

# PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR

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**SONS OF  
ANARCHY  
BABE**

THE INTERVIEW  
**DEEPAK  
CHOPRA**

**WINTER  
ZOLI** LIVE FREE  
RIDE HARD  
**2011 MOTORCYCLE  
REVIEW**

**SETH  
GREEN**  
**20Q**

**TABLOID  
TAKEDOWN**  
HOW THE NATIONAL  
ENQUIRER BROUGHT  
**JOHN  
EDWARDS**  
TO HIS **KNEES**

**ONE MAN  
FIVE COUNTRIES**  
**5,000 MILES**  
THE ULTIMATE RIDE

**HEY WILD BILL,  
WHO DID  
YOU KILL?**  
PLAYBOY INVESTIGATES  
A MURDER IN PARADISE





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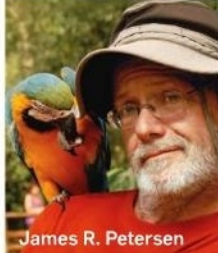
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# PLAYBILL

The man of letters E.B. White wrote, "The first day of spring was once the time for taking the young virgins into the fields, there in dalliance to set an example in fertility for Nature to follow. Now we just set the clocks an hour ahead and change the oil in the crankcase." That sounds cynical only if you don't love crankcases as much as contributing editor **James R. Petersen**, who in *The Long Road* describes (and shares photographs from) his often treacherous journey on motorcycle through South America. Closer to home, veteran media reporter **Howard Kurtz**, newly installed as Washington bureau chief of The Daily Beast, travels behind the scenes in *Tabloid Takedown* to provide the most detailed account yet of the *National Enquirer's* dogged pursuit of a story nobody else seemed to want—that of married presidential candidate John Edwards secretly fathering a child with a campaign videographer. Eight years after the passing of our hero Asa Baber, **Nick Tosches** ably revives the *Men* column with *My Hero Lefty*, the story of a friend of his father's who managed to put off getting a phone for his entire life while the rest of us became enslaved by bells, buzzes and vibrations.



James R. Petersen



Howard Kurtz



Nick Tosches



Marlena Bielinska with Winter Ave Zoli

**Lisa Lampanelli**, meanwhile, kick-starts the *Women* column, originated by Cynthia Heimel, with *How to Be a Mean Boy*, a course in the art of being nasty, which she claims will help any man get laid. Would this strategy work with a babe like **Winter Ave Zoli**, who plays porn star seductress Lyla on FX's *Sons of Anarchy*? We'll let someone else take that chance. We're sweet on Winter, and the gorgeous photos of her by **Marlena Bielinska** carry us to a higher place. That's where we bumped into **Deepak Chopra**. Is the New Age guru a shaman or a showman? You decide after reading our mindful *Playboy Interview*. William Holbert took people to a much darker place. After he and his wife moved to Bocas del Toro, a favorite escape in Panama, his expat neighbors seemed to pick up and leave in a hurry. In *Wild Bill*, **Robert Drury** reveals the horrifying truth of what happened. There are more painful secrets at the farmhouse imagined by **T.C. Boyle** for his short story *Good Home*. It used to be a quiet place, but now the men who own it take in strays only to demonstrate the dangers of arriving at the end of the road. Pick up Boyle's new novel, *When the Killing's Done*, for additional improvisations on human perversity.



Deepak Chopra



Robert Drury



Lisa Lampanelli



T.C. Boyle

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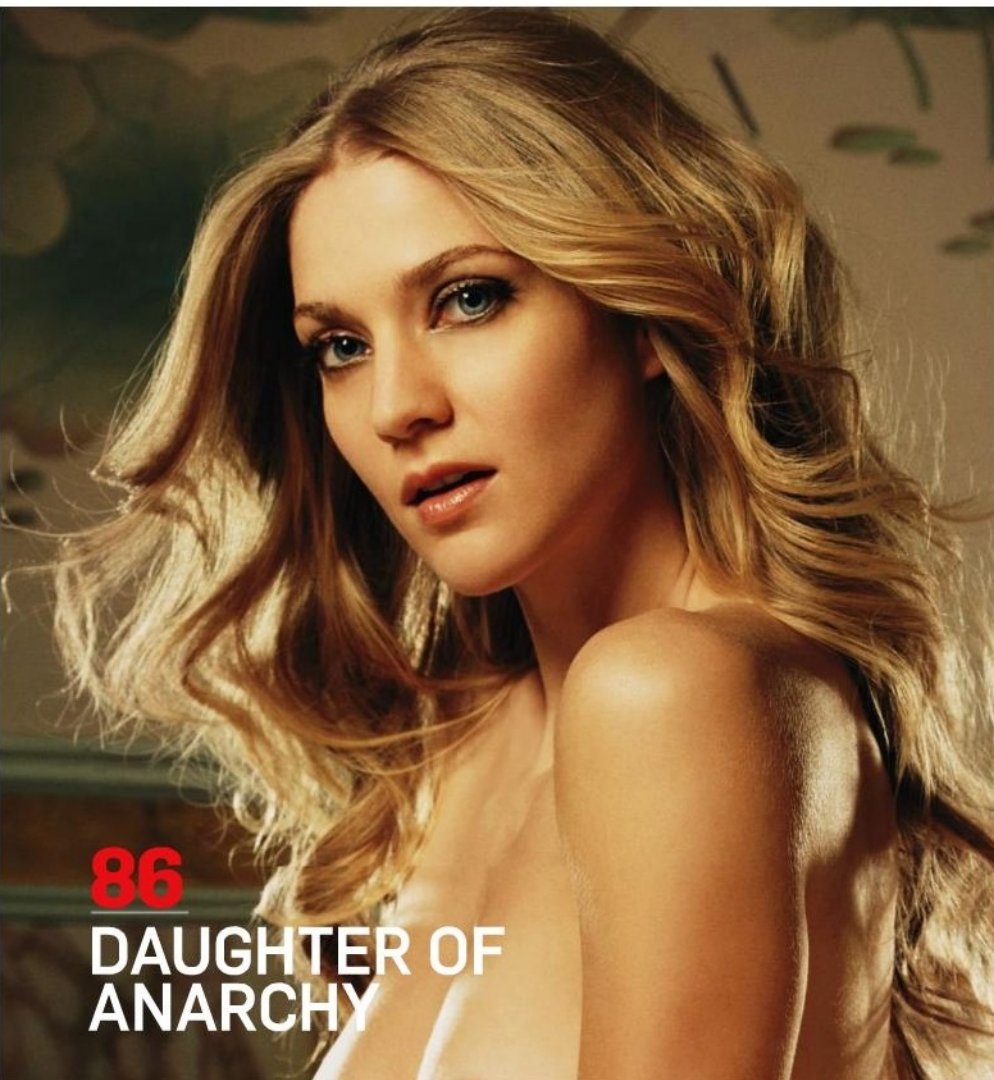
# PLAYBOY

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# PLAYBOY

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**COLLEGE BABES BRACKET** Vote for the sexiest coed in the country in our version of March Madness—you might win a trip to a Playboy photo shoot.

**BLUE ANGELS** Don't miss this hip-hugging ode to women in denim.

**THE SMOKING JACKET** Bored? Visit Playboy's safe-for-work site ([thesmokingjacket.com](http://thesmokingjacket.com)) for girls, gear and daily internet hilarity.



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# THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



## HEF RECEIVES TWO PEN LITERARY AWARDS

PEN USA honored Hugh M. Hefner twice in one night. On behalf of the literary organization, Barry "the Fish" Melton presented Hef the Award of Honor for his work editing PLAYBOY; Hef was also lauded with the First Amendment Award for fighting the good fight against censorship.

## GIRLS OF THE GRIDIRON

The same logic that first combined peanut butter and chocolate now marries sexy girls in lingerie and football. To go the whole nine yards we asked the girls of the Lingerie Football League to bare all for February's cover and pictorial. Here's a behind-the-scenes look at the shoot—now that's a huddle!



## INTERNATIONAL HOT SPOTS

"Seeing Bunnies in a global market proves that Playboy is revolutionizing nightlife again," Hef said after Playboy Clubs reopened abroad. After-hours impresarios Reggie Martin and Pete Wu kicked off the party in Macao, and four-time cover girl Carmen Electra cut the ribbon at the Playboy Club Cancun.



## NUMBER ONE IN OUR HEARTS

"Thank you for taking a chance when no one else would," Children of the Night founder and president Lois Lee (at left with Hung's Thomas Jane) said as she bestowed Hef with the Founder's Hero of the Heart Award. Hef has supported the charity, which rescues children from prostitution, since its inception in January 1979.

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### THREE CHEERS FOR BEERS

In *Beer Wars* (January) Kevin Cook beautifully captures the personalities of Brooklyn Brewery, its owner, Steve Hindy, and its brewmaster, Garrett Oliver. Today some 1,675 American breweries produce about 16,000 beers, more than at any time in the past 100 years, and they all have great stories (the breweries and the beers). Yet, as Cook points out, millions of people still haven't heard of craft beers or have inexplicably chosen to drink beer with little flavor. Cheers to PLAYBOY for helping change that by telling one of the great American beer stories.

Jay Brooks  
Novato, California

Brooks is editor of the *Brookston Beer Bulletin* ([brookstonbeerbulletin.com](http://brookstonbeerbulletin.com)).

### LONGER AND STRONGER

I am glad to see PLAYBOY address the issue of premature ejaculation (*The Dynamics of Sexual Acceleration*, January). Seven years ago I published *She Comes First*, which begins with a chapter called "Confessions of a Premature Ejaculator." I wasn't eager to share my personal traumas, but PE had nearly destroyed my sex life. I wish I had known then what we know now: that men with chronic PE have a brain chemistry that predisposes them to the problem. I found that taking a low dose of an SSRI antidepressant (e.g., Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil) helped significantly because SSRIs have the side effect of delaying ejaculation. I didn't stay on the meds forever, but they gave me the chance to develop more confidence and learn what I call "perpendicular sex positions," or making love with an emphasis on the top side of the penis rather than the more sensitive underside. Part of my journey required developing a deeper understanding of female sexuality. I learned, for example, that even if a guy can last as long as he likes, a woman may not reach orgasm if she's not receiving the right type of stimulation (persistent and clitoral). More important for men than any pill or technique is to become "cliterate" and learn that for a premature ejaculator "outercourse" is more important than intercourse.

Ian Kerner  
New York, New York

Kerner is a certified sex therapist. His latest book is *The Good in Bed Guide to Overcoming Premature Ejaculation* ([goodinbed.com](http://goodinbed.com)).

Your report, while thorough, overlooks an important issue. Based on the duration of what researchers call intravaginal ejaculation latency time (or IELT, i.e., the amount of time an erection is inside a vagina before ejaculation), I have proposed in a number of scientific articles that PE be divided into four subtypes, which combined affect about 20 percent of men. To lifelong PE and acquired PE we have added natural variable PE and

# DEAR PLAYBOY

### Cold Comfort

Kendra Wilkinson's cover (December) proves a beautiful smile always wins over a seductive or sultry look.

Joe Kuether  
Wausau, Wisconsin

I bought the December issue after the cover caught my eye—a perfect blonde ski bunny to help me cope with the long winter. Much to my dismay, the pictorial (*Simply Kendra*) doesn't contain a single ski-related photo. I knew it had to be too good to be true. Feel free to correct this omission in a future issue for the sake of us mountain men in the wild West.

Daniel Cassidy  
Bozeman, Montana



premature-like ejaculatory dysfunction, in which men complain of rapid ejaculation but are found to have normal or even better than average stamina. After two studies of men from five countries, including the U.S., it appears that persistent IELT of less than one minute affects about 2.5 percent of men, not the 20 percent to 30 percent often cited by drug companies. For that reason, health insurers should reimburse the treatment



Are you a rocket man or a slow hand?

costs of lifelong PE rather than dismiss the antidepressants used for this purpose as "lifestyle" drugs.

Dr. Marcel Waldinger  
Utrecht, The Netherlands

Waldinger is a neuropsychiatrist and professor of sexual psychopharmacology at the University of Utrecht.

### FLAG APPEAL

The photo of the cast of *Jersey Shore* draped in American flags (*Notes on Jersey Shore*, January) violates U.S. Code: Title 4,

Chapter 1, Section 8, subsections a. (never display union down), b. (never touch the flag to anything beneath it), d. (never use as apparel or drapery), i. (never use in advertising) and j. (never use as a costume). As a veteran I feel the photo is in bad taste. Hugh Hefner, as a veteran himself, should never have let that photo be printed in the magazine, especially in conjunction with that terrible show.

Jack Driggers  
Monroe, North Carolina

### EXPLOSIVE FICTION

Thom Jones's *Bomb Shelter Noel* (January) is brilliant. I will be surprised if it is not selected for *The Best American Short Stories 2011*. Thanks for another great holiday present.

Joseph Dillmann  
Libertyville, Illinois

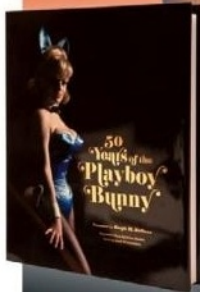
### LET'S MAKE A DEAL

I enjoyed *Vulture Capitalism* (December), but when a country defaults on billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars and has to pay only \$100 million to settle up, you ask yourself, Where do I sign up? I worked in Iraq for four years and saw the Iraqis squander everything we gave them. Now I read reports of the country being broke and large sums of cash disappearing into thin air. Some debt collector will be getting rich off Iraq in a few years.

Jason Dixon  
Visalia, California

### WHAT YOU CAN'T KNOW

Peter Lance's article about Anthony Shaffer's *Bourne*-like tale (*The Private War of Anthony Shaffer*, January) is one of the most interesting I've read in PLAYBOY. I wish I could say I was shocked that our three-letter agencies had valuable intelligence in their hands and chose to ignore



# 50 years of the Playboy Bunny

When Hugh Hefner founded the first Playboy Club in Chicago, he wanted a female waitstaff that would embody the Playboy fantasy. The Playboy Bunny was born, and 50 years later she lives on in our imaginations. With more than 200 amazing photos of classic Bunnies—along with many never-before-seen images—*50 Years of the Playboy Bunny* is the definitive work on a cultural icon. Go to [playboy.store.com](http://playboy.store.com) to order. (176 pages, \$35, Chronicle Books)

it. Please let us know if *Operation Dark Heart* is republished without the U.S. government's 256 redactions.

Jay Guio  
Indianapolis, Indiana

Earlier books such as Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars* (2004) and Pete Blaber's *The Mission, the Men, and Me* (2008) also describe the history of our military's ignorance of early-warning systems and the cover-your-ass mentality that seems to have been instilled in a large part of the Army officer corps.

Glen Piro  
Mansfield, Massachusetts

## HEAD OF CLASS

I am astounded by how perfectly Samantha Gillison puts into words how I also feel about giving head (*The Platonic Ideal*, January). It's a powerful position to know you're in charge of someone else's pleasure, and the incredible feeling of a throbbing erection in my mouth is to me more intimate than intercourse. It makes my toes curl to think about it.

Name withheld  
Rutland, Vermont

## HEART AND SOUL

I'm a former Clevelander, and *City of Broken Dreams* by Joe Eszterhas (December) stands as my favorite essay published in *PLAYBOY* during all my years as a subscriber. On behalf of northeast Ohio natives everywhere (except LeBron James—may he never win a title), thank you for such an honest, thoughtful love letter to a city that deserves a little love.

Joe Donatelli  
Los Angeles, California

It's great to see Cleveland properly portrayed. Maybe now outsiders will understand we aren't the way we are because it's easy or glamorous but because we have to be that way to survive, and we enjoy every moment.

Jarrod Amberik  
Cleveland, Ohio

Despite all the jokes about Cleveland, it has had a global influence on rock and roll. It was the place for new artists—including David Bowie, Bruce Springsteen, Mott the Hoople and many others—to get on the airwaves.

Tom Kirker  
Niles, Ohio

## SPEED BUMP

In December's *Mantrack* you describe the Porsche 911 GT2 RS as a V6. In fact its engine is a flat-6 boxer.

Mike Derby  
South Riding, Virginia

You're right. In a flat-6 the three pistons on each side of the crankshaft move in opposite directions simultaneously, like boxers punching their gloves together. This configuration is wider and flatter than a V6's, giving the engine a lower center of gravity.

## LADIES OF THE '80S

*Why We Love the '80s* (December) neglects a woman who had an impact felt to this day: Miss July 1986 Lynne Austin. She put Hooters on the map, and her billboards in the Tampa Bay area had many of us driving in circles.

Jay Yardley  
St. Petersburg, Florida

You forgot another great Playmate, Miss August 1986 Ava Fabian, who last May posed in the Club at [playboy.com](http://playboy.com).

Richard O'Rourke  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## LET THE SUNSHINE IN

As winter set in on the Midwest and memories of beaches, bikinis and hot



Ashley Hobbs brightens another day.

rods faded, I found myself snapped out of my doldrums by Playmate Ashley Hobbs (*Beach Holiday*, December) with her exquisite tan lines and blonde tresses. Spring can't get here quickly enough.

Jerry Petersen  
Davenport, Iowa

## BRIEF LIVES

I laughed my ass off at January's *Raw Data* statistic that nine percent of American men have washed and reused a toothbrush after it fell into the crapper. (I'm not one of them.) For a future *Raw Data* you should find out how many American men have bought new underwear just to put off doing the laundry. (I have done that several times.)

Rick Jerome  
Denver, Colorado

You want underwear stats? We have underwear stats. A survey commissioned by *Jockey* found 26 percent of American men own undies that are at least five years old. And a survey of British and Irish men found four percent had gone a week without changing their "smalls" and five percent frequently wear their underwear inside out to get an extra day of wear. We're not endorsing that practice, but, you know, in a pinch....







# MISS PLAYBOY CLUB

..... LAS VEGAS .....

# CALENDAR MODEL SEARCH

.....  
EVERY LAST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH | 10PM

CONTESTANTS | LOG ON TO [MISSPLAYBOYCLUB.COM](http://MISSPLAYBOYCLUB.COM) FOR MORE DETAILS



## PALMS CASINO RESORT LAS VEGAS

FOR TICKETS AND INFORMATION: [N9NEGROU.COM/TICKETS](http://N9NEGROU.COM/TICKETS) | TABLE RESERVATIONS: [TABLES@9GROUPVEGAS.COM](mailto:TABLES@9GROUPVEGAS.COM) | 702.942.6832  
ROOM RESERVATIONS: [PALMS.COM](http://PALMS.COM) | 1.866.942.7770 | [FACEBOOK.COM/PLAYBOYCLUBLASVEGAS](https://www.facebook.com/playboyclublasvegas) | [TWITTER.COM/PLAYBOYCLUBLV](https://twitter.com/playboyclublv)

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CIGARETTES

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No matter how far we go,  
or where the road leads us,  
we will remain committed to  
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CIGARETTES

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AMERICAN SPIRIT  
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CIGARETTES



We used **100% recycled** content for this insert, as we do with nearly all our marketing pieces.

We **saved 280,000** paper hand towels in 2010 by installing hand dryers in our Santa Fe office.

We **saved 30,000** paper cups in 2010 by glazing ceramic mugs both for ourselves and for our guests in Santa Fe.

Our sales team's **hybrid car fleet** saved 312 barrels of oil in 2009.

We have been **100% wind powered** since 2008.

Learn more about what we do at [www.sfntc.com](http://www.sfntc.com)

100% additive-free natural tobacco



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100% additive-free natural tobacco



No additives in our tobacco does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.

Natural American Spirit<sup>®</sup>  
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SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking  
Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.



Our journey began, as they often do, with little more than an idea – to create a premium cigarette that was **free of additives**. Once that goal was achieved, our next step was the creation of **earth-friendly growing programs**, and then tobacco grown under organic specifications, to lessen our farmers’ impact on the environment. We’re proud to have produced the first cigarette made with **organic tobacco**.



We continued on to blends that celebrate unique tobaccos. Along the way, we met the caretakers of one of the rarest tobaccos in the world. The centuries-old process of aging Perique tobacco in oak barrels lives on in the unmistakable taste of our **Perique blend** styles.

And as we met more and more farmers, they inspired us to create our **100% U.S. Grown blend**, to support our communities and the environment.



**EXPERIENCE NATURAL AMERICAN SPIRIT WITH TWO PACKS FOR \$2.**

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[TryAmericanSpirit.com](http://TryAmericanSpirit.com) or call 1-800-435-5515

No additives in our tobacco does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.

Organic tobacco does **NOT** mean a safer cigarette.



Make any time a great time  
with the just-right taste of Bud Light.

IT'S THE SURE SIGN OF A GOOD TIME


**HERE WE GO**

# PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS

## BECOMING ATTRACTION

### Tina Casciani

Every now and then you turn on your TV and see a woman so unique and striking, she makes you want to stop time so you can stare at her. When we first saw Brazilian-Italian stunner Tina Casciani on *How I Met Your Mother* and *CSI: Miami*, we were mesmerized. She's since been on *Dark Blue*, *The Glades*, *Burn Notice* and *Undercovers*—a solid résumé considering she arrived in Hollywood two years ago. Prior to that Tina studied dance and theater and worked for 10 years as a model. "I lived in Milan, Sydney, Tokyo, Paris, London and Cape Town," she says, "but I moved to L.A. to pursue acting." Her goal is to be in a film that incorporates her dance skills. "I'd love to do a remake of *Flashdance*," she says. Meanwhile, we stopped time for you. Go ahead, drink her in.



"I'd love to do *Flashdance*."



**MOBILE STUDIO**

Cyber Girl Kat Kohls purrs for the camera...phone. This image uses the Paris effect available at [ubermind.com](http://ubermind.com).



**Hot Shot**  
**Image Is Everything**



Phone cameras have improved so much they've sparked a new style of imaging. Just as blogging turned thousands of schmoes into "writers," the phone cam has now democratized art photography. Dozens of apps are available to add cool effects to your photos. We took this shot of

Cyber Girl Kat Kohls with an iPhone and tweaked it with the following apps: (A) ShakeIt Photo (\$1, [shakeitphoto.com](http://shakeitphoto.com)). (B) CameraBag Silver filter (\$2, [nevercenter.com/camerabag](http://nevercenter.com/camerabag)). (C) FX Photo Studio Old Photo filter (\$3, [macphun.com](http://macphun.com)). (D) Best Camera Paris filter (\$3, [ubermind.com](http://ubermind.com)).



**Unscrewed**  
**The Latest Buzz**

Some of the best wine in America can't be bought in a store. When we heard of the new web-based epicurean club Lot 18, which specializes in great deals on hard-to-get vino, we set up a deal for you. Go to [lot18.com/playboy](http://lot18.com/playboy) and you'll get an invite to join for no fee. Pictured: 2004 Cornerstone Cellars cabernet, 2008 Laird Family pinot grigio, 2008 Breggo Anderson Valley pinot noir, available for a limited time through [lot18.com](http://lot18.com).

**On the Block**  
**Here's Johnny**

Julien's Auctions in Los Angeles, known for selling intimate memorabilia from the coolest sons of bitches who ever walked (John Lennon, Jimi Hendrix, Albert Einstein), recently held a Johnny Cash auction. Highlights: Johnny's knee-high cowboy boots (\$22,400), rehearsal jumpsuit worn at San Quentin (\$50,000) and 1968 passport (\$21,875). Julien's couldn't auction Johnny's soul; he sold it to the devil long ago.



**For a Song**  
The black suit worn by the man in black sold at auction for \$10,000.



**SPICY PORK MEATBALLS  
FROM CHEF DANIEL  
HOLZMAN OF THE  
MEATBALL SHOP**

2 lbs. ground pork shoulder  
1 1/2 tbsp. salt  
4 hot cherry peppers, minced  
1/4 cup pepper pickling liquid  
4 slices white bread, minced  
3 eggs  
2 tbsp. olive oil

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. 2. Combine all ingredients except oil in a large bowl and mix thoroughly by hand. 3. Drizzle oil into large (nine-by-13-inch) baking dish, making sure to evenly coat surface. 4. Roll the mixture into golfball-size balls, packing firmly. 5. Place balls in baking dish in a grid so each touches the ones around it. 6. Roast until firm, about 14 minutes. 7. Allow to cool for five minutes, then serve with tomato, meat, Parmesan cream, pesto sauce or mushroom gravy.



**Flavor of the Month**

**Have a Ball** The Meatball Shop in Manhattan has gotten tons of press since it opened a year ago, in part because the word *meatball* is easy to form into a headline and because the balls are the balls. Chef Daniel Holzman, 31, started at Le Bernardin, one of the top restaurants in the world, when he was 15. His Meatball Shop offers your choice of ball, sauce and side (pasta? white beans?). We snagged his spicy pork meatball recipe for you. Shall we roll?

**BARMATE**

Sally Gibbs



**IN SEARCH OF AMERICA'S  
HOTTEST BARTENDERS**

**PLAYBOY:** So what does a drink go for around here?

**SALLY:** At the Gulfstream Casino in Hallandale Beach, Florida, draft beer and wine are a dollar.

**PLAYBOY:** Casinos are grand.

**SALLY:** And with those prices you can't lose.

**PLAYBOY:** What games are popular?

**SALLY:** The nickel slots are full year-round, but we get insane from January through April when the horse track is up and running.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you like the ponies?

**SALLY:** I actually used to be intimidated by horses, but on my 21st birthday I jumped on one and that went away. I like to face my fears.

**PLAYBOY:** What's your best accessory?

**SALLY:** I'd have to say my butt. I'm a skinny white girl with a bubble butt. I got it from my mama.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you call it your money-maker?

**SALLY:** I guess you could, but basically, with tips, I win when my customers win.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you have a drink that brings good fortune?

**SALLY:** My French martini—drink it and you'll get lucky.

**FRENCH MARTINI**

1 oz. Ketel One vodka  
1/2 oz. Chambord  
1/2 oz. pineapple juice  
1/2 oz. Navan

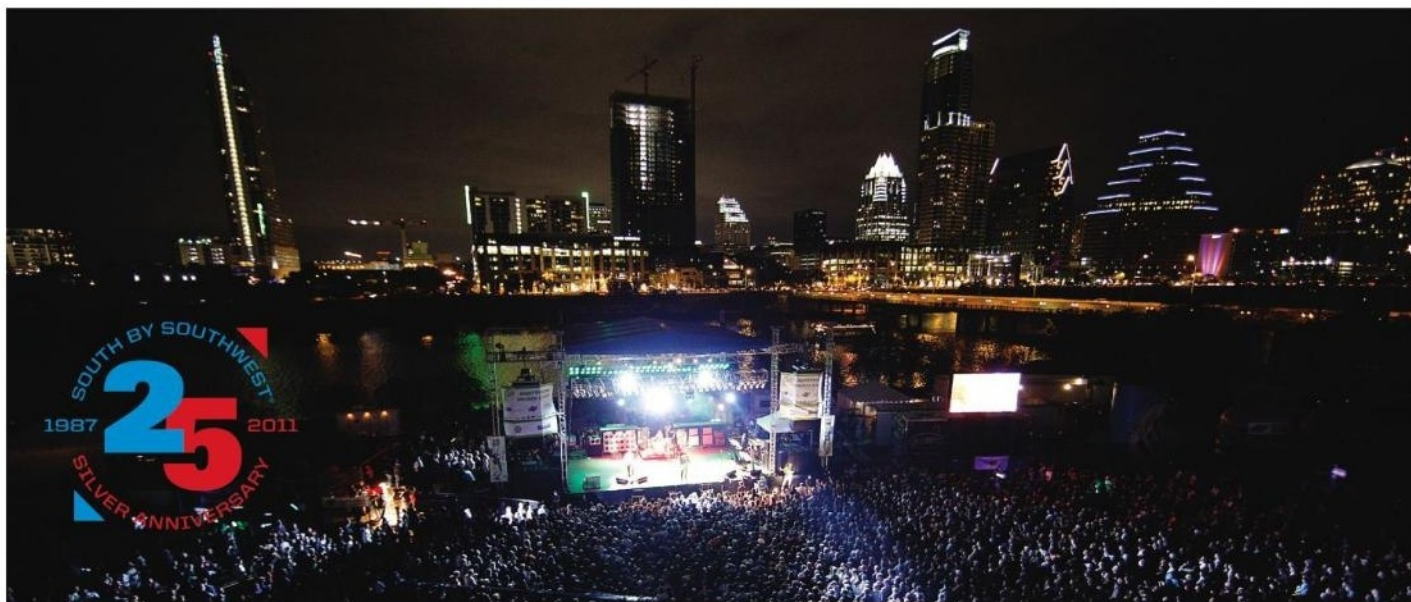
Shake hard with ice  
and strain into a  
chilled martini glass.

SEE MORE OF SALLY AT  
CLUB.PLAYBOY.COM.  
APPLY TO BE BARMATE AT  
PLAYBOY.COM/POSE.



**Rolling Thunder  
Fine Vintage**

"There is no finer thrill in the world than driving a Ferrari flat-out," film director Roberto Rossellini said in the 1960s. Coming from a guy who bedded Ingrid Bergman, this is saying something. Live the dream with Glen Smale's new book, *Ferrari Design: The Definitive Study* (\$70, Haynes). It covers the whole Ferrari oeuvre, but we adore the older models. Pictured here: a beautiful 1953 166 MM coupe, worth hundreds of thousands today.



## Austin Power Deep in the Heart of Texas

In 1986 a few Austin-based alt-weekly journals launched a music festival. The Reverend Horton Heat played, and 700 people showed. That gathering—now called the SXSW Music, Film and Interactive Festival—turns 25 years old this month (March 11 to 20) and has grown into its own Pepsi-sponsored cosmopolis. Got your ticket? The premiere of Jake Gyllenhaal's *Source Code* will headline the first night's films, and bands are booked from every continent on earth. Good luck finding a hotel room.



## Bad Ash This Is Not Your Grandpa's Cigar

There's a new generation of boutique cigar makers, tatted-up high rollers influenced less by Cuban lore than by skateboard culture. Examples: Drew Estate (makers of Dirty Rat and Flying Pig), Room 101 Cigars and Studio Tobac. Pictured: limited-edition handmade Anarchy from L.A.-based Tatuaje (Spanish for "tattoo"). They're available exclusively at [smokeinn.com](http://smokeinn.com), \$150 for a box of 15. Click your iPod to Agent Orange and play with fire.



## Houston? We Have a Final Four

Here's where to hang when you hit the world's biggest sporting event. Hotel: The ZaZa (5701 Main, 713-526-1991) is the place to drop anchor, with choice views and a great lounge. BBQ: Goode Company (5109 Kirby, 713-522-2530) is the big name in town, but for an authentic setting try Burns Bar-B-Q (7117 N. Shepherd, 713-692-2800). Dive bar: Warren's Inn (307 Travis, 713-247-9207) has a jukebox that doubles as a time machine. Music: The Continental Club (3700 Main, 713-529-9899) made the list of America's best bars in our August issue. Don't miss: the bizarre National Museum of Funeral History (415 Barren Springs, 281-876-3063). For our Houston city guide, visit [playboy.com/houston2011](http://playboy.com/houston2011).



Calling all  
**SPORTS FANS!**

Go to  
[PinnacleVodkaFans.com](http://PinnacleVodkaFans.com)  
and upload your wildest  
sports fan photo.  
You could win  
**\$20,000.**

Bottoms up!



## Movie of the Month

# The Adjustment Bureau

By Stephen Rebell

Charismatic politician Matt Damon is pursued by agents of fate who are on earth to make sure events transpire as the forces of the universe dictate in *The Adjustment Bureau*. He falls for ballet dancer Emily Blunt, and despite his not being allowed to see her again, the two defy fate and fight for their love. Based loosely on a Philip K. Dick short story, the stylish, thought-provoking movie marks the feature directing debut of screenwriter George Nolfi (*The Bourne Ultimatum*, *Ocean's Twelve*). "By design, it's definitely not a movie that fits neatly into any kind of box," says Nolfi. "A film with around 90 locations, a unique tone and different changes of genre would never have gotten made without Matt. We've done four movies together and been in the trenches. He said, 'I don't think of you as a first-time director.'"



## DVD of the Month



## Jackass 3D Is Explosive

Want to know what it's like to be Krazy Glued in the 69 position to another hairy guy? Check. Go airborne in a feces-filled outhouse? Check, mate. Channel your inner 12-year-old for this latest literal shit storm from Johnny Knoxville and his band of juveniles as they go for belly laughs—if you aren't busy losing your lunch watching guys drink each other's sweat and pull teeth via race car. The highs (or are they lows?) of *Jackass 3D*, though, come when the gang is playing practical

jokes, skateboarding into blow-up pools or getting slugged by giant robot hands. Knoxville has a deadpan approach to ridiculously extreme physical comedy, making him, as unlikely as it sounds, a candidate for this generation's Buster Keaton. By the end, you'll wonder why one of them isn't in a hospital—or a straitjacket. **Best extras:** In addition to MTV's "making of" special and outtakes, both the DVD and BD include anaglyph glasses for the 3-D version. ★★★ —Stacie Houglund

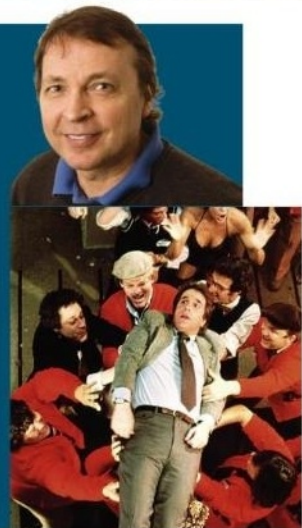
## What's in Your Netflix Queue?

Director **Bobby Farrelly's** next big-screen movie is the comedy *Hall Pass*. Here are the discs he's waiting to watch at home.

**Night Shift:** "I consider Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel to be the greatest comedy writers of the past 30 years."

**Something Wild:** "I watch it before every movie I make to remind myself just how alive a great film can make you feel."

**Animal Kingdom:** "It freaks me out."



## Tease Frame

**Marisa Tomei** won an Oscar for her hilarious performance opposite Joe Pesci in 1992's *My Cousin Vinny* and was nominated again in 2002 for *In the Bedroom*. If it were up to us, she would have taken home another little gold man after being nominated a third time, for her fearless

performance as the sexy stripper with whom Mickey Rourke is smitten in *The Wrestler* (pictured). See Tomei next in the legal thriller *The Lincoln Lawyer* with Matthew McConaughey.

## Also in gaming...



The best shooter series on PS3 returns with *Killzone 3*, which finds your forces outnumbered, outgunned and stranded on an alien planet covered with nuclear wasteland and frozen tundra.



*Mad Max* meets *Fast & Furious* in *Motorstorm Apocalypse* (PS3) as racers stage one final run through a collapsing city in heavily armed muscle cars, motorcycles and other vehicles.



## Game of the Month **Bulletstorm**

By Jason Buhrmester

It isn't enough simply to shoot someone these days. *Bulletstorm* (360, PC, PS3) is built around gunning down foes in the most stylish and sadistic manner possible. Chain a grenade to an enemy and hurl him into another, causing them both to explode, or kick an incoming missile back at the person who fired it. Then blast an enemy in the family jewels and score a bonus for putting him out of his misery. String together wild and cartoonish

kills and the system rewards you with points to gain new weapons or upgrade characters. The setting is designed for maximum bloodshed as you play Grayson Hunt, a mercenary betrayed by his boss and dumped on a planet overrun by flesh-eating vegetation and violent gangs. To guide Hunt off the planet alive, you'll kick in heads, empty clips and occasionally score the "rear entry" bonus for shooting someone in the...well, you can guess. ♫♫♫



CUT COPY  
ZONOSCOPE



## Album of the Month

By Rob Tannenbaum

## Cut Copy's *Zonoscope*

Cut Copy wants you to have fun. The hook on "Where I'm Going," from its new album *Zonoscope*, goes "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Woo!," which rates pretty high on the effusiveness scale. The breakout success of its 2008 CD *In Ghost Colours* placed Cut Copy among a throng of hip bands, from the Killers to

LCD Soundsystem, that are revisiting 1980s New Wave, and these Australians emphasize the era's pleading falsetto vocals and electronic percussion. In music, exhilaration and experimentation usually point in opposite directions. Cut Copy wants you to feel happy and smart—all at the same time. Woo! ♫♫♫

## The Destination for Jazz Lovers

Pity Jeff Jackson and Jeff Golick, masterminds of the fascinating jazz blog Destination: Out. How do they store their immense collections of rare records? The MP3s they post showcase the accessible sides of great experimentalists from a variety of decades, accompanied by descriptions of the music and the players, from Herbie Hancock to Anthony Braxton. Find it at [destination-out.com](http://destination-out.com).



# RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

## PRICE CHECK

# \$1.6 MILLION

Estimated value of a rare \$100,000 bill produced and used only for official Federal Reserve transactions.

**AUSTIN, TEXAS** IS ONE OF THE BEST CITIES TO LIVE IN IF YOU ARE SINGLE. THE MEDIAN AGE IS 29, AND 35% OF THE POPULATION IS UNATTACHED.



## WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

EVEN THOSE WORKING FOR "THE MAN" GET SHADY WHEN IT COMES TIME TO PONY UP FOR THE IRS.

### FEDERAL EMPLOYEES WORKING ON CAPITOL HILL



# OWED \$9.3 MILLION

IN OVERDUE TAXES AT THE END OF 2009, AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES NATIONWIDE OWED ABOUT **\$1 BILLION.**



A STUDY OF MOCK TRIALS USING CORNELL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AS JURORS FOUND THAT UNATTRACTIVE DEFENDANTS WERE 22% MORE LIKELY TO BE CONVICTED AND WERE SENTENCED TO AN AVERAGE OF 22 MONTHS LONGER IN PRISON THAN THE GUILTY BUT GOOD-LOOKING.

According to a study by a French psychologist, a hitchhiking female with A-cup breasts will be picked up by 15% of male drivers, while one with C-cup breasts will be picked up by 24%.



DRIVERS OF MERCEDES-BENZ SL CLASS CONVERTIBLES ARE 4 TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN THE AVERAGE DRIVER TO GET A TICKET.



**61% OF AMERICANS AGES 44 TO 75 SAY THEY'RE MORE AFRAID OF USING UP ALL THEIR FINANCIAL ASSETS THAN THEY ARE OF DEATH.**



# \$100

The approximate price per person for a gourmet meal that incorporates marijuana as an ingredient, sometimes garnished with a marijuana bud, delivered to your door by Cannabis Catering of San Francisco—medical marijuana card required.



DUE MOSTLY TO HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT, AVERAGE COMMUTE TIMES IN THE U.S. FELL TO 25.1 MINUTES IN 2009, THE LOWEST SINCE 2006.



A RECENT POLL FOUND THAT 20% OF BRITS HAVE SENT RACY TEXTS TO THE WRONG PERSON, AND NEARLY 1 IN 10 HAS BEEN CAUGHT RED-HANDED "SEXTING."

IN 1998 POLICE TRACKED 12 EXTREMIST OR TERRORIST WEBSITES ON THE INTERNET. AS OF 2006 THAT NUMBER HAD RISEN TO ABOUT 4,500.



BETWEEN 1998 AND 2008 THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SEEKING TREATMENT FOR PAINKILLER ADDICTION JUMPED 400%.

## ODD STAT OF THE MONTH

APPROXIMATELY 50% OF SCIENTISTS PRACTICE SOME SORT OF FAITH. CITING FEAR OF PERSECUTION, MANY DO SO IN SECRET.



## From the Street

What do Jay-Z and Queen Elizabeth have in common?

Bentley has restyled its Continental GT for 2011. But what's really been restyled is the Bentley driver. The car used to be the quintessentially British chariot of Queen Elizabeth II and 007 in the Ian Fleming novels. Today's Bentley owner is more gangsta. Fabolous drives a Bentley. So does the Game, Jay-Z: "Slamming Bentley doors, hopping out of Porsches / Popping up on *Forbes* lists, gorgeous." Out on the road, there's nothing street about the new Continental GT (officially a 2012 model). The cockpit holds not so much a driver's seat as a throne. The richly finished wood-paneled interior, with its aromatic hides and polished stainless fittings, resembles something on a yacht. Nothing this size on

the road accelerates with Bentley's creamy, private-jet-like surge. The uniquely engineered W12 engine can thrust this behemoth from zero to 60 in 4.4 seconds. The latest GT has even more horsepower (up 15, to 567) and 50 percent faster shifting from the six-speed ZF manumatic. With a wider track and 143 fewer pounds, the handling is even more magnificent. The base price is \$189,900—a pittance if you can make it rain. As Lloyd Banks puts it, "This is heavy, new Bentley / Color vanilla and cherry Andretti on Pirelli...."



## Italian Cut

Timber! Slice and dice the overgrown jungle in your front yard in 2.5 seconds flat with the Tonino Lamborghini electric chain saw (\$200, [tonino-lamborghini-garden.com](http://tonino-lamborghini-garden.com))—an officially licensed product built by IKRA Mogatec, the Lamborghini of garden tools. The saw also cuts close to the luxury automaker's agrarian origins as a manufacturer of tractors.

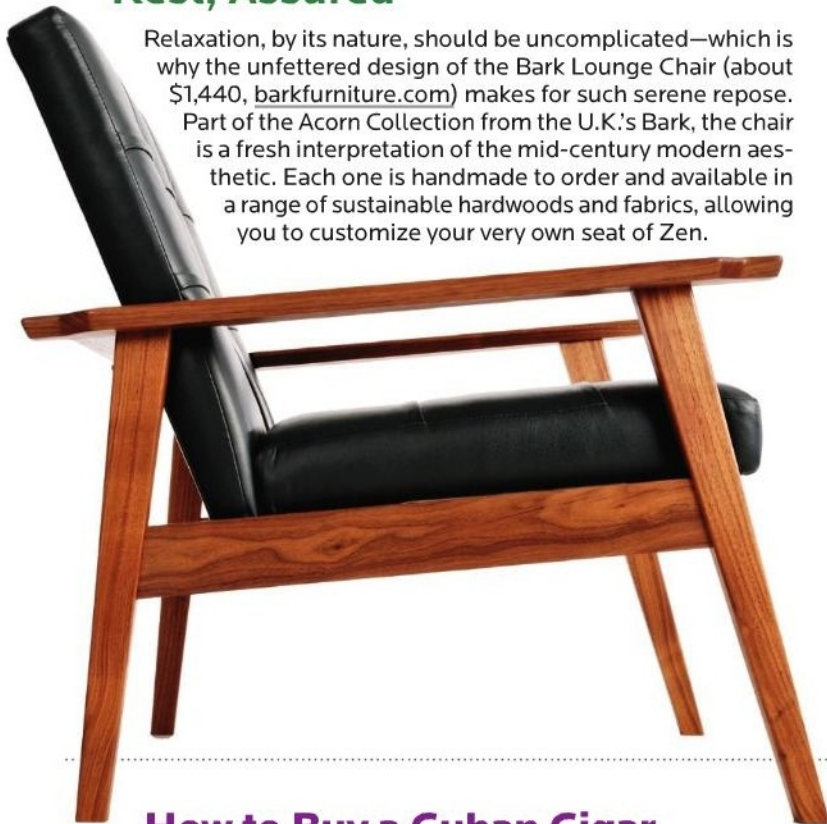


## Heal Thyself

Tell your doctor to practice his fancy medicine on someone else. J.R. Watkins's Petro-Carbo First Aid Salve (\$13, [jrwatkins.com](http://jrwatkins.com)) treats almost anything that ails you, from bug bites to burns. Its ingredients, many of which are of the all-natural variety, can even summon splinters trapped beneath the skin.

## Rest, Assured

Relaxation, by its nature, should be uncomplicated—which is why the unfettered design of the Bark Lounge Chair (about \$1,440, [barkfurniture.com](http://barkfurniture.com)) makes for such serene repose. Part of the Acorn Collection from the U.K.'s Bark, the chair is a fresh interpretation of the mid-century modern aesthetic. Each one is handmade to order and available in a range of sustainable hardwoods and fabrics, allowing you to customize your very own seat of Zen.



## Ride the White Lightning

Don't confuse the new corn whiskey Moonshine (\$40, [moonshine.com](http://moonshine.com)) with the swill brewed by backwater bootleggers. Conceived by grill master Adam Perry Lang, the 80-proof Moonshine goes down smooth straight, on the rocks with a lime or as the star ingredient of a bloody shine (tomato juice, lemon juice and Worcestershire sauce).



## How to Buy a Cuban Cigar

You'll need to travel—to pretty much anywhere but the U.S., where purchasing Cuban goods has been outlawed since the Kennedy administration. About 65 other countries, however—from Mexico to China to the U.K.—host at least one La Casa del Habano ([lacasadelhabano.com](http://lacasadelhabano.com)),

a government-sanctioned cigar franchise. (Purchase Cuban stogies online at your own risk; fakes are abundant, and the feds are confiscating cigar shipments from internet dealers at unprecedented levels.) Once you're at a La Casa del Habano, light up a Montecristo, the largest

Cuban brand, or a Cohiba Behike, the latest Cuban tobacco treasure. "It's probably the best cigar to come out of Cuba in the past 20 years," says Gordon Mott of *Cigar Aficionado*.

## All Aboard

Seafaring opulence need not be limited to the yacht club. A tandem Missouri canoe from Scott's Missouri River Boat Works (\$4,900, [scottsboatworks.com](http://scottsboatworks.com)) allows you to roll down the river in similar high style. The 15.5-foot-long, 62-pound vessel takes about 400 man-hours to build—all by hand, of course—and is constructed with such woods as birch, cherry and mahogany. Once layered and finished with high-gloss marine varnish, it rivals the parquet shine of the old Boston Garden. (A do-it-yourself kit costs \$1,400.) Each canoe can also feature a set of built-in cedar beverage holders—perfect for cradling a glass of cabernet at sunset. Custom paddles included; just add water.





**A**s Bertolt Brecht said, “Pity the country that needs heroes.” These words bleed truth. As this country falls ever deeper in its cant and lip service to heroes and heroism, the more meaningfully the truth of those words runs. Try as I might to summon to mind anyone whom I hold as a hero, I know that none I might so hold has to do with this shit about patriotism or fighting terrorism by handing out parking tickets or anything like that.

As my old man and a lot of old men through the ages said, “He who hesitates is lost.”

Thus to mind comes Lefty, who surely is one—maybe the only one—of my heroes.

I don’t know if my father ever heard of Brecht, but I know he was a good buddy of Lefty’s. This was in the old days, in the old neighborhood.

Believe me, Lefty hesitated.

Nobody knew much about Lefty. Like my father, he was one of those guys who had grown up in the Depression, gone off to World War II and come back to play out the deck. We knew him as Lefty Brusher. Few of us knew his real last name was Brescia or what his real first name was or who or what real family he had. I recall odd visits as a kid with Lefty to an old guy from the other side called Uncle Pop in Little Italy. Whose uncle, whose pop? No answers. Lefty was what might be called a man who played alone.

Everybody liked Lefty. On Sunday mornings he put on a suit and fedora and made the rounds of the neighborhood, calling at the homes of those who constituted his local social circle. The women were always ready for him: “Get the bottle, Lefty’s coming.” He would have a shot, there would be talk of this and that with this one or that one, and he would be off and on his way until his weekly wending socializing was done.

I continued to see him for years to come. Long after I had moved to the Village, he would appear once in a while, always alone, usually carrying a grocery bag, explaining that he was a comparison shopper. Maybe the food stores between Little Italy and Bleecker Street had replaced the homes of the dead and gone at which he had called.

But we were talking about why Lefty became a hero to me. We were talking about Lefty and hesitation.

The first New York City telephone directory, listing 256 subscribers, was published in 1878. The directory got fatter and fatter with the passing of years.

My great-grandfather, his wife and their eldest sons, who came here from Italy in the 1890s, didn’t know from these

contraptions. It wasn’t until about the time that the telephone became known as the Ameche—after Don Ameche’s title role in the 1939 moving picture *The Story of Alexander Graham Bell*—that the women in the neighborhood began to get wired in increasing numbers. While characters such as my grandfather and his elder brother never touched one of those things in their lives, it was not long before almost everyone else had one.

In the century following 1878, there



## MY HERO LEFTY BY NICK TOSCHES

were stylistic changes to the gizmo, but its essential nature remained the same. Telephony was a means of intrusion that one allowed into one’s life: a toy of convenience that became a necessity, a novelty that became an addiction.

Then the dam burst. Answering machines and beepers, e-mail, cell phones and text messaging, iPods and smartphones, iPads and iSlates and God knows what else. From toy and convenience to necessity to addiction to engulfing blight.

It is now possible to live one’s life from baby’s first words to death rattle in a cheap plastic hypertensive state of pure meaningless illiterate gibberish. And the more intensely pervasive it grows and the less of substance is said, the more its users are transformed into sputtering networks of twitching ganglia and stripped nerve cords, and the louder they get in their addiction to false communication as the curative for their desperation. Yes, from toy....

People walking down the street, loudly explaining into cell phones that they are walking down the street. Couples in bars, sitting together but text messaging or carrying on handheld conversations alone. People responding to bells, buzzes, snatches of strident melody, humming vibrations in the midst of a meal. People putting on shows of importance by yelling at someone who isn’t even really at the other end.

T.S. Eliot wrote a poem called “The Hollow Men.” How far beyond that descriptive we have fallen, in these times when the speed at which nothing worth saying can be said in so many ever-accelerating ways, before we have the be-all and the end-all of the HollowBerry, the iHollow, the Almighty Hollow?

So anyway, it was about 15 years ago. I used to visit my great-aunt every time she had a birthday. She was well into her 90s, the last one left from the old days, and she was still lucid. At one point she said:

“Lefty always asks for you.”

By this time, he himself must have been pushing 80. The memory of him brought a smile to my face.

“Do me a favor,” I said. “Give me Lefty’s number. I want to call him and surprise him.”

“Oh,” she said, “Lefty doesn’t have a phone. He still hasn’t decided.”

I had already been sucked into e-mail, and I knew that once you’re in, you don’t get out. I was lucky enough not to succumb to the cellular disease, but as for the old landline Ameche, it had for me always been one of life’s unavoidable curses. To hear about Lefty having warded off the damned thing for a lifetime—well, hell, I had always known he was a great guy, but now I saw and increasingly continue to see him as a Great Man, in the sense that legendary Bronze Age warriors are great.

To Lefty, then, who knew what he needed and what he didn’t, who hesitated his way into wisdom. As for the rest of you, may your handheld devices make you all you can pretend to be, and please stay away, in body, voice and device, from me.

Lisa Lampanelli, am mean.

I insult people of all races, creeds and colors in theaters every night, and I have roasted every degenerate on the planet on national TV. And I am rewarded for it with applause and enough dough to buy not one but two sweet Toyota Camrys.

You, on the other hand, are nice. You are a complete gentleman. Your compensation? You're taken advantage of by everyone from the little old ladies you help across the street to that hot soprano in your church choir, and you never get the respect or the crazy sex you so richly deserve.

Sound fair? No? Well, guess what, Doogie. Life ain't fair. So I have taken it upon myself to share some of my wisdom to help even the score. Welcome to Lisa Lampanelli's course in the Art of Being Mean.

Everybody knows the best sex is crazy sex—you know, sex with girls who aren't good girls. And everybody also knows that bad girls love bad boys. But what if you're a good guy?

How do you become bad enough to get the crazy sex those girls are known for?

Let's start with LL's Extreme Bad Boy Makeover. It's a fact of life that unless they're Stevie Wonder, people respond to visual cues. And that fact is especially true of bad girls.

Bad girls love guys who look like the Rock, 50 Cent or Bret Michaels. What do these guys have in common? No, not herpes. Tattoos.

Simply put, some ink on your arm will get you some stink on your fingers. But you can't get just any tattoo. Get a snake, a skull or a dagger. And don't even *think* of getting a tattoo of a dolphin, a happy face or a sunrise. Those won't get you laid. They'll get you an invitation from a girl to watch *Glee* and talk about both your periods.

For the bad boy, the right facial hair is crucial. A little scruff is sexy but not if it's out of hand. Too much facial hair is a turnoff, and it'll get you on every airline's "no-fly" list to boot.

When it comes to dressing, wear leather. For some reason, wrapping a dead cow around you turns bad girls on. Of course, this will turn off PETA chicks,

## HOW TO BE A MEAN BOY



but those girls are too busy at Lilith Fair and have armpits so hairy it looks like they have Nick Nolte in a headlock. You need those girls only if they're going to help you tune up your Harley.

Speaking of which, buy a motorcycle already. Nothing turns a woman on more than riding a gas-powered vibrator. If, however, the thought of driving a motorcycle leaves you shakier than Michael J. Fox, at least drive a cool car. A Prius would make even Mario Andretti look as if he cries after sex.

I know you're thinking, Tiger Woods got lots of wild sex, and *he* never wore animal hides or rode a hog. Well, guess what, guys. Tiger Woods has a *trillion* dollars. So unless you're an oil heir, a Kennedy or that dork who founded Facebook, dress the bad-boy part. That way you can play more than 18 holes a day too!

What a bad boy does in public is just as important as how he looks. First of all, drink real booze. Bellying up to the bar and ordering a piña colada is acceptable only if you're on a Caribbean island and you're a 19-year-old girl on spring break.

At this point I can tell you're asking, "Isn't there more to being a bad boy and getting good sex than all this superficial stuff?" Oh yes, ass-hopper, indeed there is!

To get crazy girls, a little bit o' mean goes a long way. One way to score big points is to blatantly hit on other chicks. This will make her claws literally pop out and into your back during some crazy missionary later that night. Flirt with your girl's friend and you'll score quicker than Charlie Sheen at a porn convention.

This maneuver can be done in a virtual way via the internet. When you start dating a woman, friend-request her hottest friend on Facebook. Your chick will hate that you friended her hot Latina friend Gabriela instead of her fat friend Precious. And she'll be so jealous she'll bang you like the dinner bell on the Ponderosa.

Do not deal with a woman's pets. Nowadays it seems as if every girl has a goddamn cat. And her cat is the big-

gest cock blocker since *Dateline NBC's* Chris Hansen. It's a harsh fact, but it's either the cat or you. So the next time you two go out for a big night at Quiznos, leave the door open just enough for Buffy to bolt. You can score big points for consoling her after losing her adorable little fur ball. Believe me, she may lose a pussy, but you'll get plenty more of hers.

When it comes to the Art of Being Mean, remember: It is possible to go too far. Heed this cautionary tale or you may end up in the joint, being traded for a carton of smokes and an eight-ounce bag of Reese's Pieces.

Phil Spector is a textbook example of a Bad Boy Gone Way Too Bad. Phil Spector was a lucky man. Women overlooked a lot when it came to him—weird wigs, erratic behavior. But even the baddest girls tend to draw the line at fatal gunshot wounds.

So listen up, potential bad boys, and learn from Phil's mistakes: If you tell a girl, "Come back to my place, baby, and I'll blow you away," remember: It's a good line in theory but not so much in practice.

# PLAYBOY ADVISOR

It has become clear to me after conversations with my girlfriends that not enough women perform fellatio. As a woman who loves to give and receive, I want to share three tricks that, based on my experience, are fun for both parties and extremely satisfying for the guy: (1) The Hot Water BJ: Fill your mouth with hot (but not too hot) water, leaving room for the penis. Slowly create a vacuum by sucking on the tip of his erection and simultaneously slide it into your mouth. Hold the shaft steady with both hands. Have a towel handy and more hot water in a glass. Take your time; this one is tricky at first, but practice is a nice excuse. (2) The Vibrating BJ: Suck as you normally would, then apply a vibrator between your lower lip and chin. The harder you suck and press the vibrator, the more intensely he will feel the vibrations. (3) The Jacuzzi BJ: Begin with the Hot Water BJ, then add the vibrator. It's messy and complicated but well worth the effort once you get it down. I brag about these tricks because no one seems to have heard of them. I hope that will change now!—A.H., Cleveland, Ohio

*A thousand thanks. Sometimes this column writes itself.*

The men on both sides of my family are bald or balding, with the exception of my father, who went gray in his 20s. I'm now in my mid-20s and don't have a receding hairline like my cousins of the same age, but I am starting to see gray hairs. Does this mean they aren't going to fall out?—A.P., Cincinnati, Ohio

No, these tragedies are unrelated. Male pattern baldness, of which there are seven varieties, is caused by an androgen called dihydrotestosterone, which left unchecked stifles growth. Graying, scientists discovered in 2009, is caused by hydrogen peroxide produced by hair cells, which left unchecked bleaches the hair gray and then white. Most men start balding before they turn gray, so there may be hope for you. A common myth is that you inherit male pattern baldness from your maternal grandfather, but research has shown both parents contribute genes that are "necessary but not sufficient" to cause it. Scientists are investigating a number of counteroffensives. In December German researchers reported they had created the first artificial hair follicles from stem cells. Other scientists are working on tests to identify young men at high risk

**M**y boyfriend loves it when I'm on top, and I love seeing his face twist up every time I slide onto him. But no matter what position we're in, I can't manage to go fast enough to make him come. How can I thrust as fast as he does?—D.A., Seattle, Washington

No chance of that. Men are the undisputed champions of the pelvic thrust, which appears to be instinctual: Not only does every primate do it, it has been observed in patients having seizures, and some researchers claim a primitive form occurs when toddlers "hump" their mattress or the floor. (No one has figured out how to turn women into natural thrusters, but it has been accomplished in mice by damaging a sensory organ in their nose that doesn't exist in humans. The instinct is so strong in male rats they still thrust after being castrated.) To thrust faster, place your hands or elbows on the bed and raise your ass so you can move your hips more easily. Your boyfriend may not want speed, however, since guys tend to hit maximum power only when they're about to come. Try to provide unexpected pleasure by "milking" his erection, a.k.a. the squeeze box, a.k.a. a vagina job. Slide up and down while tensing your vaginal muscles as if trying to stop the flow of urine (done in sets when you're not having sex, these are known as Kegel exercises). He may not scream, but we know you'll enjoy his reaction.

so they can take preventive measures such as Rogaine or Propecia, currently the only drugs available to prevent or slow hair loss. If it's any comfort, it has been suggested that male pattern baldness evolved because fertile women associate it with maturity,

wisdom and nurturing. The women who aren't trying to get pregnant remain a challenge.

**R**ecently I bought a three-inch penis extender. I thought it might be too long, so I cut an inch off. I figured eight and a half inches would be a good start. I showed it to my wife, and she said, "You're not sticking that in me." The other night, she was in the mood but starting to have her period, so I told her I wanted to wear a condom. In the dark I rolled on the extension. She had three orgasms in 20 minutes; usually she has only two. The next morning I asked her if the sex was good, and she said, "It's always good." I told her I had used the extension. She didn't believe me and wanted to try it again. That night I put on the extension, but before I was in halfway she said it hurt. If she had such a great time when she thought it was my penis, why didn't she when she knew it wasn't? Before me she slept with eight or 10 guys, and at least one of them must have been larger than I am. Why do women lie? I have told her about my relationships with total honesty, and I thought she had been honest too.—W.D., Atlanta, Georgia

Where did this come from? Has your wife given any indication she's a size queen? If not, let's get a grip. When she didn't know about the extension she was turned on and wet, and when she knew about it she was not as turned on or as wet. Your erection is already on the high side of average and longer than the typical vagina, so a dick cap won't make any difference unless you're trying to ring a bell on her cervix. The reason a woman may enjoy a larger penis is not length but girth, which stimulates the clitoris. However, this can just as easily be accomplished with fingers, tongues and vibrators.

**D**o potential employers hold it against you if on your application you say it's not okay to contact a former boss?—S.C., Colorado Springs, Colorado

It will raise questions, but the only strategy is to be honest: If it comes up, explain that you and your boss didn't get along. Even if an

employer does call, many firms won't do more than confirm your past employment because they risk being sued if they give a bad review that keeps you from finding work. In 2008, for example, a New Jersey man who was fired by Best Buy and subsequently turned down for



TINA BERNING

jobs at two competitors sued after he created a fake e-mail account, pretended to be from Target and asked for a reference. The Best Buy human resources manager replied, "He was hired as GM and demoted after 12 months or so because he sucked. He is desperate for a job because supposedly his wife left him because he has no job. I would not touch him." A firm can also get in trouble for giving a glowing reference if you don't deserve it, such as when a hospital fired an anesthesiologist who had a drug problem but gave him a glowing send-off. Soon after another hospital hired him, he botched a simple procedure and left a patient in a vegetative state. When the second hospital sued the first, a federal court ruled it had no obligation to reveal the doctor's addiction; it just couldn't say anything untrue about him. Ask the HR department at your old company about its policy; this may not be an issue.

**A** couple of months ago my husband and I decided to swap with another couple. One of the ground rules was that it had to remain a group activity. About an hour after it was over, my husband and the other woman were missing. I found them in our bedroom, having sex. I felt as if I had caught him cheating. He apologized repeatedly and said he wouldn't have done it but he'd had too much to drink. Now I have trust issues, and I'm afraid it's ruining our relationship. Can you give me any advice on how to get over this?—L.M., Atlanta, Georgia

*You have every right to feel betrayed. But given your inexperience as swingers, and the combination of liquid courage and "I can't believe this is happening" horniness, we suggest you treat this as a pardonable first offense. (The other woman should also have known better, even if she and her husband had agreed on different rules.) Your husband needs to make this right with you, but it may be punishment enough that he ruined a good thing—how many men hear a partner scold them by saying "Don't ever fuck someone else unless I'm there"? We doubt you would be swinging if your husband had ever given you serious reason not to trust him.*

**H**ow many rings is too many? I wear one on each ring finger—a wedding ring and a ring I inherited from my grandfather. I am graduating with a master's degree in May and may get a class ring, but I've been told a man wearing three rings is odd. If three rings is okay, on which fingers should I wear them?—J.R., Elkridge, Maryland

*This is a matter of personal choice, but we'd say two is enough unless you have other rings with great stories, excepting any worn on pinkies or thumbs. While you have every reason to be proud of your accomplishment, a class ring should be worn only at graduation and postacademy events such as reunions or alumni gatherings. It's not everyday jewelry.*

**M**y wife of 25 years has human papillomavirus, and I assume I now have it too. Her doctor told her we should not have

oral sex until she is "clean," as HPV can cause throat cancer. I love to go down on her, but she refuses to let me. What are the chances oral sex will lead to cancer?—S.C., The Colony, Texas

*They're slim, but it's good to know the facts. Scientists have become concerned about HPV and oral sex because of a 2007 study that found the more oral-sex partners a person has in his or her lifetime, the greater the risk of developing throat cancer. While throat cancer is rare, the evidence suggests oral sex transmits the virus from genitals to mouth (and vice versa), where it can damage cells, which decades later may turn cancerous. That's why some health officials argue that young men as well as young women should be vaccinated against HPV before they become sexually active. It is a common predicament; three in four Americans under the age of 49 have had HPV at least once. So be cautious until your wife's body has cleared the virus, which usually happens naturally. You should also get tested. Don't count on warts to tell you if you've been infected; many types of HPV don't cause them. Even among those that do, the virus can be spread when warts aren't present. Confidential to R.S. in Atlanta: The virus can lie dormant for years, so an outbreak can't be taken as evidence of cheating.*

**I** read years ago that when being introduced to a woman, a man should never extend his hand for a shake but should wait for the woman to extend hers. Does this still hold true?—A.M., Columbia, South Carolina

*That rule has long been retired, though Emily Post's advice from 1922 that "a gentleman on the street never shakes hands with a lady without first removing his right glove" still seems like a good idea.*

**D**oes ejaculating slow down the process of getting bigger and stronger at the gym?—M.P., San Francisco, California

*Yes, but only if you stay home to masturbate instead of working out.*

**W**hat is the best way to secure your router?—R.L., St. Louis, Missouri

*Toss it in a lake and stay off the internet. At a minimum, stand up right now and change the default password. To access the control panel, open your browser and enter the address provided in your manual. Create a strong password, i.e., one with at least 10 characters that is not a dictionary word and is a combination of upper- and lowercase letters, numerals and symbols. Once you're inside, change the SSID name from the default to something unique, disable WAN management and UPnP, and create a WPA2-AES encryption key for the wireless connection with a password that has 40 or more completely random characters and contains no words. For more details and suggestions, visit the Wi-Fi Router Security Checklist by the helpful nerds at [jdpfu.com](http://jdpfu.com).*

**M**y husband and I have been married for four years and have two children. I

attend college full time. He whines and begs for sex every day. How can I get him to understand this is annoying and turns me off? I have told him that if he didn't beg, we would have a better sex life. It worked for a week. We had great sex three times. Then he went back to whining. He is driving me crazy. I miss good sex, but I have no desire when he acts this way.—K.J., Muskegon, Michigan

*Although this may be hard to imagine, your husband whines and begs because every time he sees you he imagines you naked, and then he wants to see you naked. His brain never says, "Now's a bad time" because for him, there is no bad time. If you're in a sour mood, sex will change that. If you're tired, sex will perk you up. If you're stressed, sex will help you relax. Sure, you had regular sex when he stopped begging, but you still decided when and where and so remained in control. Now, what if every time he asked, you at least gave him a hand job? What does that take, five minutes? We're not justifying his whining—besides the fact that it doesn't work, it reflects a certain immaturity, because a man with experience knows that sometimes you just have to find something else to do. (It helps to have other interests.) But it's a simple compromise. And based on the letters we receive, many women would love to have a husband who wants them night and day.*

**D**o condoms go bad? I know they can dry out, but if they have been sitting in my dresser and seem to be lubricated, can I use them for protection? I haven't had sex since breaking up with my girlfriend. Last night I brought home a hottie, but I noticed my condom had expired six months ago.—M.F., Lincoln, Nebraska

*Better to use an expired condom than no condom, especially if it doesn't feel brittle and the package still has that puff of air. But over months or years latex will deteriorate and become less elastic, meaning older condoms may break more easily. Condoms without spermicide will last four to five years; those with spermicide are good for two. This assumes that you don't store the condoms in direct sunlight or in temperatures above 100 degrees, including the heat from your ass if you stupidly keep any in your wallet. Welcome back to the game, cowboy; time to hit the drugstore.*

*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. Write the Playboy Advisor, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or send e-mail by visiting [playboyadvisor.com](http://playboyadvisor.com). The site also has links to download our greatest-hits e-book, Dear Playboy Advisor, and air times for the weekly Advisor Show on Sirius/XM 99.*



# NEW YORK PLAYBOY



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# PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: DEEPAK CHOPRA

*A candid conversation with the leading New Age thinker about living in the present, reversing aging, battling with skeptics and who's really twisted on Fox News*

The proverbial mountaintop looks a lot like a suburban golf resort. On the lush grounds of La Costa Resort and Spa in Carlsbad, California guys in Dockers and windbreakers practice their chip shots, oblivious to the procession of starry-eyed minions heading toward the Chopra Center for Wellbeing. Today is the final session of a weeklong *Seduction of Spirit* workshop full of meditation instruction, grinning silences and cosmic conversations with the man whose inspiration and words have brought the faithful together. Attendees paid \$2,775 each for the privilege of sitting at his feet.

Deepak Chopra has arguably been the most public face of the New Age movement in America. A physician, public speaker and spiritual advisor to celebrities like Michael Jackson, he is the author of 57 books (including the number one best-sellers *Ageless Body*, *Timeless Mind* and *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*), which together have sold more than 30 million copies. Drawing on elements of Eastern and Western spirituality, metaphysics, medicine and science, with dashes of self-help and happiness psychology, Chopra has become a sort of Lao-tzu for the iPod generation. His "simple yet powerful" principles mostly involve ridding oneself of negative emotions to transcend the obstacles that afflict body and mind. Strip away selfish conditioning, he says, and we can discover our true purpose in life. Skeptics

scoff at his fuzzy language and poke holes in the quantum theories he invokes, yet Chopra's message of hope spreads like galactic dust via book, blog, e-mail and Twitter feed.

Born 64 years ago in New Delhi, India to a prominent heart surgeon, Chopra thought he might write novels (as he now does) but ended up in medical school instead. Like so many ambitious Indians of his generation, he sought his fortune in America and was soon chief of staff at a prominent Boston hospital. Working too much, he numbed himself with cigarettes, coffee and alcohol but couldn't ignore the feeling that *Big Medicine* was only making patients sicker. His early writings on incorporating age-old practices such as ayurvedic medicine and meditation caught fire with readers looking for fresh answers on everything from insomnia and cancer to aging. Celebrities liked him, too: Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Jackie Onassis, George Harrison, Oprah Winfrey and Barack Obama all came calling.

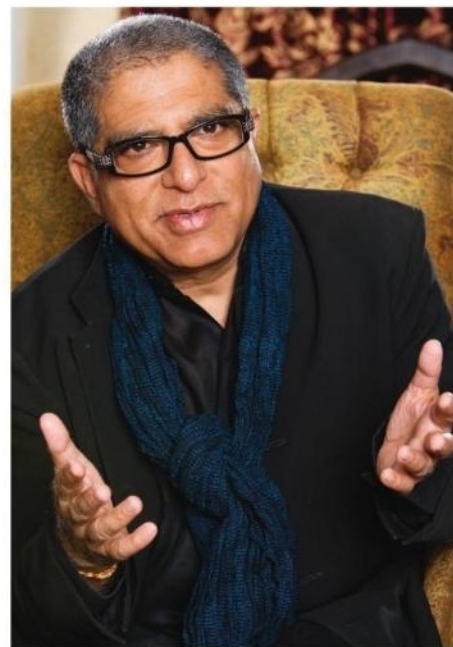
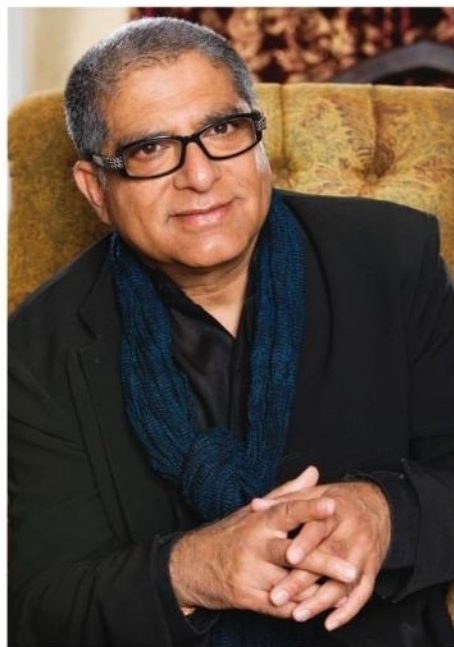
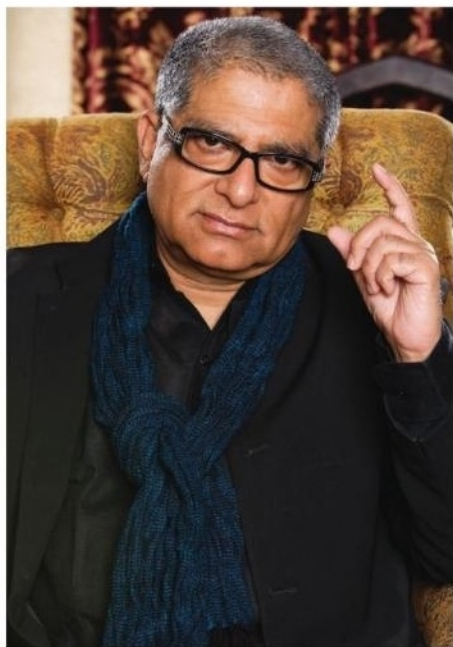
These days Chopra, married to Rita, his wife of more than 40 years, has two grown children and roams the globe as a highly paid ambassador for wellness and mindful living. Yet the first impression he made on Contributing Editor David Hochman, who last interviewed Cornel West and Michael Savage for *PLAYBOY*, was as "a little man with a bit of a paunch who didn't look up from his BlackBerry." But he soon

had Chopra's unwavering attention, in a wide-ranging chat in the Chopra Center offices that touched on life's biggest questions. Says Hochman, "Once he put down his phone, Deepak got down to business. 'What is life? What are its secrets and mysteries?' It was riveting."

**PLAYBOY:** People have looked to you for guidance on spirituality, health and happiness for 40 years. Don't you get tired of having to have all the answers?

**CHOPRA:** First of all, I don't think I have all the answers, but I enjoy contemplating and living the questions. I live, breathe and even think in my sleep about these ideas: the connection between mind, body and spirit, the true meaning of consciousness. I'm not alone in thinking about these concepts. I see a great longing in the world for self-knowledge and self-awareness. The only way to deepen understanding and deepen one's self-identity is to engage in reflective self-inquiry. Ask yourself, Who am I really? What is my true purpose? How can I live the best life imaginable? That type of self-reflection is the key to global transformation.

**PLAYBOY:** Isn't that New Age mind-set just a recipe for narcissism? Every town in America now has a yoga studio and a place to



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

"Drugs are not part of my life, but I have tried them all. I've done LSD. I've done mushrooms... everything. But all at a young age. I certainly don't regret it. I'd go so far as to say that drugs were a source of great joy to me."

"I don't invest and I don't save. I carry maybe \$200 and a credit card in my pocket. If you ask me to read a bank statement, I can't. I believe that when I die there won't be anything for anyone. I don't have that kind of mind."

"India is getting a false sense of pride because it made a nuclear bomb. Globally, yes, it's an economic superpower, but Indians are totally ignoring the fact that 30 percent of their children go to bed hungry—starving."

buy scented candles for meditation. But has any of that actually made us more compassionate or more peaceful as a society? **CHOPRA:** Our culture has become self-absorbed, and meditation, yoga and all that have played a part. To have perfect bodies and peaceful minds requires a good deal of self-focus. For the most part, people who follow this type of lifestyle are idealists. They want to bring peace to the world, they want to make war obsolete, they are committed to repairing the ecology and supporting racial equality, feminism and gay rights. The roots of that idealism surfaced in the 1960s with us baby boomers, of course, but it always had a shadow of narcissism.

I think we're always evolving, not just as individuals but as a society, as a human species. My sincere hope is that at some point we'll go beyond personal gratification and realize the true value of quieting the mind, of being good to the body, of relieving ourselves of stress and of paying attention to others and recognizing our inseparability from the rest of the world. We're in a time when half the world's population lives in radical poverty, which means less than \$2 a day, when conflict, war and terrorism abound everywhere in the world, when there is extreme social injustice and extreme economic disparities. If we're truly mindful we can begin to recognize and address these inequities.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's talk about that for a moment. These are uncertain times for many people and industries—for America itself. Is it a worthy goal to simply stay mindful of the present? In many ways not thinking carefully enough about the future is what got us into the financial crisis, the real estate mess and two agonizing wars.

**CHOPRA:** That's something people get confused about. Being mindful and being in the moment means not being distracted and not being overwhelmed by the melodrama and hysteria around you. It may be difficult to believe this, but present-moment awareness allows intuitive and creative solutions to emerge even in the midst of crisis. No crisis can be addressed at the level of consciousness in which it was created. What's happening in the country now is the result of our not being present to what is happening around us. Unfortunately it's also the weakness of our president. If he had been totally present to the immediate needs of the American people, we wouldn't have this crisis. Our president is an idealist and thinks long term. I totally support that. But people want short-term gratification.

**PLAYBOY:** So it's fair to say you're disappointed with President Obama?

**CHOPRA:** It's a sad state of affairs. I loved President Obama. I've met with him, I voted for him and I supported him, but I think he's ineffective at the moment. I mean, with all the support and the majority in Congress that he had, he couldn't get the health care bill passed comfortably! It's that way with all the things he

said he would do. He can't get rolling, he can't get the support. I think Obama should be just a one-term president.

**PLAYBOY:** Is there anything Obama can do to save himself?

**CHOPRA:** Well, I was with President Clinton at a private function a little while ago. He mentioned there are more job postings in the postrecession era in America today than at any other time in the history of the United States. But our workers don't have the skills. The jobs are in technology and other fields that require a high degree of education and training. One of the saddest commentaries on our time is that Americans have lost the kind of skills they had because we became complacent about everything. We no longer manufacture anything significant, notwithstanding GM's recent recovery. America's two biggest exports right now are Hollywood and weapons of mass destruction. Obama would do well to focus on creating different kinds of jobs that don't require advanced degrees. In the meantime, all the service jobs and information-technology jobs are going outside the country.

**PLAYBOY:** Our losses are India's gain, in

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*Being in the moment  
means not being distracted by  
the melodrama and hysteria  
around you. Present-moment  
awareness allows solutions  
to emerge.*

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other words. Do you think you would have left India to come to the United States if you were starting out today?

**CHOPRA:** Probably not. In fact, Indians are now returning to India. It's become fashionable. Even though I'm an American citizen and I relate more to being here than anywhere else, I think of myself as a citizen of the globe with an American passport. But I'm very intrigued by what has happened in India over the past few decades. It's exciting, but India also faces enormous challenges.

**PLAYBOY:** What are India's biggest challenges right now?

**CHOPRA:** Overcoming hubris is a big one. India is getting a false sense of pride because it made a nuclear bomb. India is getting a false sense of pride because the middle class is expanding dramatically. Globally, yes, it's an economic superpower, but Indians are totally ignoring the fact that 30 percent of their children go to bed hungry—*starving*. They are ignoring the fact that 300 million people still live in abysmal poverty and there's still a lot of communal tension and violence. India has huge problems.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's come back to America for

a minute. Why do you think there are so many broken, psychologically damaged people out there? Many of them pick up your books for comfort and guidance. In that way, is your success somehow a sign we've failed as a society?

**CHOPRA:** I've wondered about that so much. It's something that has bothered me all these years. Why are there so many unhappy people? As I said, America has everything to offer. There's so much opportunity. It's still the land everybody criticizes but wants to come to, and I believe the American dream still exists. But unless you're lucky, maybe like I lucked out, people are set up for disappointment because we are a dysfunctional society. I've wondered about this a lot and I have a radical theory about it. My theory is that for more than a century, America has been at war. First it was the Civil War, then World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam war, the Iraq war and then the Afghanistan war. We are a country at war with the world and at war with itself. People will say, "Oh, that was the great American thing, to save the whole world." What has resulted is a lot of men being absent, dysfunctional families and children growing up with insecurities. When you grow up in a society at war with itself, you come of age with uncertainties and fears, and the result is that many people are lost.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you ever feel guilty that you've made so much money selling your books, DVDs and workshops to these lost souls? Isn't enlightenment supposed to be free?

**CHOPRA:** We live in a society where making a huge income from selling cigarettes or alcohol or even drugs, pornography and weapons is totally legit. But selling knowledge, which helps people, is somehow considered not legitimate. I hope the day will come when this will be the most enlightened way of making money. In America you never apologize about being successful. I'm never going to apologize about being successful. Having written 57 books—18 that hit *The New York Times* best-seller list—why should I apologize? Because they're popular books? There must be a need for them, right? Unless I'm fooling all the people all the time. I do the work I do with a great passion and a great sense of responsibility, so I'll never apologize for being successful. Having said that, we have 65 people working here at the Chopra Center. At times, when we're doing a course, we have 100 people working here. They get salaries, benefits and insurance. What I earn from the center covers one third of my overhead, so I subsidize two thirds of what happens here.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you suggesting you're not making any money?

**CHOPRA:** No, there's enormous revenue from the books. I've hit the jackpot as far as selling books is concerned. That's where my income comes from. But I put it back into the business, and what's left I put into my foundation. I don't have any saved money.



**PLAYBOY:** You have no savings? What about investments?

**CHOPRA:** I don't have that kind of mind. I don't invest and I don't save. I carry maybe \$200 and a credit card in my pocket. If you ask me to read a bank statement, I can't. I believe that when I die there won't be anything for anyone. In the meanwhile, until I'm dead, my wife is totally taken care of from my royalties. My children are self-sufficient, so I don't need to give them any money. I keep about \$30,000 in my account and the rest goes to keeping the operation running.

**PLAYBOY:** What motivated you to go into the guru business?

**CHOPRA:** [Laughs] My initial motivation as a doctor was to try to figure out what was going on with the body. I would see patients who had the same illness, saw the same physician and got the same treatment, yet had completely different outcomes. Why? What was going on? Some of those patients thought differently about their illness, some had different expectations or outlooks. I started recording their stories and soon realized that every patient's story and outlook influences his or her biological response. The mind has an influence on the body, something nobody was talking about at that time. I collected these stories, sent them to about 30 medical journals and was roundly rejected. They didn't want anecdotes; they wanted authentic research. So I sent the stories to publishers but didn't get anywhere in publishing, either. I didn't have an agent. I found a little ad in *The New York Times* one day that said I could get 100 self-published books from Vantage Books for \$5,000. I sent off the stories and a check, and my first book was born. It was called *Creating Health: The Psychophysiological Connection* and it was published in 1985.

**PLAYBOY:** Instant success?

**CHOPRA:** Not exactly. I was in Boston at that time, doing my residency and other things. I knew a woman who was intrigued by the book's ideas: how meditating can help people, the importance of eating right, developing a sense of equanimity and compassion. She was doing her Ph.D. at the Harvard Divinity School and persuaded the manager at the Harvard bookstore, the Harvard Coop, to put the book in the window. Some agent picked it up, called me two days later and said, "Why don't you have a publisher?" I said, "Nobody would publish it." She said, "How much did you spend publishing this?" I said, "\$5,000." She said, "I'll get you \$5,000 from Houghton Mifflin." Next thing you know, it's a national best-seller called *Creating Health*.

**PLAYBOY:** What were people responding to?

**CHOPRA:** Readers intuitively felt that here was an answer they couldn't find in traditional medicine—that our mind, our emotions, our behavior, our social interactions and our relationships affect our biology. People may have understood that on some level, but they wanted to know more. I was

suddenly inundated with requests to do speeches, workshops, more books.

**PLAYBOY:** You've also faced criticism. The medical and scientific community has slammed you from the beginning for being soft on evidence and heavy on vague promises and pseudoscience.

**CHOPRA:** There's been huge criticism. Huge. But that's because I've gone out on a limb, whereas other people have played it safe. In 1989 I wrote the book *Quantum Healing*, in which I began speculating on the healing power of the body. My idea was that intelligence exists everywhere in our bodies, in each of our cells, and as such, each cell knows how to heal itself. By using methods like meditation, we have the potential to defeat cancer and heart disease and even slow the aging process. We can think ourselves sick and think ourselves well again. I really believe that, but again, because much of the book was anecdotal, the science and medical people took me to task.

**PLAYBOY:** Have advances in science proven your early speculations correct?

**CHOPRA:** In many instances, yes. Since I started down this road I've been amazed by what we've discovered. The EEGs of

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*My theory is that for more than a century, America has been at war. What has resulted is a lot of men being absent and children growing up with insecurities.*

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people in meditative states repeatedly show increases in alpha waves [indicating wakeful relaxation], which proves we have the power to change our bodies with our minds. More recently it's been proved that prolonged periods of meditation, like you see with monks in monasteries, can change the brain permanently. The fight-or-flight centers in the brain that normally light up to trigger alarm and anxiety are quieted. In a normal waking state our brain waves are at a level of 13 to 30 cycles per second, but these monks were able to slow their brain waves to between four and eight cycles. That doesn't mean they're duller to the world. It means they're more quietly alert in a way that's permanently hardwired in their consciousness. What that means to me is that all our thoughts have an effect on our biology, and that's reflected in our state of consciousness, our blood pressure, our hormone levels and our body temperature. If we teach patients in hospitals how to relax—to breathe properly, to meditate, to do some passive movements or even bedside yoga—we can get rid of what most drugs are prescribed for, which is insomnia, nausea, constipation, anxiety and pain.

That's 80 percent of what's prescribed in a hospital, and it's unnecessary.

That said, I'm less of a fundamentalist than I used to be. I'm not so fanatically attached to every interpretation I may have espoused years ago. My books have matured. But nothing I said about aging or biological markers of aging or the fact that there is such a thing as spontaneous healing, that the body has self-repair mechanisms, has been disproved. In fact, if anything, we know more about it.

**PLAYBOY:** You've had a public flap recently with Michael Shermer of the Skeptics Society and physicist Leonard Mlodinow, who accuse you of misusing terms from quantum physics, such as describing consciousness as being "nonlocal." They say your terms are fuzzy and contend there's no evidence for God, the soul, consciousness or human love that can't be explained by citing brain chemicals such as oxytocin and adrenaline.

**CHOPRA:** Oxytocin is not love or spirituality. It's the measure of love and spirituality. But that's not the point here. The skeptics are all angry people. They're mostly high school teachers with old science behind them. And now they have a few champions such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. Leonard Mlodinow is co-author with Stephen Hawking of a recent book that refutes the existence of God. They all love to call me the woo-woo master, or Dr. Woo, and I admit, they did anger me. But I decided to reach out to them and engage with these issues. I wrote to Leonard and said, "It seems like you know your mathematics, but conceptually you and I have a lot of disagreements. You definitely don't understand consciousness. So why don't we get together and hang out, and you teach me physics and I'll teach you consciousness?"

**PLAYBOY:** Have you done it?

**CHOPRA:** Yes! We're doing a book together. It's about the things that physics and spirituality can agree on and what physics and spirituality cannot agree on. It's called *War of the Worlds*. It's a big book. We've got a multimillion-dollar contract for it. It's going to be huge.

**PLAYBOY:** Do your differences just come down to faith? In other words, is it that you have faith and they don't?

**CHOPRA:** No, it's not a faith issue at all. It's about consciousness. The fact is, without consciousness you and I couldn't have this conversation, right? Consciousness is what makes perception, thinking and emotions possible, and conversation, cognition, personal relationships. In the absence of consciousness you're dead. They don't even acknowledge consciousness. They believe consciousness is an emergent property of evolution and a product of the brain—just as acid is a product of your stomach or bile is a product of your gallbladder.

I believe there's a lot of evidence that consciousness itself is what drives evolution. Consciousness is what creates our biology. Consciousness is responsible for our perception. It's not just my

idiosyncratic way of thinking. The fact is, this is part of the perennial philosophies of the wisdom traditions. It's what Emerson, Thoreau, Buddha and Confucius believed and what many modern scientists believe. A physicist named Henry Stapp at Berkeley says that every choice we make influences the future evolution of the universe. These are major concepts that these guys who work in academic institutions are waiting to publish. The problem is, they need to secure their next grant and want to get tenure, so they don't have time for metaphysics or philosophy.

But the debates on these big questions continue. Do we have the ability to influence the future evolution of the cosmos? How does our understanding of consciousness as pure potentiality enhance our capacity for intuition, creativity, conscious choice making, healing and the awakening of dormant potentials such as nonlocal communication and nonlocal sensory experience? Major scientists from Stanford, Yale and other places are working from a rigorous research angle to get answers to these uncertainties. I'm talking every day with Stuart Hameroff, a physician who studies the mechanics of consciousness. He's a collaborator with Roger Penrose, who shared the Wolf Prize in physics with Stephen Hawking. All these people are taking the study of consciousness very seriously. Ten years ago it would have been called pseudoscience. Some mainstream researchers who have not kept up may still call it that, but in my opinion those people are frozen in an obsolete worldview.

**PLAYBOY:** What if the skeptics turn out to be right? Are you genuinely open to that possibility?

**CHOPRA:** I'm not sure we'll ever have firm answers to these questions, frankly. But the skeptics are entitled to their views and I'm entitled to disagree with them. I'm learning a lot from Mlodinow. He's a smart guy with a particular interpretation of quantum mechanics that has many adherents. Ultimately, though, we may need to agree to disagree.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's change course. Is it true you used to party with George Harrison?

**CHOPRA:** George was a sweet person. And yes, we did some stuff together, like bhang. You know what bhang is? It's ganja. It's similar to cannabis. We drank it together in India. He was a lovely man. We listened to music together. We would discuss everything from creativity to spirituality to the divine. He had his own visions of other realms of existence and was more of a literalist than I was, but he was a lot of fun to be with.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you still a cannabis fan?

**CHOPRA:** Drugs are not part of my life, but I have tried them all. I've done LSD. At 17 it led me to my first spiritual awakening. I've done mushrooms...everything. But all at a young age. I certainly don't regret it. It gave me a glimpse into a different reality. I recognized that I can actually navigate these realms in my

consciousness. I'd go so far as to say that drugs were a source of great joy to me, great nourishment and the source of all my writing. So much of what I've written comes from my being able to go into other states of consciousness.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you tried ayahuasca?

**CHOPRA:** [Hesitates] I have.

**PLAYBOY:** How was it?

**CHOPRA:** [Laughs] Fantastic. Ayahuasca in Peru is part of a ritual with shamans. What happens is there's a very clear-cut dissociation of your consciousness from your body and from your mind, and very gradually you lose the well-defined edges of your body. It all seems to merge into one wholeness. It can be very scary because you start to lose the boundaries of yourself and they start to extend. But as you stay in it, you become extremely joyful and euphoric because you feel you're literally unbounded. This was many years ago. Fortunately, now I can go there through intention and meditation—and without drugs.

**PLAYBOY:** We notice you've been glancing at your BlackBerry and iPad throughout this interview. What's up with that? Are you addicted?

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*My wife thinks I'm a good husband. In the West, marriage can be a self-indulgent partnership. Very selfish—a lot is expected. We have none of that drama.*

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**CHOPRA:** I admit it's a problem. If I get an e-mail, I feel the need to respond immediately. I'm working on it, but I have to say it's definitely something I struggle with. I'm a bit of a compulsive personality.

**PLAYBOY:** You also blog obsessively and post frequently on Twitter and Facebook. What's all this distraction doing on a meta-level to consciousness in our society?

**CHOPRA:** First of all, I love blogging. I love the immediacy. I love the reach. I love the instant connection with so many people. It's vast and it's fast. But the impact remains to be seen. If it blunts our emotional intelligence or our face-to-face, eye-to-eye, body-to-body contact—and we're certainly heading in that direction—it will be extremely detrimental. On the other hand, if you can integrate with it, it's an amazing technology to reach a critical mass of consciousness. I personally love participating in it.

**PLAYBOY:** Let's get practical for a moment. If someone has never meditated before and wants to try it, give us a quick primer on what to do.

**CHOPRA:** Sit down, close your eyes, put your attention in your heart and slowly

ask yourself a few questions. Who am I? What do I want? Do I have a purpose? How do I want to make a contribution? What's a meaningful relationship? What do I look for in my good friends? Do I have any mentors, heroes in history, in mythology? What inspires me? What's a joyful moment for me? What's a peak experience? I think it's very important to do that kind of contemplative inquiry. But then after you've done that, let it all go and either observe your breath—the simplest kind of meditation is just observing your breath—or mentally observe the sensations in your body for about 15, 20 minutes. You might get distracted. Come back to the breath or the sensations. Your mind will quiet down. Occasionally you'll experience silence within, and those are moments of extreme peace and joy.

That said, don't stress too much about whether you're doing it correctly or not. Assume you're doing it correctly and don't look forward to any flashy experiences in meditation. If Jesus Christ shows up or suddenly the heavens explode, just come back to observing the breath and your thoughts. That's the best thing you can do because every experience we have is just another thought. There's nothing more to it. But there are benefits in terms of the gradual expansion of consciousness.

**PLAYBOY:** What's the best way to ensure a good night's sleep?

**CHOPRA:** Make sure you're busy during the day, not only physically but mentally. If you are dynamic and active during the day, your sleep will be restful. It's that simple. When people say they haven't slept for a long time or have chronic insomnia and have tried everything, I force them to stay awake for 48 hours, even 56 hours. That completely resets their biological clock.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you say 56 hours?

**CHOPRA:** It's a very unusual way of getting people to sleep. But in fact it forcibly resets the circadian rhythm. I've never seen it fail. You see, whatever you struggle against, it's worth considering the opposite approach. If you battle insomnia by trying to go to sleep, you'll still be an insomniac. But if you don't struggle against insomnia and just stay awake, you'll go to sleep. It's the same with dieting. If you force yourself to diet, you'll never lose weight.

**PLAYBOY:** What is the key to a healthy diet?

**CHOPRA:** Try to avoid things that come in a can or have a label. Don't adjust your diet because you think something's good for you. That won't work for lasting changes. Instead, listen to your body and be easy about it. If you fight your food vices, they'll spin around and destroy you.

**PLAYBOY:** What are your food demons?

**CHOPRA:** I don't really have any.

**PLAYBOY:** Nothing? Come on! Don't you ever sneak a Snickers bar?

**CHOPRA:** No, I don't. Not because I think it's unhealthy; I just don't have a taste for it.

**PLAYBOY:** Ice cream?

**CHOPRA:** I don't have a taste for it.

**PLAYBOY:** Chocolate?

**CHOPRA:** I don't have a taste for it.

**PLAYBOY:** Pizza?

**CHOPRA:** I don't have a taste for it.

**PLAYBOY:** Wow, you're really good.

**CHOPRA:** I have two or three cups of coffee a day. That's my vice. But I'm a vegetarian and I eat healthy foods.

**PLAYBOY:** Now, don't be offended, but you do have a bit of a paunch.

**CHOPRA:** [Sighs] Yes, I do.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you exercise?

**CHOPRA:** I exercise like crazy! I mean, today I exercised one and a half hours. But sometimes I am in a hotel and haven't eaten all day, so at night, if I have a sandwich or bread of any kind, I will gobble it up. [puts hands on his gut] But this is going to go, for sure, very soon.

**PLAYBOY:** Gut or no gut, you certainly attract beautiful, fit, healthy women to your lectures and events. Has it been hard to resist the temptation of gorgeous women throwing themselves at you?

**CHOPRA:** There's an interesting mind-set for dealing with this. If you want to keep women interested and exuberant and lively, the worst thing you can do is have sex with them. There's nothing more interesting than manifesting a different type of energy. That doesn't mean suppression. You can be aware of your sexuality, but it's interesting to keep it in reserve. Once people have sex the whole dimension changes.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you been a good husband?

**CHOPRA:** It depends on your cultural conditioning.

**PLAYBOY:** [Laughs]

**CHOPRA:** My wife thinks I'm a good husband. But in America and in the West, marriage can be a self-indulgent partnership. Very selfish—a lot is expected. You know, you can't be talking to another person. There's a lot of jealousy. We have none of that drama. In our marriage we are both extremely secure and mature. That means there's a sense of complete caring but complete detachment at the same time. I'm not constantly trying to be in surveillance of where my wife is or what she's doing, and neither is she. But when we are together we have the best time in the world. I think the secret to a good marriage is it's better to be friends than lovers.

**PLAYBOY:** We were intrigued by your provocative update of the Kama Sutra, the thousand-year-old Indian sex manual. What inspired you to publish that?

**CHOPRA:** First let me say that more than anyone, PLAYBOY has understood the mind-body connection. Its entire business model is based on the knowledge that images in consciousness arouse biological responses. Many people avoid the topic of sex in our culture. Over the years people have asked me every question imaginable about life and beyond but very few questions about sex. I thought it was time to focus on what is really the most powerful of human forces. Anything that's alive has sexual energy. But in the West, sex and spirit have been tragically divorced. The

flesh is sinful and profane, and the spirit is sacred and divine.

**PLAYBOY:** You write that "sex is freedom." What do you mean by that?

**CHOPRA:** Sex is transcendence as meditation is transcendence. If you're really alive to your sexuality, if you let go during the sexual experience, you lose track of time. Your ego is not there. There is a sense of vulnerability, surrender, mystery, joy. It is freedom in that sense. It also influences your biology. For instance, pornography may be one of the best ways to keep your hormones going—better than taking testosterone, for sure. Miss March will get the hormones marching and ordering organs to stand tall and erect. Why is consciousness such a mystery? Every state is reflected in the body—anger, fear, love, compassion, the thrill of adventure, the excitement of discovery. Look what happens when you suppress sexuality. There's so much of that, particularly around religion. As soon as you suppress it, you create disasters.

**PLAYBOY:** We've certainly seen that with the Catholic Church. Do you think the church will ultimately survive its endless sex scandals?

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*Pornography may be one of the best ways to keep your hormones going—better than taking testosterone. As soon as you suppress sexuality, you create disasters.*

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**CHOPRA:** It's the hypocrisy I worry about. If it were just saying sexuality or homosexuality is fine, there would be no problems. But condemning certain types of sexuality as sinful while its own clergy is hiding pedophiles, that's the height of hypocrisy.

**PLAYBOY:** Eastern religions aren't any more tolerant of homosexuality and premarital sex.

**CHOPRA:** All religions are hypocritical.

**PLAYBOY:** Do we need organized religion?

**CHOPRA:** [Waves hand dismissively] No. Organized religion is all corrupt. It's just a cult with a large following. Get a large enough following and you can call yourself a religion, and then it becomes all about control and power mongering, corruption and money. We don't need mediators to experience God.

**PLAYBOY:** So you do believe in God?

**CHOPRA:** I do not believe in God as a dead white male or as God in the sky. In fact, I used to be an atheist until I discovered I was God. I think of God as the creative and evolutionary principle and impulse in the universe that becomes self-aware in the human nervous system. Chemicals and hormones are the mechanisms through

which this principle expresses itself in a biological system. However, I do believe in the divine as a feminine energy rather than a predatory, masculine energy. For evolutionary reasons, men have been predators and women have been nurturers, and I think of God as more of a nurturing force. For every single egg there are 250 million sperm. Unlike God, men are dispensable. Unlike divine energy, men are promiscuous, whereas women are not. You need nine months in the womb to come out. Patience and acceptance—that's God. When you understand the biology of relationships you are also more tolerant and forgiving of the behaviors people indulge in. Divine intelligence is nurturing, affectionate, tender, intuitive, sensitive, loving and compassionate.

**PLAYBOY:** You're a pretty earnest fellow. What makes you laugh?

**CHOPRA:** Jon Stewart, definitely. Stephen Colbert. Conan O'Brien is fantastic.

**PLAYBOY:** I'm guessing you're not a Fox News fan then?

**CHOPRA:** Fox News caters to the basest instincts of our collective consciousness. In Eastern terms I'd say it's stuck at the first chakra, which is the fight-or-flight response and everything that goes with it—you know, fear mongering, influence peddling, cronyism among the extreme right wing. I've been on Bill O'Reilly's show a few times. He's always respectful to me. The first time I went on I said, "If you interrupt me or raise your voice, I'm going to walk out." And he didn't. I think he's smart and pretends to be a bigot, but he's not so much of a bigot. On the other hand, Sean Hannity is a bigot and is not smart. And I totally can't take Rush Limbaugh.

**PLAYBOY:** When you look at the bookshelves today, you see dozens of books on seeking happiness and the science of happiness. You wrote one called *The Happiness Prescription*. Is being happy all the time a worthy goal?

**CHOPRA:** Yes, it's better to be happy than to be miserable. Of course it's also important to understand the true nature of happiness, to realize that personal pleasure brings only transient happiness. Only meaning and contribution and purpose can give you lasting fulfillment.

**PLAYBOY:** What's the secret to a happy life?

**CHOPRA:** The secret to a happy life is relationships, nurturing relationships—people you can share a love with and people you can help grow in one way or another. Now as I'm getting older, I find myself most joyful when I'm with my grandkids. It's interesting. I never thought I was that kind of person. But with a child, I can go see *The Lion King* for the seventh time or go to the Museum of Natural History for the 50th time and never get bored.

**PLAYBOY:** Who's the happiest person you know?

**CHOPRA:** The Dalai Lama is the real deal. He loves everything. He's authentically who he is. He never gets upset. He's not even mad at the Chinese. If you ask him

he says, “No. What they do is very upsetting, but I’m not mad at them.”

**PLAYBOY:** Are you sure he’s human?

**CHOPRA:** He’s definitely human. I remember we were with him in London and he ordered bacon and eggs for breakfast and everybody went crazy because they don’t realize that Tibetans are not vegetarians. He looked around because he knew he was being a bit provocative, but we all just started to laugh.

**PLAYBOY:** Who does Deepak Chopra call when he’s feeling down? Dr. Phil? Tony Robbins? Oprah?

**CHOPRA:** [Laughs] I don’t feel down, honestly. I can say that.

**PLAYBOY:** Oh please! There’s never been a moment when you thought, Woe is me, my last book didn’t sell so well?

**CHOPRA:** No. I just do what I do.

**PLAYBOY:** If someone is facing a daunting medical diagnosis, what questions should they be asking?

**CHOPRA:** We’re in a privileged situation because of the internet. As soon as you get a diagnosis, google all the information you can about it and see what treatments are necessary and what ones are not. Because there will be a lot of unnecessary treatments, tests and procedures if you simply put yourself at the mercy of the medical system. You have a little chest pain and the next thing you know you’ve had an EKG, a 24-hour heart monitor, a stress test and, if you’re really unlucky, an unnecessary angiogram or angioplasty and maybe even surgery. Doctors are not bad people, but never forget that the medical industry is a business motivated by profit, and just like with anything else you pay for, you have choices. The only way to make smart choices is by educating yourself first and not being passive with your care.

**PLAYBOY:** Can alternative medicines such as ayurveda cure cancer?

**CHOPRA:** What ayurvedic medicine or any form of holistic medicine does is help restore self-repair mechanisms. You fall down, you injure yourself, you have a clotting response—otherwise you’d bleed to death. The body knows how to cure itself. And what we learn from the wisdom traditions, whether it’s ayurveda or something else, is they restore self-repair, or homeostasis, as we call it. Is that enough to cure cancer or infection? I would say it’s enough in many cases to make you less susceptible to these illnesses. Are there cures? Well, you talk to any physician, there are what they call spontaneous remissions. They don’t know what happens. Spontaneous remissions occur in all kinds of illnesses, including cancer. Prostate cancer, for example, can go into remission. Through exercise, diet, meditation and healthy relationships you can change the genes’ behavior. For heart disease there are 500 genes you can change through behavior. For coronary artery disease, with four months of exercise, meditation, a good diet, good sleep and healthy relationships, you can make changes. These studies are not

published, but the news is encouraging.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you still feel you have an ageless body and a timeless mind?

**CHOPRA:** Absolutely. The biological markers of aging are extremely flexible. I bet if you took my blood pressure, examined my immune system and my hormone levels, I’m biologically not over 35. And I feel that. Just this morning I’ve already been to the gym, I’ve done my basic yoga, I’ve done my meditation and I’m all set for the day. I’m a happy camper. I have no anxiety. I enjoy what I’m doing. I think this is possible for anyone. But we live in a society that perpetuates anxiety, stress and fear and even motivates behavior change through fear. If you don’t lower your cholesterol you’re going to get a heart attack! If you don’t get a colonoscopy you might have cancer! If you motivate people through fear, they’re going to die faster. Even if they change—if they stop smoking, lose weight and lower their cholesterol—they’re probably still going to die faster because fear creates adrenaline and cortisol and has its own biology.

**PLAYBOY:** What happens to us after we die? Will Deepak Chopra still exist somehow?

**CHOPRA:** There is no such thing as Deepak

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*A person’s identity is a socially induced hallucination. There’s no such thing as a person. There’s only a bundle of consciousness that’s constantly in flux.*

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Chopra. What I am is a constantly transforming bundle of memories, impulses, desires, imagination and creativity. But there’s no permanence to me, even now. I mean, if I look back at the Deepak who was a teenager, he was a different person. In fact, I have very little to do with that person. When I look at Deepak the resident and intern who was smoking two packs of cigarettes a day and getting sloshed on weekends, I can’t relate to that person. The fact that you think you are a person is a socially induced hallucination.

**PLAYBOY:** Say that one more time.

**CHOPRA:** A person’s identity is a socially induced hallucination. There’s no such thing as a person. There’s only a bundle of consciousness that’s constantly in flux. That’s the value of what I do and what I teach and what I honestly know and believe. Once you get rid of the person, you realize there’s a deeper identity that’s inseparable from all that exists and that can’t be destroyed. Once you go to that deeper identity, which is more transpersonal and even transcendent, then you tap into the spontaneous expression of what I’ll call platonic values—truth, goodness, beauty, harmony,

love, compassion, joy, understanding, forgiveness. These spiritual values are not commands or rules of morality; they’re expressions of your true identity.

**PLAYBOY:** How do you know your true identity when you see it?

**CHOPRA:** You just know. There’s much more peace and detachment from trivial and mundane things. There’s more compassion. There’s more love. There’s a greater desire to help. There’s loss of fear. There’s a complete understanding of death. You’re easy.

**PLAYBOY:** So you’re not scared of dying?

**CHOPRA:** Not at all. I’ve worked hard on eliminating fear from my life. As I’ve gotten older I’ve lost the fear of death. What could be bigger? If you lose the fear of death, then you lose all fears, because all fear is the fear of death in disguise. It’s the fear of letting go. It’s the fear of stepping into the unknown.

**PLAYBOY:** What do you hope your legacy will be?

**CHOPRA:** Easy come, easy go. I honestly mean that.

**PLAYBOY:** Easy come, easy go?

**CHOPRA:** That’s where I am in my present stage of development. We take ourselves so seriously and yet we’re gone in the blink of an eye. I recently took my son to the place in India where I’d like my ashes to be scattered. It’s a place called Haridwar, and it’s where I scattered the ashes of my own father recently. When you go there you open the registry and see that your grandfather had visited and your great-grandfather and your great-great-grandfather. In three generations, it’s as if you never existed.

And yet we are timeless. It can be mathematically proven that right now you have in your body a million atoms that were once the body of Jesus Christ, the Buddha and Genghis Khan. In just the past three weeks, a quadrillion atoms have gone through your body that have gone through the body of every other living species on this planet. We are not our body and mind. There’s a spiritual essence that transcends the activity of the present moment. Part of you never dies, because it was never born. It’s outside time, outside space. That’s very comforting. It’s a kind of universal identity.

In the meantime, the highest form of intelligence you can have is to observe yourself. Let it go at that. You don’t need to judge, you don’t need to analyze, you don’t even need to change. This is the key to life: the ability to reflect, the ability to know yourself, the ability to pause for a second before reacting automatically. If you can truly know yourself, you will begin the journey of transformation.

As human beings we have unlimited potential and imagination. The worst thing you can do is be a conformist and buy into conformity. It’s the worst possible thing. It’s better to be outrageous. It’s better to hang out with the sages, the people open to possibilities, even the psychotics. You never know where you’ll find the geniuses of our society.



Truly Unique



Stauer  
1930  
AUTOMATIC  
21 JEWELS

## Time travel at the speed of a 1935 Speedster?

The 1930s brought unprecedented innovation in machine-age technology and materials. Industrial designers from the auto industry translated the principles of aerodynamics and streamlining into everyday objects like radios and toasters. It was also a decade when an unequalled variety of watch cases and movements came into being. In lieu of hands to tell time, one such complication, called a jumping mechanism, utilized numerals on a disc viewed through a window. With its striking resemblance to the dashboard gauges and radio dials of the decade, the jump hour watch was indeed "in tune" with the times!

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*True to Machine Art esthetics, the sleek brushed stainless steel case is clear on the back, allowing a peek at the inner workings.*

jumping complication). The stainless steel 1 1/2" case is complemented with a black alligator-embossed leather band. The band is 9 1/2" long and will fit a 7-8 1/2" wrist.

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# HOW THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER BROKE

# THE JOHN EDWARDS-RIELLE HUNTER STORY

THAT NO ONE ELSE WOULD TOUCH, ALTERED A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND EARNED JOURNALISTIC CREDIBILITY OVERNIGHT

# TABLOID TAKEDOWN

BY HOWARD KURTZ

**O**n the chilly afternoon of December 3, 2010, Barry Levine was trying to write the final chapter in the scandal that had come to define the *National Enquirer*.

For three long years, ever since the tabloid disclosed that John Edwards was having an affair with his campaign videographer, the paper's executive editor had been consumed by the story. Levine

viewed Elizabeth Edwards as the woeful victim of her philandering husband, her declining health a sad footnote to John's betrayal. Now Levine was about to take a step that seemed downright ghoulish: asking her to confirm her imminent death.

After two weeks of reporting, the paper had learned that Elizabeth was about to abandon her valiant struggle against cancer. Levine had a source in North Carolina sign legal documents agreeing to testify in court if the paper was sued. His assistant sent Elizabeth's camp an e-mail informing a spokeswoman that "the *Enquirer* will report Elizabeth has told close friends she's giving up on further treatments to sustain her

life.... Please kindly attempt to provide any comment by noon EST, Monday, December 6."

That Monday Elizabeth Edwards decided to preempt the paper that had turned her into an object of national sympathy and ridicule by exposing her family's darkest secrets. The 61-year-old woman posted her own statement on Facebook, implicitly announcing that the end was near and offering "love and gratitude" to her supporters. The next day, she was dead.

The *Enquirer*, which had gone to press the night before, was stuck with an out-of-date headline based on an unnamed friend quoting her as being "ready to die." And the paper couldn't resist adding, "In a final stab to her heart, as Elizabeth was hospitalized, [John] spent Thanksgiving with his mistress and their toddler daughter Quinn."

Edwards had fumbled away his political future, his credibility and his marriage, but Levine was not ready to move on. A balding man with a soft voice and a hard edge, he had helped guide the supermarket weekly to its greatest triumph, the exposure and humiliation of a presidential candidate and the



Rielle Hunter (left), the most famous other woman in recent Elizabeth's history. At Edwards's December funeral (right), John Edwards trails behind the casket carrying his popular and long-suffering wife.





# WOULD EDWARDS GO TO JAIL? WOULD HE TESTIFY ABOUT THE SEX TAPE? DID HUNTER BELIEVE HE WOULD MARRY HER?

revelation of his, in tabloid parlance, "love child." The series of exclusives had put the *Enquirer* in contention for a Pulitzer Prize and won it grudging respect from the mainstream media, which had long denigrated the paper as a slimy bottom-feeder.

But Levine wouldn't let it drop. He remained in hot pursuit as federal investigators examined whether Edwards had misspent campaign funds on his mistress, Rielle Hunter. If Edwards tried to pick up a woman in a bar, the *Enquirer* was there to blow the whistle.

Why the obsessive pursuit? The answer provides a clue to what drives this oddball collection of journalistic cowboys. They are addicted to the thrill of the chase, whether the story is major or marginal, whether the quarry is a big-time politician or a small-time celebrity. It's no accident the same cast of characters busted Tiger Woods for the first of his multiple mistresses, sending the golfer's career into a tailspin, yet it also ran a weak, unconfirmed report that Sarah Palin "feared" her

Whatever the paper's excesses, what its staff does for a living no longer seems so alien to the mainstream news organizations that are increasingly encroaching on its tabloid turf. Even elite journalists have been spending their time chronicling the sexual misbehavior of David Letterman, Nevada senator John Ensign, former South Carolina governor Mark Sanford and many other public figures, stretching back to Bill Clinton's dalliance with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. If there was a difference between *The New York Times* winning a Pulitzer for exposing Eliot Spitzer's predilection for prostitutes and the *Enquirer* falling short on the Edwards story, it was not immediately apparent.

Obviously the *Enquirer* pays for information, and the practice of writing checks to sketchy folks casts its journalism in a dubious light. But the television networks and celebrity magazines get around their prohibitions by paying news subjects six-figure sums for photos and videos, and besides, when it comes to Edwards and Woods and a growing list of other high-profile targets, the *Enquirer* has gotten the goods.

Once, its aspirations were not so lofty. Generoso Pope Jr.,

Everybody's life changed after the *National Enquirer* outed the Hunter-Edwards affair. Edwards's campaign and marriage fell apart, and the tabloid gained a new respect.

16-year-old daughter, Willow, might be pregnant. If the Edwards saga was a moment of triumph for Barry Levine and his crew, they seemed determined to keep reliving it.

Levine believed readers were still fascinated by the players: Would Edwards go to jail? Would he have to testify about the sex tape he made

with his lover? Did Rielle still believe that her Johnny would one day marry her, with the Dave Matthews Band serenading them? Levine was determined to cover every blip.

But sometimes the *Enquirer* overreached. Back in March 2010 it ran another huge headline: GRAND JURY READY TO INDICT JOHN EDWARDS. While the piece flatly declared that "insiders say an indictment is imminent" over Edwards's alleged payments to his campaign videographer, the year ended with no charges having been filed. Predicting indictments is risky business.



a former member of the CIA's psychological warfare unit who launched the modern *Enquirer* as a scandal sheet in the 1950s, felt he had his finger on the country's pulse and was untroubled by the paper's cash-for-trash reputation. "A Pulitzer Prize ain't going to win us two readers," he declared in 1975. "I don't care if other media respect us or not."

But the tabloid did change some minds in 1994, six years after Pope's death at 61, when it broke story after story about the O.J. Simpson murder case. In the first glimmer that the media's tectonic plates were (continued on page 104)





*"I'm here for the Miss Universe contest...!"*



# GIRLS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

A BREATHTAKING TOUR OF A REGION RIPE WITH BEAUTY

**T**he most striking thing about the coastal regions of the Mediterranean is the juxtaposition of ancient cultures and architecture with hot, tautly curved young women dressed in designer nothingness. Documentation of these women's mystique can be traced to ancient Greek mythology, particularly Homer's chronicle of Helen of Troy, the fabled Mediterranean knockout whose lethally attractive face launched a thousand ships and sparked the Trojan War. Today, photographers for PLAYBOY's Mediterranean editions spend their hours

**KÁTIA DÉDE** Looking like a true Greek goddess, PLAYBOY Greece's Playmate of the Year 2010 (above) poses on the island of Crete.



combing the cities and villages in search of arresting pulchritude. Beautiful women can be found strolling among the whitewashed villas of Greece's coastal towns, frolicking in the picturesque Italian countryside, cavorting on the pristine beaches of Croatia and meandering through the crowds on the narrow stone streets of Spain. We culled PLAYBOY's international editions from Greece, Spain, Slovenia, Croatia and Italy and found 10 ravishing examples of what this glorious region has to offer. As you'll discover, the coastlines aren't the only views worth taking in.

**JESSICA MICARI** PLAYBOY Germany's Miss July 2007 (right) gets wet during her shoot in Turkey. The model owes her olive skin to her Italian father.





**ANDREANI TSAFOU** PLAYBOY Greece's 2010 Playgirl of the Year (left) displays her lithe physique poolside in Crete. **GIULIA BORIO** PLAYBOY Italy's Miss October 2010 (above) is a free-spirited beauty who says her





ideal spot for making love is on a beach in Bora Bora. **TRIANA IGLESIAS** The Spanish-Norwegian model (below center) doesn't care that some might consider her brazen—she's proud of her body and her sensuality. **GLORIA PATRIZI** **PLAYBOY** Italy's Miss June 2009 (below) was raised near Lake Como, where the vistas are almost as striking as the women.





**RIA ANTONIOU** The Greek vixen (above) represented her country in the Model of the World competition. **ANA DRAVINEC** PLAYBOY Slovenia's Miss November 2010 (below left) says it's important for a woman to feel "erotic and beautiful." **ANAMARIJA FRLAN** PLAYBOY Croatia's Miss October 2010 (below right) can work both sides of the camera—she's an accomplished photographer. **FLAVIA BAZZOFFI** PLAYBOY Italy's Miss October 2009 (right) is a world traveler who loves reading and classical music.





See more Mediterranean  
girls at [club.playboy.com](http://club.playboy.com).

**BOCAS DEL TORO IS A SUNNY PLACE FOR SHADY PEOPLE.**

**AMERICAN EXPATS IN PANAMA KNEW BILL CORTEZ WAS WEIRD, BUT THEY DIDN'T REALIZE HOW WEIRD. NOBODY WAS SHADIER THAN WILD BILL.**

**PLAYBOY INVESTIGATES A MURDER IN PARADISE**

# WILD BILL

**KEITH WERLE HADN'T SEEN** *his wife, Cher Hughes, for three months. That was in July 2010, when a special detail of the Panamanian National Police took her remains out of a shallow grave on a hillside, beneath a grove of giant ceiba trees. Cher had once been a knockout, a slim five-foot-10 blonde with full lips and Farrah-like curls. But on this July day Werle barely recognized her. The jungle and the bullet that had exploded the back of her head had taken their effect. Werle was able to identify the tatter of clothes still clinging to what was once her lithe torso. It was small comfort that the four bodies buried around her had already been scoured to skeletons by insects in the moist, loamy soil. Werle cried then, silent tears for a woman from whom he*

**BY ROBERT DRURY**

ILLUSTRATION BY JESSE AUERSALO







The pristine coast of Panama attracts many peculiar American expats but none more disturbing than Wild Bill Cortez (above, in the arms of justice). Below: Cortez and his wife, Laura Reese, in the States and in the jungle.

had separated but for whom he still cared deeply.

As Werle paces the linoleum floor of the Panama City morgue some 200 miles from that jungle grave, as he waits to reclaim Hughes's desiccated body and autopsied brain, the dingy yellow walls close in. And tears are the last thing on his mind. The female government functionary has already informed him that his paperwork is not in order, and as Werle stares at his local attorney, the morgue attendant adds, albeit with a compassionate smile, that tomorrow might be a better time to collect his wife.

The morgue is in one of the stolid, American-built administrative buildings on the south side of the old Canal Zone. Werle arrived here with his U.S. passport and a Panamanian certificate of marriage to Cheryl Lynn Hughes dated October 25, 2005. Now, after a conversation in Spanish between his lawyer and the clerk, Werle is informed he will also need to produce Hughes's original death certificate—which is still in police custody in the provincial capital of Bocas del Toro, on Panama's Caribbean coast—as well as the official, government-issued DNA report, which for some reason has been filed in an investigator's office in the city of David, across the isthmus on the Pacific coast.

This is too much for Werle, and he stomps out into a humid October day to light up a smoke. He began the habit again after Cher's disappearance in March, often burning through as many as four packs a day. As he pats the empty pocket of his white linen guayabera, I hand him a Marlboro. The rain has stopped, and steam rises from the street. A somber undertaker's assistant patrolling the sidewalk hands us each a business card, and as Werle draws in his first deep drag, the fissures



## HEMINGWAY WOULD HAVE SET AN ILL-FATED ROMANCE ON THE ISLANDS OF BOCAS DEL TORO.

on his stubbled face grow longer and darker. "Fucking psychopath in Bocas," he says, his voice a rasp. He runs a calloused hand through his thick hair. "Who could have thought?"

At 51, Keith Werle retains the handsome boyishness that once gave rise to his celestial ambitions, and as he paces the sidewalk I am put in mind of the actor Aaron Eckhart in the film *Thank You for Smoking*, or even a young Clint Eastwood. As if reading my mind he repeats, "Fucking psychopath. I feel like I'm in a fucking movie right now. Who could have known?" He shakes his head, the words subsumed by cigarette smoke. But this particular movie scene has not yet played out, for when

we return to the morgue, his attorney, a brunette named Ruth Alvarado, is opening a manila envelope delivered by messenger from the Panamanian prosecutor general's office. Inside is the latest prison deposition from the accused serial killer William Dathan Holbert, the self-proclaimed Wild Bill Cortez, the man who put Cher Hughes in her grave.

Since Holbert's arrest during a shootout on the San Juan River he has offered more confessions than Saint Augustine, each contradicting the last. Now Alvarado runs her fingertip under the sentences of this latest 11-page notarized document, translating simultaneously, mouthing some of the words in a whisper and reading others aloud in English. Werle is in no mood. "Jesus, Ruth, cut to the chase," he says. "What's he saying now?" Alvarado's brown eyes squint and she sucks in a breath between her teeth. "He is naming you as the hit man who hired him to kill Cher."

Ernest Hemingway would have set an ill-fated romance on the palm-fringed islands of Bocas del Toro, Elmore Leonard a heist. The isolated province, lapping the Caribbean in Panama's far northwestern corner, is an emerald whirl of forests that rise to the shrouded Volcán Barú, an 11,401-foot dormant volcano. In the shadow of these mountains a string of cays dots the Chiriquí Lagoon. When Christopher Columbus first spotted the archipelago on his final voyage to the New World in 1502, it reminded him of the mouth of a bull, and for the next 400 years, nothing much, save for a banana plantation or two, disturbed the soft rhythm of life in Bocas del Toro. Then, in the last days of the 20th century, Bocas was rediscovered—this time by the expats.

The surfers came first, drawn to the breaks off the (continued on page 99)



*"I'll be a little late—I got jumped by a cougar, but I managed to wrestle her to the ground."*



20Q

BY DAVID HOCHMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHIAS CLAMER



# Seth Green

THE COMIC EVERYMAN DISCUSSES HIS LOVE OF SUPERHEROES, EXPLAINS WHY *ROBOT CHICKEN* WILL NEVER BE MADE IN 3-D, ADMITS THERE'S A DOWNSIDE TO BEING SHORT AND REVEALS WHY NERDS ARE SUDDENLY GETTING ALL THE GIRLS

Q1

**PLAYBOY:** From *Austin Powers* to *Family Guy*, your brand of entertainment has been heavy on snark and eye-rolling irony. *Robot Chicken* is all about kitschy action figures. Do you ever wonder, When am I going to grow up?

**GREEN:** No, because this is what I do best. Goofing on this stuff is where my value to our culture is, you know? I wouldn't be a good longshoreman. I'm kind of useless in that area.

Q2

**PLAYBOY:** How is it that you've been working steadily as an actor since the early 1980s?

**GREEN:** I'm like the everyman in a funny way. I'm short enough to be nonthreatening but appealing enough to kiss the girl in a movie. The guys want to have a beer with me and the girls think I'm a cute alternative to their asshole boyfriend. It's also because I'm a student of pop culture. I get how pop culture relates to the economic atmosphere and politics and our personal lives. The shit we grow up watching and listening to has a huge impact on us and reflects what's happening in the larger world.

Q3

**PLAYBOY:** So what does, say, Comic-Con tell us about our society?

**GREEN:** Are you kidding? Comic-Con is everything. This past year was my 15th time. On one level, it's simply nerds in their natural habitat, which is a great way to study that culture. Nerds can commune with one another without fear of persecution. But it's also an emblem of corporate entertainment. The major toy companies and studios roll out their products in a grassroots way. They feed ideas that the nerds consume and broadcast on a multitude of social networks. Plus you have all those cute girls running around dressed like Catwoman or the Ninja Turtles. It's just hot.

Q4

**PLAYBOY:** Women used to run screaming from nerds. What happened?

**GREEN:** It's weird. Something shifted in our culture over the past 10 years and beautiful young women started liking nerdy stuff. It was as if someone said, "Okay, hot women. You can like all this stuff." Which is great for guys. They get to keep doing what they love, and now it's cool—video games, old toys our mothers made us throw away, *Star Wars*. (concluded on page 118)

BY

T.C. BOYLE

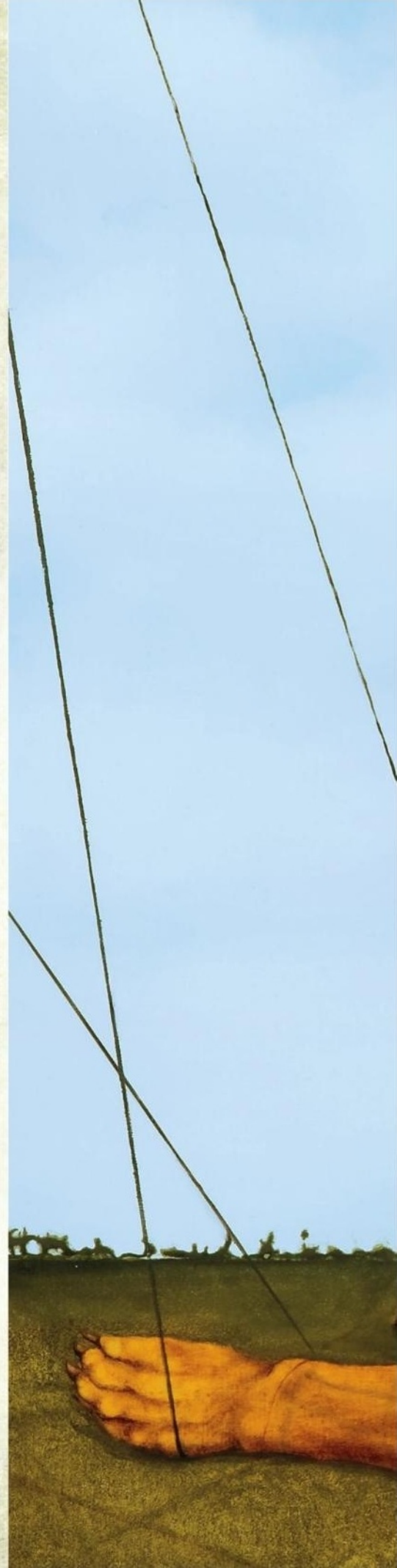
# GOOD HOME

THE HOUSE AT THE END OF THE ROAD  
LOOKS LIKE A FAMILY PLACE.

IT WAS ONCE, BUT ITS CURRENT  
OWNERS HAVE OTHER, MORE  
BRUTAL NEEDS

**H**e always took Joey with him to answer the ads because Joey was likable, the kind of kid anybody could relate to, with his open face and wide eager eyes and the white-blond hair of whoever his father might have been. Or mother. Or both. Royce knew something about breeding, and to get hair like that there must have been blonds on both sides, but then there were a lot of blonds in Russia, weren't there? He'd never been there, but from what his sister Shana had told him about the orphanage they must have been as common as brunettes were here, or Asians and Mexicans anyway, with their shining black hair that always looked freshly greased, and what would you call *them*, blackettes? His own hair was a sort of dirty blond, nowhere near as extreme as Joey's, but in the same ballpark, so that people often mistook Joey for his son, which was just fine with him. Better than fine: perfect.

The first place they went to, in Canoga Park, was giving away rabbits, and there was a kid there of Joey's age—10 or so—who managed to look both guilty and relieved at the same time. A FOR SALE sign stood out front, the place probably on the verge of foreclosure (his realtor's brain made a quick calculation: double lot, maybe 3,500 square feet, two-car garage, air, the usual faux-granite countertops and built-ins, probably sold for close to five before the bust, now worth maybe three and a half, three and a quarter), and here was the kid's father sauntering out the kitchen door with his beer gut swaying in the grip of his wifebeater, Lakers cap reversed on his head, goatee, mirror shades, a real primo loser. "Hey," the man said. He *(continued on page 108)*







# Strength and Beauty

## BREAK A SWEAT WITH MISS MARCH

**I**'m really good at having fun!" says 24-year-old Ashley Mattingly. Evidence of her carefree spirit: She revels in traveling on annual "girls' trips" to such locales as Monaco and Greece ("I've been to Santorini, Mykonos and Athens—amazing"). She throws dinner parties ("I love to entertain with wine, food and flowers") and she kayaks off the coast of Malibu, where she will occasionally partake in some au naturel relaxation ("I take everything off, lie back and go 'Ahhh...'). A shy kid, her enchanting joie de vivre first burst forth in high school. "Joining the track and cross-country teams helped bring out my personality," explains Ashley, a native Texan who four years ago moved from Dallas to Beverly Hills. "At the end of every race I would laugh. People would ask me why I was laughing so hard, and I'd say, 'I'm just having so much fun!'" Today, however, her pleasure has become more glam. "I adore slipping on a Versace dress and a pair of Jimmy Choos and going to dinner at Madeo in L.A., which is so much fun and such a scene. The paparazzi are always out front! I don't just love the glamour scene; I want to be part of it." So take heed: If you're driving along Rodeo Drive, be on the lookout for a silver BMW. "Do I weave in and out of cars?" asks our unstoppable Miss March. "Yes. But it's not that I'm driving too fast; it's that everybody else is driving too slow!"



**PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
ARNY FREYTAG**











See more of Miss March  
at [club.playboy.com](http://club.playboy.com).





**MISS MARCH**

**PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH**



Adrienne Mattingly

under armour  
under armour



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Ashley Mattingly

BUST: 32C WAIST: 24 HIPS: 32

HEIGHT: 5'7" WEIGHT: 110

BIRTH DATE: 9-10-86 BIRTHPLACE: Dallas, Texas

AMBITIONS: To always be a fun, helpful person and Playmate-I want to turn this into a career!

TURN-ONS: A worldly man who works hard and plays hard but who is always sweet, loving and caring.

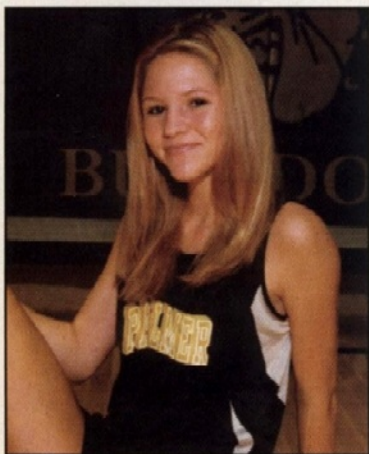
TURNOFFS: Fake, rude, out-of-shape slobs who smell and eat with their mouths open!

MY IDEA OF SEXY: A woman who holds herself well, is impeccably classy and is not judgmental of others.

FAVORITE SONG OF THE DAY: "Superman" by JD Evolution - It's fun, upbeat and has a message of positivity.

ALL-TIME FAVORITE MOVIE: Arthur with Dudley Moore and Liza Minnelli. It never fails to make me laugh!

MY HERO: Hef! You made it respectable for beautiful women to express their personality in a HOT way. :)



High school track pic.



First trip to St. Barts.



Eighteen-year-old Dallas babe.

MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Ashley

Playmate of the Month



Mattingly

# PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

**A** redhead, a brunette and a blonde were all in the same hospital room, waiting to give birth, when the redhead said, "I just know I'm going to have a baby girl, because I was on top when I conceived."

"And I know I'm going to have a boy, because my husband was on top when I got pregnant," the brunette said.

The blonde looked horrified and started sobbing.

"What's wrong?" the brunette asked her.

"I think I'm going to have puppies!" the blonde cried.

**W**hat did the penis say to the condom?

"Cover me, I'm going in."



**O**ne evening a woman was having dinner at home with her husband and she said, "You know, dear, I had a physical today and the doctor told me I have the breasts of a 25-year-old."

"Is that so?" the husband replied, rolling his eyes. "What did he have to say about your ass?"

"Oh, darling," his wife said, "I don't think your name came up in the conversation."

**T**wo men were having drinks together when one said to the other, "A few days ago my wallet was stolen, and the person who took it has been using my credit cards all week."

"Why haven't you called the credit card companies to report them stolen?" his friend asked.

"Because the thief spends less money than my wife," the man replied.

**O**ne summer a beautiful blonde college student wanted to earn some extra money, so she went door to door in her neighborhood, looking for odd jobs. Finally, a man asked her to paint his porch. She returned the next day with supplies and started working. After an hour, she knocked on his door to let him know she had finished. When he opened it she said, "I just wanted to let you know that I'm done with the job. Oh, and by the way, you don't have a Porsche, you have a Lexus."

**J**ust before his son was to be married, a man decided to offer him some fatherly advice.

"Son, on my wedding night in our honeymoon suite, I took off my pants, handed them to your mother and told her to try them on. She did and then she said, 'These are too big. I can't wear them.' So I replied, 'Exactly. I wear the pants in this family and I always will.' We've never had any problems since then."

Impressed, the son decided to try the same tactic as his father. That night in his honeymoon suite, he took off his pants, handed them to his new wife and told her to try them on.

"But they're too large," she said. "They won't fit me."

"Exactly," he replied. "I wear the pants in this family and I always will. I don't want you to forget that."

His wife then took off her panties, handed them to him and told him to try them on.

"I can't get into your panties," he said, astonished.

"Exactly," his wife replied, "and if you don't change your attitude, you never will."



**O**ne evening a woman arrived home to discover her husband sitting at the kitchen table, staring at their marriage certificate.

"Why are you looking at that?" she asked.

"I'm trying to find the expiration date," he replied.

**A** man was drinking at a bar one evening. Every time he ordered a drink, he would pull a picture out of his wallet and gaze at it for a moment.

"Old girlfriend?" the bartender asked.

"No," the man replied. "It's a picture of my mother-in-law. When she starts to look attractive, I know I've had too much."

*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](http://jokes.playboy.com). PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.*

Cipson



*"Better get down here, Chief. Today's lineup you gotta see."*

# JEANEOLOGY

FROM FITS TO BRANDS TO JACKETS, THE PLAYBOY LAB DISSECTS HOW TO WEAR DENIM

**IT'S A RIVETING** story—or at least a story with rivets. They belonged to San Francisco dry goods operator Levi Strauss, who used copper rivets to strengthen the pockets of his customers' denim work pants during the Gold Rush. Not only were the pants—what we now call jeans—tough, they felt good, a cotton-twill second skin. About a century later James Dean made them rebellious, meticulously rolling his jeans at the ankle. Then came the bell-bottomed bacchanal of the 1960s. A decade onward, denim went all disco and glitzy signature designer (Sasson et al.). Can we skip the 1980s—3,652 days of stonewashes and man-butt cleavage? The ensuing years, however, have compensated nicely for that miserable nadir. Thank you, heritage revival. High or low rise, button fly or zipper legged, tapered or flared, Kate Moss low or Run-DMC baggy, dude-ranch dude or heroin-chic androgyne, jeans are a fad...yet not at all.



## SELVAGE DENIM

Straight from the looms that wove denim in the 1950s, selvage jeans are for the purist. Show them off by turning up the cuffs so the seams are in full view. They ain't cheap; the antique looms can't mass-produce like modern weaving machines. Break them

in naturally and wash them—by hand—sparingly. Above from left: **IMOGENE + WILLIE** (\$275, [imogeneandwillie.com](http://imogeneandwillie.com)), **RALEIGH DENIM** (\$200, [raleighdenim.com](http://raleighdenim.com)), **J. LINDBERG** (\$248, [jlindeberg.com](http://jlindeberg.com)) and **TELLASON** (\$198, [tellason.com](http://tellason.com)).



*Relaxed Fit*



*Skinny*

## FITS AND CUTS

**RELAXED-FIT** jeans such as Eclipse by Raven Denim (\$188, [ravendenim.com](http://ravendenim.com)) belong on men with muscular legs. They don't sit way above the navel or ride the bush; instead, they're relaxed about the hips, calves and waist. Know this about **SKINNY** jeans, e.g., the Super Chuckin Skinny from Converse by John Varvatos (\$150, [converse.com](http://converse.com)): Unless you share a tailor with Iggy Pop, you're in danger of looking

like Meat Loaf in them. **BOOT-CUT** jeans, on the other hand, flatter most body types, elongating the legs of shorter guys and balancing out wider guys. In particular, try the Braeden Jean by DRT (\$119, [drtjeans.com](http://drtjeans.com)). Somehow **STRAIGHT-LEG** jeans look dressy while still being casual. Buy a pair of Brixtons by Joe's Jeans (\$185, [joesjeans.com](http://joesjeans.com)) if you're tall and lean or of medium height with regular hips.



*Boot Cut*



*Straight Leg*

## TOP BRANDS



**A/X Armani Exchange**  
\$125  
[armaniexchange.com](http://armaniexchange.com)

**ck one**  
\$70  
[calvinklein.com](http://calvinklein.com)

**Levi's**  
\$46  
[levis.com](http://levis.com)



**7 For All Mankind**  
\$189  
[7forallmankind.com](http://7forallmankind.com)

**Earnest Sewn**  
\$195  
[earnestsewn.com](http://earnestsewn.com)

**Buffalo David Bitton**  
\$89  
[buffalojeans.com](http://buffalojeans.com)

**William Rast**  
\$150  
[williamrast.com](http://williamrast.com)

**J. Crew**  
\$96  
[jcrew.com](http://jcrew.com)



Never before have there been so many different denim brands to choose from. But don't feel overwhelmed. All the brands listed here are solid choices. Give the most thought to finding jeans that suit your body and personal style. (The overall style of the moment? Anything with vintage appeal.) We've gone over fits and cuts. As for washes and finishes—aged, distressed, bleached, indigo, pigment-dyed, stonewashed or sandblasted: Go dark when you plan to wear a sports jacket and tie. And go with an acid wash when you want to look like your dad and/or Tom Selleck. Also: Don't fear the tailor—or, more likely, consider your jeans too informal a piece of clothing to have a tailor make the requisite nips and tucks. And finally, ask how often your jeans should be washed, how much they will shrink when washed and if they should even be washed.



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# DENIM JACKETS

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Don't laugh. After all, denim jackets were cool enough for Steve McQueen and Paul Newman. And lately they've experienced a major resurgence—aided and abetted by new designer brands that have given them a slimmer fit and longer arms. Bold men can wear them with blue jeans, provided the dyes

aren't the same; otherwise you're sporting a Texas tuxedo. Clockwise from top left: **LEVI'S TRUCKER JACKET** (\$80, [levis.com](http://levis.com)), **TOKYO FIVE JACKET** (\$98, [tokyofivebrand.com](http://tokyofivebrand.com)), **G-STAR SLIM TAILOR JACKET** (\$260, [g-star.com](http://g-star.com)) and **PRPS LIGHT-WASH JACKET** (\$310, [prpsgoods.com](http://prpsgoods.com)).

WOULD YOU SLEEP WITH THIS WOMAN?

# NEANDERTHAL

# LOVE

AFTER MODERN HUMANS MIGRATED OUT OF AFRICA, THEY MAY HAVE ENCOUNTERED THESE BARREL-CHESTED HOMININS, NOW EXTINCT. DID WE HAVE SEX WITH OUR BIG-BROWED COUSINS?

AND IF SO, ARE THEY PART OF US STILL?

# IN

the summer of 1856, in the Neander Valley near Düsseldorf, miners quarrying limestone discovered the top of a misshapen human skull and other bones. A debate began over their origin. Some argued the remains belonged to a deformed Cossack horseman who had crawled into the cave to die; others felt it had to be an ancestor of the Australian aborigines, who in Victorian times were thought to be the least advanced of *Homo sapiens*.

Further whisker stroking revealed the astonishing truth: This not-quite human was the “missing link” between ape and man. Why else would his bones indicate he walked stooped over on bent knees?

As it turned out, the man stooped because he had arthritis. In 1864 a geologist from Galway suggested the bones belonged to a distinct, brutish species he dubbed *Homo neanderthalensis*, or Neanderthal Man (*thal* was German for “valley”). But it wasn’t until 1886, when two complete skeletons were unearthed in Belgium, that most scientists in the young field of paleoanthropology accepted *neanderthalensis* as a distant cousin of *Homo sapiens*. The two

BY CHIP ROWE





## DID WE SEE THESE HUMANS AS OUR SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL EQUALS OR TREAT THEM LIKE ANIMALS?

RECONSTRUCTED FROM FOSSIL AND GENETIC EVIDENCE, THIS NEANDERTHAL REDHEAD LIVED ABOUT 43,000 YEARS AGO.

populations split between 500,000 and 800,000 years ago, probably from a common ancestor called *Homo heidelbergensis*, after which the proto-Neanderthals hiked west to the Middle East and Europe. Back in Africa, the *Homo sapiens* population may have withered to as few as 2,000 people on the entire continent—a dodo's breath from extinction. Yet 40,000 years ago, after these disparate Africans managed to find each other, a population explosion pushed *sapiens* north.

Ten thousand years later, the Neanderthals were gone. They made their last stand in modern-day Spain and Portugal, south of the Ebro River, and stragglers may have survived another 2,000 years in a cave on the Rock of Gibraltar. Although other hominins (i.e., species more closely related to us than chimpanzees) possibly outlasted the Neanderthals—*Homo floresiensis*, Hobbit-like humans who lived in isolation on an island in Indonesia; *Homo erectus* in the Far East; a cousin in Siberia whose fossilized pinkie bone was discovered in 2008; and others surely yet to be unearthed—*Homo sapiens* is today the last mankind standing of at least eight varieties of humans.

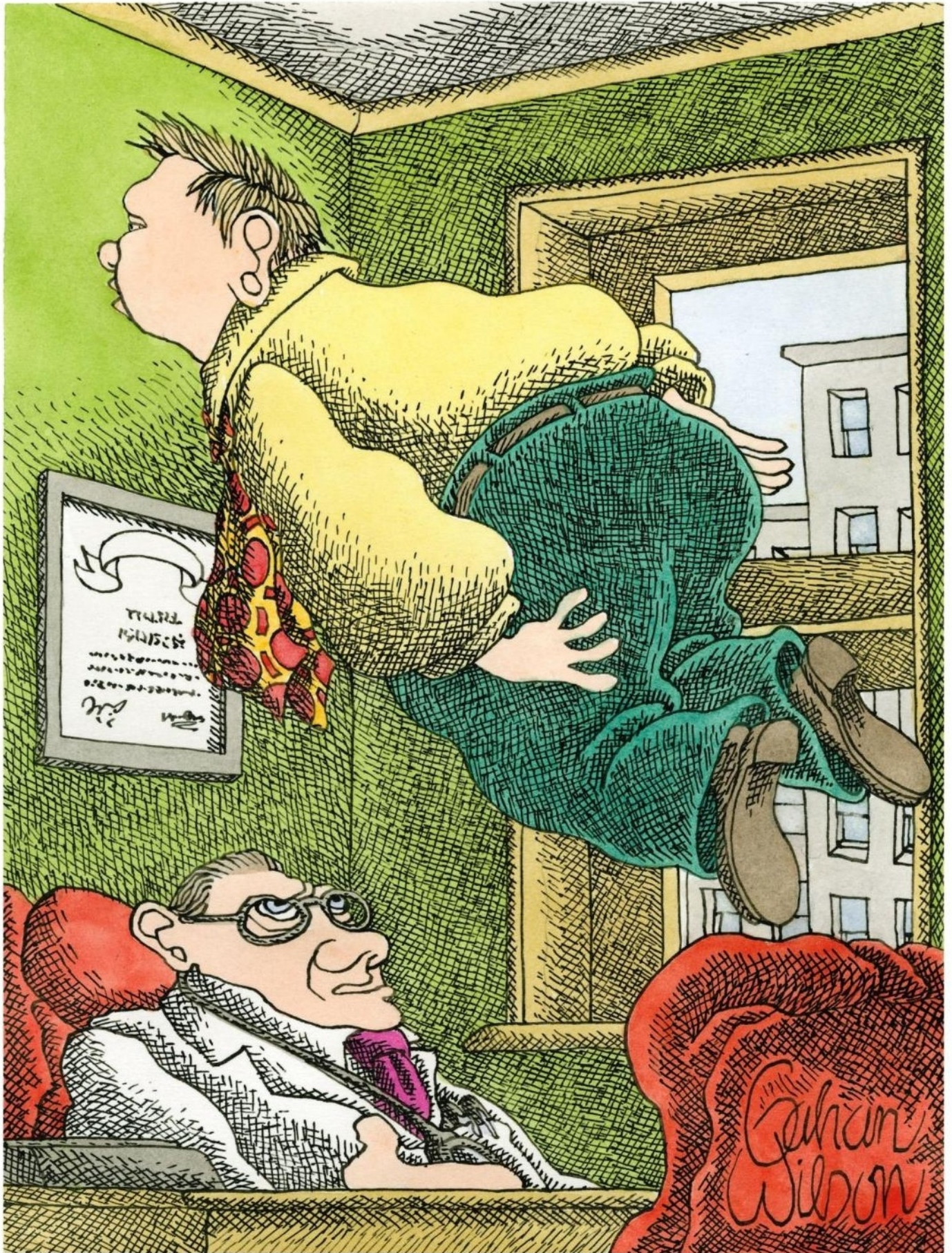
The Neanderthals survived for at least 150 millennia. What doomed them? Was it a suddenly harsh climate? Did they not breed quickly enough? Did their tools suck? Did they meet their match in modern humans, who, while not as stout, had a darker disposition and more efficient ways to kill? Or did we fuck them into oblivion? That is, we may have fucked the Neanderthals by driving them to the sea with our superior guile. But did we actually *fuck* them?

Anthropologists call it interbreeding. They don't calculate how many beers it would take. Last summer, after comparing DNA extracted from thimblefuls of powdered Neanderthal bone fragments to that of five modern humans, a team led by Svante Pääbo of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig calculated that Neanderthals have contributed 2.5 percent of the DNA of every living person except natives of Africa (where Neanderthals never lived). Although there is no fossil evidence, the paleogeneticist

believes the two groups first encountered each other in what is now Israel between 60,000 and 100,000 years ago, after early *Homo sapiens* (our *Homo* genus plus *sapiens*, which is Latin for “knowing man”) arrived from Africa but before we spread into Europe and Asia. The sequencing has also revealed what makes us unique; scientists so far have compiled a list of more than 200 genetic variations that appear to have given us the edge over *neanderthalensis*, including one that improves sperm motility and many devoted to brain function. But given that *sapiens* and *neanderthalensis* can reproduce, we are not distinct species. Instead, technically, we are subspecies—*Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

Despite the attention given to the shared genetics, DNA doesn't say much about how or if we interacted. Is that 2.5 percent the long tail of a single one-night stand? Although Pääbo finds this scenario unlikely, even one half-breed in a limited population could have spread *neanderthalensis* markers far and wide. Did we view Neanderthals as less than human and avoid them except for occasional desperate acts of “bestiality”? (Male members of our sophisticated species are to this day caught penetrating creatures not nearly as closely related.) Or did we consider Neanderthals as equals and rut so wildly they essentially melted into the crowd?

New research suggests early hominins were willing to have sex with anything on two feet. In October British scientists reported that Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons (the *sapiens* best known for their cave art) had physical characteristics that signal aggressiveness and promiscuity. Specifically, higher levels in the womb of androgens such as testosterone (which fuels the sex drive in men and women) are thought to increase the length of the fourth finger in relation to the second finger. By that standard, fossilized finger bones indicate Cro-Magnons and Neanderthals were even hornier than we are. In April an analysis of 99 populations around the globe by genetic anthropologists at the University of New Mexico found hints that we interbred with other species some 60,000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean and (concluded on page 115)



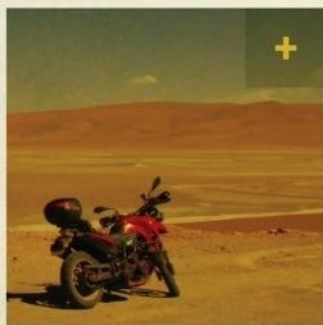
*"Well, at least we've licked the weight problem."*



THE

# LONG ROAD

+ PHOTOS AND TEXT BY JAMES R. PETERSEN



+



## HIS VISION HAD DETERIORATED

to the point where he couldn't tell a red light from a green one. Rather than hang up his helmet, he took on the challenge of a lifetime: a 5,000-mile motorcycle blast across South America, with its fabled

## ROAD OF DEATH



+

# THE

wind is unrelenting. We leave Chile and ride 500 yards to a Bolivian customs and immigration outpost. For eight hours we sit in a tiny building watching sand blow under the door. The power is out, and the Bolivian customs officials will not release our bikes. We get approval

just as the sun goes down. We have to ride 150 miles in the dark, in the freezing cold, without our support vehicle.

With my eyesight, riding at night is an act of faith. I tuck my bike behind Andres and Rob, the most experienced off-road riders in the group, and go chameleon. I will do what they do, an act of trust unprecedented in my life.

I read their taillights for direction changes, hills, drop-offs, use the path of their headlights to illuminate enough road to match their speed. I stand on the pegs to lower the bike's center of gravity, making it less squirrely on the gravel, potholes, sand and ruts. The road deteriorates into what locals call *ripa*—miles of washboard bumps. The bike chatters like a white ball on a spinning roulette wheel. I try not to dwell on the rest of the metaphor. If I drop into a rut or pothole, my number will be up. My heart beats a mantra. Not me. Not yet.

I ride almost entirely by feel, letting the bike handle the details—its suspension is quicker than my quads. I commit to the throttle, to the physics of a gyroscope (stability provided by spinning wheels that disappears if you slow). I don't touch the brakes. I force myself to breathe regularly. Adrenaline turns my mouth to cotton. Evidently my body knows it's in a fight-or-flight situation. I suck on a plastic tube that runs to a bladder of water built into my riding suit. Nothing. The tube is frozen solid, as are the water bottles strapped to my fanny pack. The container of antifreeze in our guide's top box freezes, explodes and leaks antifreeze icicles. The cold poses more of a problem than the dark.

At minus 10 degrees centigrade, if a bike breaks down, it will be a matter of moments before hypothermia escalates the mechanical to the mortal.

Hours into the night I crest a hill to find the wind has deposited six inches of sand between two embankments. The sand swallows our front wheels. Just like that, Andres is sideways. I follow, sideways. Rob sees what is happening, touches his brakes and goes down.

Almost in unison Andres and I ride out three whip-lash turns, steering with our knees and foot pressure, like skiers in powder. We apply throttle to unweight the front wheel, and finally, as the sand gets shallower, we bring the bikes under control.

We flick on the hazard lights, put the bikes on their side stands and run up the hill. Rob is uninjured, but there are five riders behind us, stretched across the night.

I am halfway across South America, exactly where I want to be....

In college I started a journal, and the first entry describes a motorcycle ride through the streets of Hartford, Connecticut, shifting through the gears, feeling the front wheel lift, seeing the slash of red as my taillight reflected off the chrome trim of parked cars. The motorcycle

made me a writer. It is a machine for generating words, a tool for seeing. Kick an engine to life and I enter an altered state, one that turns highways into hymns, momentum into moments.

I ride a motorcycle to take my eyes places where I'll see things I'll never forget. Unfortunately, my eyes do not return the favor.

Chicago, 2003: I'm sitting in a darkened doctor's office, staring at eye charts. In the space of a few months my eyesight has deteriorated dramatically. I tell the doctor I can no longer read headlines accurately.

"I don't think I could pass the vision test for a driver's license," I tell him.

He laughs. "This is Chicago. Everyone has an uncle in the DMV." Then he looks at the back of my eyes.

Blood vessels have done to the retina what tree roots do to sidewalks. The macula—the part of the eye responsible for fine focus, for details—is swollen, leaking fluid from tiny eruptions. If you project a slide onto a rumpled sheet, some parts will be in focus, some parts won't. There will be gaps and blind spots. Weirdly, the mind takes the fractured information and tries to make sense of it.

Pick a word in the middle of this page. Focus on just that word. How well do you see the other words on the page? That's how I see.

The retinologist launches a *Star Wars* battle on the inside of my eyes, cauterizing blood vessels with a laser. Two or three times a year he plunges a needle into one eye or another, injecting steroids to reduce swelling. It is not a cure, but it slows the deterioration.

I don't talk about my eyes. If asked, I tell people I

## BLOOD VESSELS HAVE done to my eyes what tree roots do to sidewalks.



**THE BMW F650 GS: 798 cc, 71 horsepower, top speed of 115 mph. Distance: 5,000 miles, five countries, one continent.**

can still sit for hours at a computer, watching porn. At least I think it's porn.

Someday soon I will be unable to ride. As a result, mileage is the only thing that matters. The road ahead. I start taking long rides, logging miles in South Africa, Canada, France, Spain, Central America, the American West.

Then one day my editor, a man possessed of a manic restlessness, contacted me: "I want a feature where you ride across Mongolia or Siberia or something like that Ewan



**TRAVELOGUE (above)**—A: Outside Antonina, two dead bikers lie under a blue tarp. B: a near head-on collision with a truck on the road approaching Blumenau. C: 100 mph days! D: Bolivia’s legendary Road of Death, conquered. E: Near Arequipa, Peru, 147 roadside shrines mark casualties along a 95-mile stretch.

McGregor TV special, *Long Way Round*. Something that really gets at the heart of what it’s like to ride and be out there in the elements, doing what every man dreams of. We’ll need frightening locals, harsh weather and loads of color—like across Afghanistan but not as dangerous.”

I contact Compass Expeditions, an Australian outfit that keeps a fleet of BMW motorcycles in South America. By stitching together three of their tours, I can go 5,000 miles from Rio to Lima, spending six weeks getting to know the planet. I’ll have a guide and a support vehicle filled with spare parts. I’ll traverse coast highways, jungles, deserts, high plains, the Andes. I’ll challenge El Camino de la Muerte—the Road of Death—in Bolivia.

At a hotel in Rio in September I meet two New Zealanders who, for reasons not unlike my own, have signed on for the coast-to-coast adventure. We share a passion: the desire to take a skill and use it to unlock the world.



On the other side of six weeks we will be different people. Different, i.e., crazed or dead.

Rob, a musician–math instructor, reports he’d been in the country barely 10 minutes before facing drawn guns and someone demanding money. He seems unfazed.

John, a software engineer with a voice that registers on the Richter scale, asks Rob if his Leatherman has a file. He’s chipped a tooth and wants to grind it smooth.

One morning as I try to figure out a mounting system for my helmet cam, I tell them my editor’s hopes for this article. A hint of danger. Exotic locales. Getting buggered by commie guerrillas and capturing it in high-def. “For that,” asks John, “would you mount the camera facing backward?”

In Penedo, a town two hours from Rio de Janeiro, we pick up the BMW F650 GS motorcycles that will take us across this continent. I don’t tell anyone about my eyes.

Micho, our guide, warns us that South Americans are aggressive drivers. Oncoming cars may pull into your lane to pass and expect you to deal with it. Taking electrical tape, the Kiwis put yellow arrows pointing to the right on their windscreens, a reminder that here they have to drive in the opposite lane from home. On the windscreen of my bike I put an arrow of yellow tape pointing straight ahead.

We spend the first few days getting used to the bikes and the odd rhythms of Brazilian roads. We learn to dodge the unexpected: Dog. Goat. Rooster. Vulture. Speed bump. Town. On the coast highway near Bertioiga, I have a startling vision. What I think is a bag of trash that has fallen out of a truck reveals itself to be a religious fanatic kneeling on the center line, eyes closed, arms outstretched and raised toward heaven. Rapture? Surrender?

In the coming weeks I will *(continued on page 94)*

FOR VIDEO GO TO [PLAYBOY.COM/LONGROAD](http://PLAYBOY.COM/LONGROAD).



# Playboy's 2011 Motorcycle Review

**PRESIDENT OBAMA** and Congress have continued the Bush tax cuts, which means you have extra discretionary income. What are you waiting for? Our picks of the hottest new rides on the road.



**HARLEY-DAVIDSON  
XR1200X**

**PRICE/ \$11,799**

**ENGINE/  
1,200 cc V-twin  
HORSEPOWER/  
90 at 7,000 rpm**

**UNLIKE OTHER** motorcycle companies, Harley competes against Harley. If you're looking for that certain kind of ride, what else will suffice? Every year the company breathes new life into the brand and reignites that certain attitude. The 2011 XR1200X is the next

generation of the bike Harley debuted in Europe in 2008. The idea: Start with the basic Sportster chassis, then build a Harley with a sport-bike feel, a modern Harley you could even take on a racetrack. Think fully adjustable Showa shocks, rear-set foot pegs and wide

flat-track handlebars. Gone is the old-school chrome in favor of black exhaust pipes. It's still a Harley, so you're talking about a wet weight of 573 pounds and a 60-inch wheelbase. Like a linebacker, it's big and quick. Bonus: a Vance & Hines-sponsored five-race pro series.



**TRIUMPH TIGER 800 XC**

**PRICE/ \$10,999**

**ENGINE/ 799 cc in-line triple  
HORSEPOWER/ 94 at  
9,300 rpm**

**WITH THIS NEW** motorcycle, Triumph is going after BMW's F800 GS, the benchmark midsize adventure tourer. The English invented world conquest (remember Lawrence of Arabia). Maybe Triumph is pissed that Ewan McGregor didn't choose a Brit bike to circle the globe. The Triumph triple is bulletproof, and this bike gives it a purpose: empire building.



**DUCATI DIAVEL**

**PRICE/ \$19,995**

**ENGINE/ 1,198 cc L-twin  
Testastretta 11  
HORSEPOWER/ 162 at 9,500 rpm**

**DUCATI'S TAKE ON** the muscle bike is pure evil. Thus the devilish name of this freakishly fast beast. Italian designers wanted the bike's profile to resemble the arched back of a power sprinter in the block—only this sprinter has traction control, ride by wire, a slipper clutch and other goodies borrowed from the racetrack. The optional bodywork pictured here is made of exotic carbon. Zero to 60? Just 2.6 seconds.

## BMW K1600 GT

PRICE/ ~\$24,000

ENGINE/ 1,649 cc in-line six cylinder

HORSEPOWER/ 160 at 7,750 rpm

**THIS MOTORCYCLE** competes with any cross-country asphalt-eating tourer. It's the kind of bike you toss a Jacuzzi, a hibachi and a satellite dish into the saddlebags and head for the sunset. It marks the first time BMW has used an in-line six in a bike (the in-line six being the classic Bimmer road-car engine, of course). The K 1600 GT offers power, less weight than any bike in the class, plus electronic throttle control, selectable throttle response (rain, road, sport) and traction control. The headlights look around corners. Optional electronics allow you to reconfigure suspension with the flick of a switch from "solo" to "sport" to "passenger with luggage." Leave the Bentley at home.



## MV AGUSTA F3

PRICE/ ~\$13,000

ENGINE/ 675 cc in-line three cylinder

HORSEPOWER/ ~137 at 14,000 rpm

**THE F3 ISN'T OUT** until fall, but we couldn't help ourselves. A midsize supersport for the connoisseur, the F3 was the sexiest thing at the Milan Motorcycle Show, a missile with a mission. The backstory: Harley-Davidson bought MV Agusta—an Italian company known for lavish, cost-is-no-object creations—for megamillions in 2008. When the economy crashed, Harley sold the company back to Claudio Castiglioni for three euros. This new bike proudly announces that Agusta is alive and well. The three-cylinder motor invokes history; MV Agusta won 10 Grand Prix titles with the world's first triple. The F3 will share much of the company's legendary F4 technology but at a more affordable price.



## KAWASAKI NINJA ZX-10R

PRICE/ \$13,799

ENGINE/ 998 cc in-line four cylinder

HORSEPOWER/ 188 at 11,000 rpm



**NEVER CONTENT** to create anything less than the king of serious sport bikes, Kawasaki engineers set a 200-horsepower goal for this new engine. Early YouTube videos show a dyno test at 188. The package sets a new bar: adjustable power setting for full, medium or low; traction control that reads wheel speed, rpm, throttle position and rate of acceleration so you can ride on the edge of adhesion; and an optional antilock brake mechanism that interprets input at 100 cycles per millisecond. The intelligence is in the machine, race-bred and ready for the track. This is the most fearsome Ninja ever.

# (NOT) LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

SINCE MY WIFE LEFT IT'S JUST BEEN ME AND MY SON. I'M REAL WORRIED ABOUT HIM, ALWAYS LOCKED IN HIS ROOM WITH VIDEO GAMES. HE'S 25 AND HE'S STILL A VIRGIN!



DON'T YOU KNOW ANY GIRLS YOU COULD INTRODUCE HIM TO?

WELL, I KNOW FOR SURE THE NEIGHBOR HAS ALWAYS LIKED HIM... SHE'S THE SAME AGE, TOO.

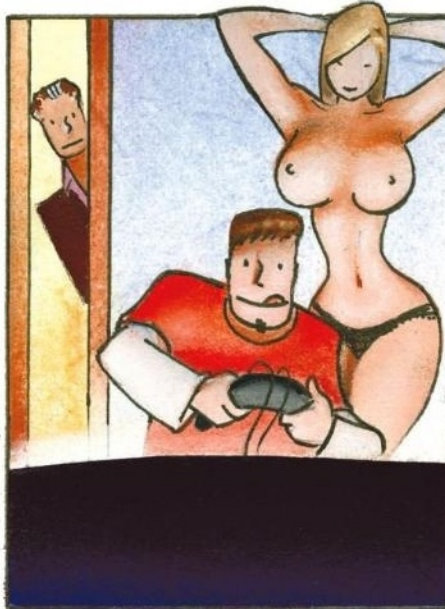
INVITE HER ROUND!



HEY, DAVID, LOOK WHO'S HERE!

MAY I COME IN?

UM, I SUPPOSE.



I HAVE TO SAY, THAT'S THE BEST ADVICE I'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN.

AHA! SO HE SLEPT WITH HER?

NO. BUT I DID!



JUAN IVAR W. LORGEZ




# DAUGHTER OF ANARCHY

YOU KNOW HER AS LYLA, THE PORN STAR BIKER  
BABE ON *SONS OF ANARCHY*. OFF THE SET, WINTER  
AVE ZOLI TURNS ON HER REAL LOVE LIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY

MARLENA BIELINSKA

 In *Sons of Anarchy*, Winter Ave Zoli's Lyla is the proverbial porn star with a heart of gold, a scene-stealing seductress and the love interest of badass biker Opie Winston (played by Ryan Hurst). But in real life, Winter's story rivals anything you'd see on television.

Born in the sticks of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, she was just like any other small-town American girl with a sparkle in her eye. But at the age of 11 Winter moved to the Czech Republic with her parents, a pair of hippies turned entrepreneurs.

"The Czech Republic was freshly postcommunist when

we got there," Winter says while sitting on a couch in her West Hollywood apartment after a long day of rehearsals. "It was kind of hard to settle in. I remember feeling

a heavy energy in that city, and Prague is already heavy. A lot of people missed communism because they could get away with doing nothing."

Winter enrolled at the International School of Prague while her parents started a business: a nightclub.

But not just any nightclub. In postcommunist Prague the youth generation was hungry for a taste of the West and a wild party. The Zolis' place was soon voted one of the top 10





Winter plays Lyla, a porn star with a wild streak, on FX's hit biker-gang drama *Sons of Anarchy*. She got her start in musical theater in the Czech Republic.



nightclubs in the world by a British magazine.

"It was their first nightclub," she says, letting loose a guffaw reminiscent of Diane Keaton's in *Annie Hall*. "Basically everything they've touched has been successful."

Not unlike their daughter. Winter studied ballet and started auditioning for musical theater. By the age of 13 she was working professionally in productions that passed through Prague. At 19 she enrolled in New York City's Atlantic Theater Company, founded by David Mamet and William H. Macy. From there it was only a matter of time before Hollywood beckoned.

For some reason—can you guess?—producers tend to cast this Kate Hudson-esque beauty in roles that emphasize her deliciousness. She has played hot characters in *Sex and Death 101* and *The Oh in Ohio*, co-starring Parker Posey and Danny DeVito. "The fact that I seem to play only porn stars, prostitutes, courtesans and various other sex-compromised women is sort of a running joke in the family," Winter says. "I'm nothing like that in real life, obviously." In fact, off the set the most reckless Winter gets is on horseback. "I spend as much time as possible at my stable in the Hollywood Hills," she says. "It keeps me sane."

Winter was no novice when the time came to step in front of the camera sans clothes. "It turns out nudity is not a problem for me," she says about her job and her *PLAYBOY* shoot. "It's one of those things you think about later and say, 'Yeah, I could do this for a living.'"











See more of Winter at [playboy.com/winter](http://playboy.com/winter).



# THE LONG ROAD

(continued from page 82)

see gravel take flight as what I thought was stone becomes birds. I will see boulders heave themselves from the grass and become bulls. I will throw open a hotel room window and watch a tree dissolve into hummingbirds, then resolve into a tree.

That I can't read road signs doesn't bother me. None of us knows Portuguese. Faced with confusing signage for restrooms (ELE and ELA) Rob comes up with a mnemonic: Would you rather go into a restroom with Elle Macpherson or Ella Fitzgerald?

We stop at fruit stands to buy oranges. The vendors sell window stickers of Christ, Bob Marley, Che, the Playboy Rabbit Head, Yosemite Sam, Betty Boop. A truck driver from Alabama would feel right at home. The magazine racks sell the same glossy dreams, the cleavage and lip gloss, the tips to flatten your abs and improve your sex life. I begin to doubt local culture exists.

And then I take to the highway and catch out of the corner of my eye a hillside covered with horse trailers—a gaucho rodeo. Cowboys are chasing a fake cow being towed by a motorcycle, dropping a lariat over the horns, keeping alive the old skills.

After a week of coast highways, fishing villages and colonial towns, we turn inland toward the highlands of Brazil. A sign even I can read warns ATENÇÃO: CURVA SINUOSA. The BMW offers its own translation. Sinuous, sensuous curves. The road coils and uncoils beneath me. I create smooth arcs of acceleration that intoxicate. At 60 mph, the BMW scampers, showing off an agility that delights. The passing surge—from 60 to 80—leaves slower vehicles in the mirror. We ignore double lines, pass on corners, anywhere there is an opening—because we can. There is nothing quite as stirring as the sight of three bikes locked in formation, angled over, sweeping through a turn.

We will ride just shy of flat-out for entire days on roads so empty the only distraction will be three pigs crossing, a mule-drawn cart, a gaucho on horseback. To ride at speed is an act of sustained concentration. I extend my sense of sight to the breaking point, aware that a blind spot may contain an oncoming truck.

We pass vultures having their morning meal. A dozen birds perch on the corpse of a large goat to form a black, seething mass, like dog-size maggots with feathers.

Day 6, Brazil: The bodies lie under blue tarps. Leather boots indicate the two are male and, until recently, young. An emergency response team stands idly on the hillside near an ambulance. Three women wrapped in blankets sob hysterically. On the shoulder a Mercedes truck seems isolated and ashamed. The cab sports two impact craters just below the windshield, a good eight feet off the ground. Near the truck is a motorcycle, wadded into something the size of a medicine ball, and the crushed remains of a helmet.

Here lives ended.

Motorcycling is a subtle sport, one that harnesses enormous forces with

my left: truck. To my right: a hundred-foot drop into a river. I aim for the space between and open the throttle.

My heart beats a mantra. Not me. Not yet.

I will hear the noise of those shrieking tires in my sleep for weeks.

Day 12, Argentina: New riders join the group. Newts shows up wearing a T-shirt from the Lazy Gecko, a bar in Cambodia, that depicts a line of marching penguins and the caption ONE BY ONE THE PENGUINS TOOK MY SANITY. It befits his shaved head and goatee. A former machine gunner with the Australian army, he'd served in Somalia and East Timor before he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. The army shrinks told him to destress, so he took up world travel—visiting former war zones as a tourist. Over drinks he tells of waking up in a Kuwait hotel to find himself caught in a shootout between the army and Al Qaeda.

"If you call up the BBC footage, I'm the guy in the zip-tie handcuffs and a Hawaiian shirt, sitting on the curb behind an armored vehicle that's pumping 50-caliber shells into the hotel," Newts says.

I'm relieved to have him along. If anything is going to happen on this trip, it's going to happen to Newts.

Andres, a Colombian financial advisor, raises the mischief quotient. His English has a tinge of Borat, the Sacha Baron Cohen character. One night he tries to teach us the music of the Spanish language. He starts by having us

practice the proper way to greet a policeman. We repeat the phrase until we have it right. *Hijo de puta. Hijo de puta.*

The phrase, it turns out, means "son of a bitch."

We pull into a roadside café with no name. A sweating, gap-toothed chef throws meat onto a sidewalk grill, the smoke collecting under the overhanging tin roof. Andres translates the menu: "cow parts." The waitress brings a wooden plank with cow ribs, cow intestines, an udder and possibly a tongue.

John asks, "Does this qualify as a hint of danger?"

The tour dossier had said we would discover exotic cuisine like alligator and guinea pig. It made no mention of projectile vomiting inside a closed motorcycle helmet.

Day 18, Argentina: When we wake in Purmamarca—a town lined with hard-scrabble streets and adobe houses—it is zero

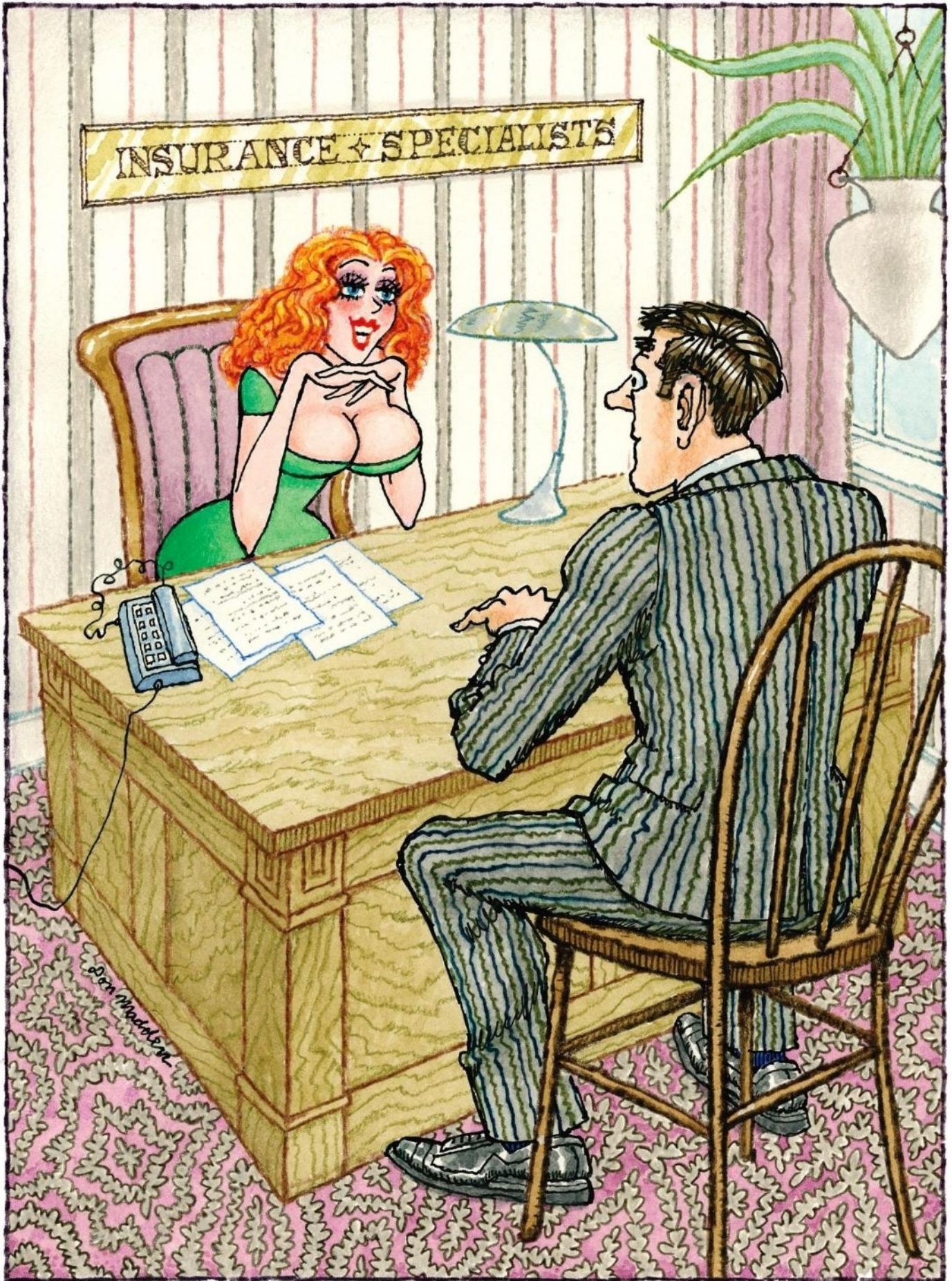


The writer's BMW against the sunbaked desert of southern Peru.

the twist of a throttle, the gentle push on a handlebar, the squeeze of a brake lever. When you do it right, the bike becomes invisible and you are a creature of flight. Do it wrong, and those forces reveal themselves in mangled metal and mauled flesh. A moment's inattention and the last thing I will see is the big blue tarp. I've accepted and been shaped by that risk for most of my life.

The cobblestone road becomes a dirt track winding through hills. We pass cascading rivers, a farm with a giant spinning water wheel, pastures filled with indifferent cows and small towns with churches letting out. I come around a blind corner at the same time a tanker truck enters from the other direction. If this were a graphic novel, the next frame would show the look of surprise and fear on the driver's unshaven face. The beads of sudden sweat.

I hear the shriek of locked brakes, the sound of a couple of tons of metal scabbling across the road into my lane. To



*"Do you have any preexisting conditions—like a wife?"*

degrees centigrade. We breathe into the locks on the motorcycles to unfreeze them.

We head out of town as dogs watch us from the rooftops and alleys, and we begin to ascend a winding road. We enter a cloud of mist, emerging at about 3,000 meters with the cloud below us blazing white in the sun. We continue over a 4,700-meter pass, the temperature gauge on the bike showing minus 10 degrees centigrade. If we were on a commercial flight, in a cabin without pressure, oxygen masks would be dropping out of overhead compartments.

The ride across the Altiplano is awesome, empty and strange. We pass salt flats, white discs in the middle of vast open spaces, and dark blue lagoons that draw color from the sky. Vicuñas and llamas graze on rare patches of grass. We pass the skeleton of a horse still wearing its skin, propped up as though it were sitting on its rump. Someone has decorated it with flowers and flags.

The quality of the air, the clarity of the light.... This is as far from the eye chart in a doctor's office as it is possible to be. Up here I can see farther and in greater detail than I have in years.

Day 22, Bolivia: We arrive in Uyuni around midnight to a hotel without power, heat or lights. We sleep in our riding clothes for the second night in a row.

The power outage lasts three days. Cars and buses line up at the two gas stations, waiting for the pumps to light up. We tour a graveyard of rusting trains abandoned in the 1950s. The sand drifts halfway up the steel wheels, burying the tracks. On blood-red metal someone has painted the phrase *My heart is burning alive*.

Standing on a downtown corner, Andres and Newts make a sign that says in Spanish "Will pay twice the going rate for gas." Within five minutes a guy leads them to a 50-gallon drum in his backyard. We suction fuel through a hose and pour it through plastic Coke bottles cut into funnels.

We leave town for another day of gravel, construction detours, water crossings

and animal hazards, arriving in Potosí, a 400-year-old city built on mineral wealth—silver hauled from the ground. Three weeks into the journey, my riding suit has developed a personality. I picture the end of the ride, standing the suit at a bar, buying it a drink, slapping it on the back and saying, "You're on your own."

We buy dynamite from a street vendor, a young woman who cuts fuse cord and short stubby sticks of explosives. She reaches into her apron for blasting caps. Total cost: about \$2 an explosion. One of the Aussies who have joined our group sniffs the dynamite and says it doesn't smell of cordite like the stuff he buys at home.

"What do you use it for at home?" I ask. "Family arguments."

Our guide helps us set off one of the sticks in a stone field. The concussive fist of air triggers something in each of us.

That night Newts makes another sign, drawing a stick figure of a woman with large breasts and a bottle with xxxxx, the universal sign for booze. He flags down a taxi and gives the sign to the driver. In the morning the survivors can barely recall: a flashing neon sign, a dance floor, women and someone, Newts probably, saying, "Wanna bet I can get thrown out?"

Day 26, Bolivia: On the outskirts of La Paz we roll past a block of stores with steel grates on their windows. Out of the corner of my eye I notice an effigy—a human figure fashioned from gray fabric, filled with rubber blocks or garbage or something more dreadful, strung up by the neck 20 feet off the ground. A phrase is painted on the chest in red paint. Looking down the block I see an effigy on every lamppost.

I ask someone at the hotel about the effigies. The answer: "Theft is a big problem in Bolivia. The police are corrupt or inefficient. The merchants know if you hand the thief over to the authorities, he will be back the next day, angry. So they hang them. Or burn them." Thirty-five thieves have been hanged in the preceding year. At a festival at a nearby beach

resort, eight youths followed a woman into an alley. They grabbed her necklace and tried to pry the earrings from her ears. Two boys saw what was happening and ran to the town square. The community descended on the youths and, angered by the marks on the victim's neck, poured gasoline on the thieves and set them afire.

We store our motorcycles in a secure compound, then take a taxi to the hotel. I walk the city. The shoe-shine boys, ashamed of their profession, wear ski masks to hide their identities. At intersections citizens dressed in zebra costumes leap about. Actors in donkey suits follow jaywalkers. A museum diorama shows one of the heroes of Bolivia being drawn and quartered—pulled apart by horses.

Rob and I visit the witches' market, a narrow street lined with stalls selling totems that promise to protect you on a journey, bring love and prosperity and make your pecker grow. Outside are llama fetuses hung by the dozen and dried piranha, their mouths gaping, arranged on spikes to be used as offerings to God.

We are looking for something else, a map to the Road of Death. We hire a taxi driver to guide us through La Paz traffic to El Camino de la Muerte. It's just me and Rob. No one else in the group will go.

Day 28, Bolivia: The Road of Death was constructed by prisoners of war from Paraguay in the 1930s. It is a ledge strung across a nearly vertical swath of the Andes, a slippery strand of mud and gravel, barely a car and a half wide, prone to landslides and fatal rockfalls. Above the road, a steep, overgrown, almost vertical mountain. Below the road, a 2,000-foot precipice. No guardrails between.

This very morning I read a news story about a bus plunge that took 17 lives. The reporter used an odd phrase, saying the bus "fell off the Andes."

I turn on the helmet cam and head downhill. The government has closed the route to trucks; it is now maintained



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as a thrill ride for oxygen-starved mountain bikers. Without the oncoming trucks or the taxi drivers adrift in an alcoholic stupor, the Road of Death is just another road with an incredibly steep drop-off.

Rob wills himself not to look at the edge (on a motorcycle you go where you look) and rides close to the cliff face. I ride with the helmet cam aimed at the edge. It catches details that in my focused state I miss. The soundtrack picks up the sound of my breathing, the rattle of water hitting the bike as I pass waterfalls, a muttered prayer: "Don't look down." The wide-angle lens imposes a frame on the view, a frame that magnifies the blur of details that indicates speed. When eventually I see the footage, I crawl out of my skin.

Day 31, Peru: On the road from Puno to Cuzco, we gallop across the landscape at 90 to 100 miles an hour. We pass beneath the relics of glaciers hung out like skins to dry in the sun.

And then we hit a traffic jam. We edge past a long line of stopped gas trucks to where large rocks lie in rows across the road. The hills are covered with locals out for the entertainment. This is a roadblock, the first of many.

No one can tell us the cause of the protest—natives close the artery to express discontent over the outcome of soccer matches, the price of gasoline, government attempts to regulate the coca industry. Strikes can start on one side of Lake Titicaca and sweep the nation. We may be stopped for hours or days.

Our guide, Micho, negotiates with the locals. I take their laughter as a good sign. A deal is struck. We will carry villagers to the next roadblock. Two girls climb on one bike; an old guy climbs on behind me, giving a toothless grin to every person on the side of the road as we move out. It is a great frolic, until the last roadblock.

The organizers (oddly, all women) deny us passage. They scold the girls, who reluctantly climb down from our bikes. The mood changes in an instant. The women, all jowls and crossed arms, threaten to stone us, douse us with gasoline and set us afire. The threat needs no translation.

We backtrack and run a small roadblock guarding a side road. It is a rumor of a road, a blade-cut swath up the side of a mountain that supposedly leads to Cuzco. We crest the mountain and find ourselves in unspoiled Peru: farms, sheep, schoolkids pushing bikes, cattlemen on horseback. We buy gas from a woman in a cowboy hat who

goes into her house and comes out with a pitcher filled with fuel.

Somewhere in this mad passage we lose Rob. Riding ahead, he takes a wrong turn and ends up back on the highway of roadblocks. He plays dumb, riding past the protesters, saying, "No entiendo" ("I don't understand"). A boy throws a wire net under the wheels of the motorcycle, which wraps around the chain and brakes. Rob cuts it free with his Leatherman and beats us to the hotel.

Day 39, Peru: I depend on my cameras. They have autofocus; my eyes do not. At night I review the images like a pilgrim counting prayer beads:

A girl with cutoff shorts in a bar watching a soccer game, the flag of Brazil worn like a garter on her lean, tanned thigh.

A young boy leading blind musicians home at the end of the day, one hand on the shoulder of the person in front.

We sit at a café in Arequipa, comparing images on our digital cameras. Independently we have each taken a picture of a policewoman directing traffic on the town square, her motorcycle parked nearby. She is a striking figure, wearing the skintight khaki stretch pants and high boots favored by CHiPs. A policewoman with visible panty lines makes an arresting authority figure. None of us photographed her face, just that perfect ass.

I retire to my room to edit the picture. I have been on the road too long.

Day 40, Peru: We descend toward the coast. For three weeks the bikes have been starved of oxygen. Now they romp.

The road out of Arequipa twists through a lunar landscape where nothing grows. The colors—gray, tan, white—are the dust and rubble from ancient volcanoes, worn to stumps. The shrines begin almost immediately. In one 95-mile stretch I count 147 crosses. They are easy to spot. Other than the power line to our left, the black-and-white kilometer posts and the shards of truck tires, they are the only man-made objects in view.

Here someone went off a corner through a guardrail. Here someone didn't see the oncoming curve and augured into the mountain. There are shrines at almost every service station and store. And then there are those that dot the long straits. Every point where someone asked something of their vehicle and it failed. This is the real highway of death. And at each shrine I hear my heart beat its mantra. Not me. Not yet. Not ever.

We crest the last range of mountains and feel the cold breath of air coming off the Humboldt Current. John, Rob and I split off from the group for a private celebration. We set the bikes loose in the sand, performing burnouts, sending rooster tails skyward. But quickly we become subdued. How will we describe this journey to friends and family? I set the timer on a digital camera for a group photo with motorcycle. Every day of the ride is visible on our faces. Below us the Pacific applauds.



"I think I might've played too many slow songs."







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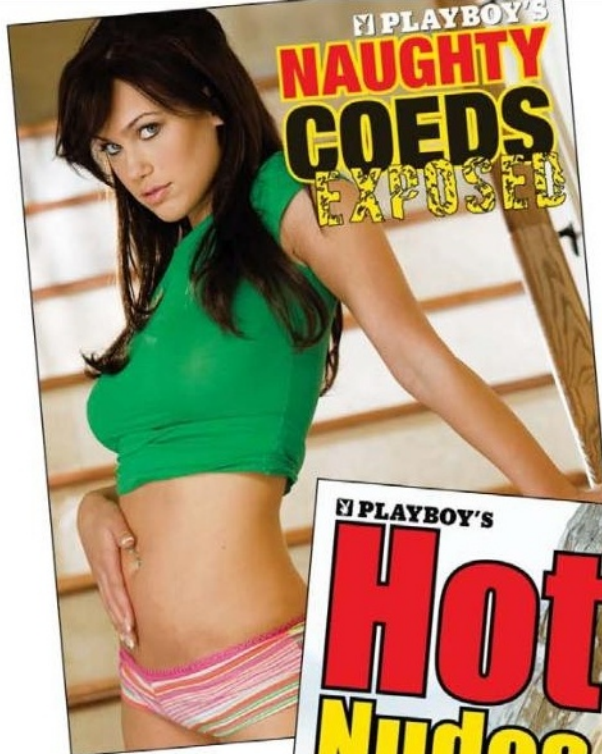
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# WILD BILL

(continued from page 54)

white-sand beaches of the east-facing islands. They were followed by American and European backpackers and sun worshippers. Soon enough guesthouses and hostels sprouted, tourist outfits from the States hired local Indians to run their canoe-like *pangas* across the bay on snorkeling excursions, and scuba instructors hung signs.

"When I first arrived here 10 years ago there were a couple of local Indian fish restaurants, a taverna or two and a lot of dogs fucking on Main Street," one foreign resident of the province's principal cay, Isla Colón, tells me after a day of exploring mangrove swamps and jungle trails. We are sitting outside a bar in downtown Bocas Town on Isla Colón. I look around. The dogs are gone.

Evoking W. Somerset Maugham's notorious homage to the Côte d'Azur—"a sunny place for shady people"—some gringos moved to Bocas to become, and remain, lost. A wealthy 65-year-old Floridian known as Mike Brown was one of them. In 2003 he and his Thai wife, Manchitha Nankratoke, and teenage son, Watson, purchased a 45-acre finca in a district known as Cauchero, at the ass end of nowhere some distance from Isla Colón. Back in Miami, Brown was wanted on a 1981 warrant for kidnapping, grand theft, possession of cocaine and a prison escape under his true name, Michael Francis Salem.

Others, such as the 58-year-old former Santa Fe antiques dealer Bo Icelar, found the islands an ideal corner in which to escape money problems. Icelar—who had changed his name from Barry Eisler after declaring bankruptcy back in the States—still liked to take the occasional journey to Africa or Asia and return with a rare Hutu tribal mask or Cambodian porcelain figurine. Friends knew him as a tough albeit quiet man, a martial artist with refined tastes.

The Browns and Bo Icelar would soon be dead.

For Keith Werle and Cher Hughes, Bocas represented a new adventure. He was a kid from Flushing, Queens who had knocked around Hollywood until—in a bizarre world Harrison Ford career arc—he found his niche as a master carpenter and set designer. She had brains, beauty and a magnetic personality, a businesswoman from St. Louis who had migrated to Florida to start a neon-sign business and, in her words, "make enough money to spend the rest of my life traveling the world before I'm too old."

In 1990 Werle counted his savings, pulled up stakes in Los Angeles and moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, where he opened a beachside gin mill. One night a few years later Cher Hughes walked in. They fell heavily.

"We both had this restless streak, like there had to be more to life than what we were seeing and doing," Werle tells me one morning over Costa Rican coffee. "In Florida, aside from our businesses, we were also making money flipping houses—buying these ramshackle places, fixing them up, selling them. I liked her idea of chucking all our stuff and just seeing the world. Then one day a friend of mine from St. Pete came

into my bar, told me he'd bought a lot on some godforsaken Panama seacoast and asked if I'd head down there to build him a house. Cher and I stepped off the plane here planning to spend a couple of days. We stayed a month and went back only to get our stuff."

Werle unloaded his bar. Hughes sold her sign-making business for \$1.2 million. On tiny Isla Carenero, just across the water from Bocas Town on Isla Colón, they refurbished an "Indian shack" and added a separate four-room guesthouse. He was soon in demand as a builder, "a guy who comes in on time and on budget," as the owner of a hotel Werle constructed told me. She was a happy gadabout, taking a particular interest in the local children, handing out lollipops near the Isla Colón grammar school and hosting kids' movie nights. They were married in an outdoor ceremony beneath a spinney of banana and bougainvillea trees. The expat community still tells tales of the all-night party.

The two next purchased their own isolated "footprint" island, 2.5 acres in all, one hour south of Isla Colón by motorized *panga*. They erected a Swiss Family Robinson wood home atop the small cay's steep crest, complete with two thatched-roof outer buildings, a hot tub and indoor and outdoor rainwater plumbing.

"This was our getaway," says Werle, adding that he and Hughes had a steady income from the Isla Carenero guesthouse. "Bocas Town and Carenero were getting old, not quite the Panama we were looking for—too many gringos, still too Americanized, even by the time we got here. I mean, both neighbors on either side were from Florida."

Their new island home was a mile across a small bay from the Brown family's farm in Cauchero.

In early 2008 Werle and Hughes returned to Cauchero from a vacation to discover they had new neighbors, a 30ish American couple who skimmed over to their island one morning in an expensive speedboat—the same speedboat, Werle was quick to notice, in which Mike Brown always traveled.

They introduced themselves as William Adolfo and Jane Seana Cortez—"Call me Wild Bill," the man insisted in his Southern drawl—and announced they had bought out the Browns, paying cash for the homestead, lock, stock and barrel. Bill and Jane were odd. He was about six feet tall and close to 300 pounds, with an inflated chest set on short stubby legs, ripped biceps and platinum ringlets falling about his balloon-like head. (His bloated body and boisterous personality led Werle—and, later, many others—to peg him as a steroid freak, anabolics being as easy to score in Panama as cocaine.) She was short and verging on round with two dark satchels of flesh bulging beneath her eyes, an obviously once-pretty blonde going to seed. She was also careful to always remain a few steps behind her loud-mouthed husband, emitting inappropriate high-pitched giggles over nothing.

Still, Bill and Jane Cortez's presence raised no red flags. The Browns had been a private family, tending to their chickens

and a few cattle while venturing into Bocas Town only for supplies. Everyone on the islands knew their place had been on the market for months. Anyone who lived in the tropics, including Werle and Hughes, understood that gringos, even gringo families, often picked up and left Central America as quickly as they'd arrived. The disappearance of the Browns and the arrival of this new couple was par for the expat course.

Over the next several weeks Bill Cortez dropped by Werle and Hughes's island regularly. He boasted he was the son of a Mexican mother and a Texas cattle baron, had inherited vast wealth and was looking to get into the then-thriving Bocas del Toro real estate market. He had first tried neighboring Costa Rica, he said, but he felt that country was played out. Panama, and particularly the Bocas islands, were "virgin turf" more to his liking.

Werle and Hughes were puzzled and somewhat amused when Wild Bill also announced his intentions to build a waterside bar and restaurant near the dock landing that led to the former Brown farm. It would be, Cortez said, "the First Temple of Drunks," and he would serve as its pope. Werle could count on both hands the number of foreigners who had settled so far from Isla Colón, and he knew there was no way the local Indians, who made up the majority of the population in Cauchero, would ever be attracted to a joint serving greasy french fries and flash-fried frozen chicken wings.

"But everyone has their dream, you know," Werle recalls that morning, months later. "Even if it's nuts, it's still a dream."

Soon enough, however, *nuts* was one of the milder epithets the residents of Bocas began to utter about Bill and Jane Cortez, whose names had become as synonymous with misfortune as Smith & Wesson.

"I remember going to the opening party for their restaurant, and there was just something off about the whole thing," says Doug Ruscher, raising his voice over the drone of his 60-horsepower engine as he weaves his fiberglass *panga* around mangrove islands on the way to Cauchero. Ruscher, a former agronomist from Ohio, owns a lovely beachside bed-and-breakfast in Bocas Town. He was also one of Bo Icelar's best friends.

"We all motored down, like today. You don't reach Cauchero by road," he says. Above us the sky is the color of brushed aluminum, and in the near distance an Indian dives for lobster from his dugout canoe. "And, well, Bill never struck me as the type to move down here and be captured by the jungle's beauty and solitude. Anyway, here we are. Check it out for yourself."

Ruscher kills the engine and guides his *panga* toward a disused dock fronting a two-story hardwood structure. A pelican perches atop a bloodred rendering of a leering skull and crossbones wearing a conquistador's helmet. Beneath the image, in hand lettering, a sign reads CASA CORTEZ: EST. 2009.

The three-sided bar at the end of the dock is empty. A few unopened Heineken bottles litter the plank floor. Someone has swept a small pile of chipped CDs and yellowing paperbacks into a corner amid the cigarette butts, empty liquor bottles and rotting palm

fronds. Ruscher pauses to examine a couple of the books, reading the titles aloud. "Lucifer's Hammer, Killing Time." He shakes his head. "Creepy shit," he says.

"I've been living in Bocas for 10 years, which makes me something of a pioneer, I suppose. And I've seen some strange characters come and go. But Wild Bill was different. He was kind of dense yet a braggart at the same time, if that makes sense. And he loved to bang off clips from his AK-47, just blast them into the sky. You'd be having a drink and suddenly *blam-blam-blam*."

"Told me he'd played NFL football, said he was the son of an American ambassador to Mexico. But given his pretty obvious lack of education—I mean, come on, an ambassador's son?—that was hard to swallow. More like trailer trash gone bad."

Similar opinions were offered to me by expats across the islands, including a former North Carolina epidemiologist and close friend of Cher Hughes's—she asked that I use only her first name, Michelle—who still lives a few miles from the Cortez compound in Cauchero.

"I went to one of their first parties—they had them almost every weekend," Michelle says one afternoon as a hard rain raps off the tin roof. "He was always out in front, the loud greeter, with all his pirate stuff and his guns. A big swinging dick. He liked to show

off his toys—his WaveRunner, his giant flat-screen TV—and he boasted he once shot an Indian he caught fishing off his dock. I didn't go over there after that. He was the type of guy for whom the word *fuck* was noun, verb and adjective, and he used it twice a sentence. That and the word *nigger*; he threw around all the time. But he never lacked for cash. Liked to flash big wads of it. Said he got rich trading gold.

"Early on, at that first party, I tried to talk to Jane. It seemed to me he didn't like her mixing or even speaking with other people. But I got her alone in the kitchen, and she told me she was a large-animal veterinarian from Texas. I had a sick dog at the time and asked if she would take a look at him. She freaked. The sweat poured out of her, and she said, 'Oh no, a dog is too small an animal for me to look at. You better find another vet.' She was as much a veterinarian as I'm the queen of Sheba."

It was in fall 2009, as Wild Bill Cortez became a fixture in the bars of Isla Colón, that Bo Icelar decided to pull up stakes. "He was just a restless guy," says his friend Ruscher. "I think he was considering moving overseas, maybe to one of the places he'd visited on his antiques-hunting trips."

That November Icelar put his two-story beachfront home on Isla Colón on the market. At the same time he struck a deal with

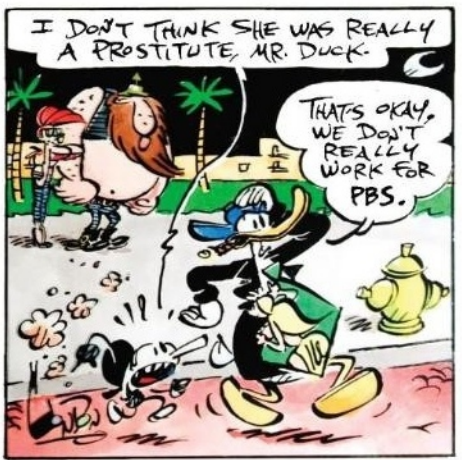
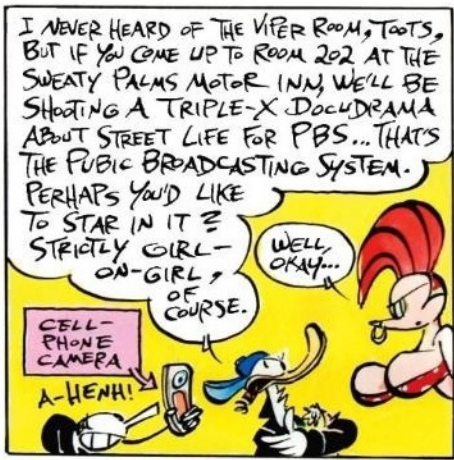
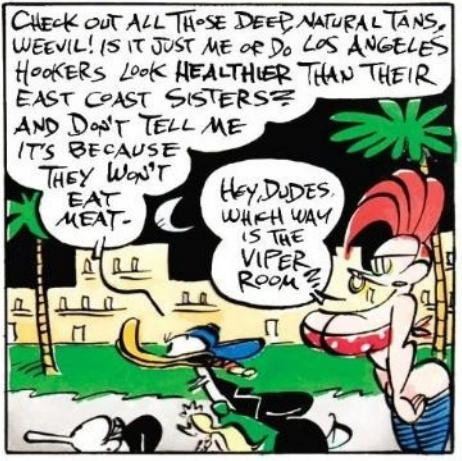
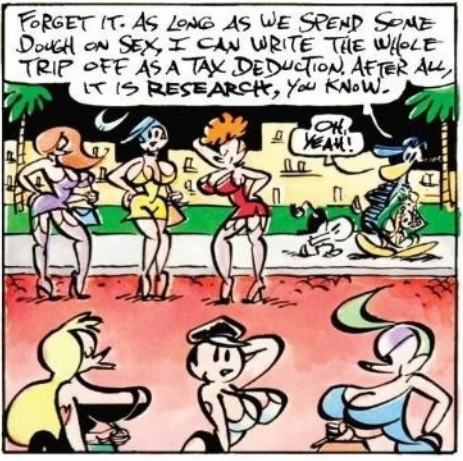
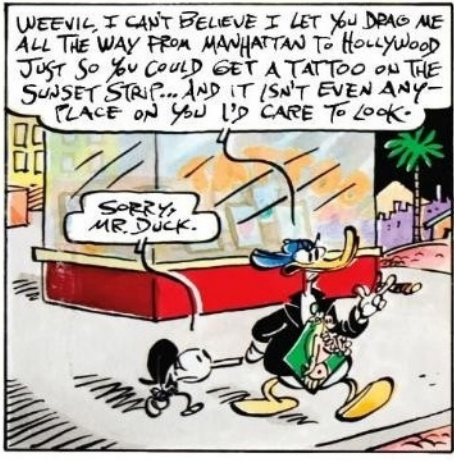
Werle's construction outfit to redo the upper floor. When Werle and his crew arrived three days later to begin work, he was greeted at the front door by Bill Cortez.

"Same story as with the Browns," says Werle. "Told me he'd bought Bo out for cash. Said he still wanted me to do the work; he was going to fix up the house and flip it. When I went inside it was just too eerie. All Bo's clothes were still in the closet. All his artwork and antiques were still there. Lots of personal stuff, like his toothbrush. Still, like I say, it's not beyond the range of plausibility that Bill gives Bo \$400K in cash and Bo's on a plane the next morning with only the clothes on his back. You know: 'Here's the key; see ya.' That's life down here."

Unlike the Brown family, however, Icelar had lived near Bocas Town. He had neighbors, and his sudden disappearance fanned rumors that Wild Bill had been spotted lugging something heavy, wrapped in a blue plastic tarp, onto his speedboat the night Icelar departed. Cortez countered by telling people he had purchased half a cow on Isla Colón to butcher in Cauchero.

Meanwhile, it was also around this time that Werle and Hughes's marriage began to go south. Some who knew Hughes said they could see the physical deterioration; she was putting on weight and, says a friend, her five years in Bocas had seemed to add years to

# Dirty Duck by Bobby London



her face. The same friend accompanied her to the city of David for an appointment with a plastic surgeon. The breaking point in her relationship with Werle came one September night when Hughes, drinking heavily, stuck a sawed-off shotgun to his chest over a perceived slight. He moved out and rented a room on Isla Colón the next day. That Christmas was the first they'd spent apart since they'd met. Three months later, in March 2010, Cher Hughes vanished.

Thirty-one-year-old William Dathan Holbert and his wife, Laura Michelle Reese, 27—a.k.a. William Adolfo and Jane Cortez—were pegged as lowlives pretty much from the start by nearly everyone with whom they had come into contact. Acquaintances and former co-workers have described both of them as avid weight lifters. He is a former North Carolina high school football player, she a former gym rat for whom Holbert left his wife and three children. He is also an avowed white supremacist with a large swastika tattoo on his upper back and another, engraved *ARYAN PRIDE*, on his arm. In 2002 the Southern Poverty Law Center cited him as a rising star in the western North Carolina branch of the neo-Nazi National Alliance organization. A year later, according to the center's investigators, he arrived at a white nationalist cookout claiming to represent a new racist group.

During this period Holbert also opened a business in Forest City, North Carolina. The storefront, frequented by skinheads, sold books, CDs and pamphlets promoting white supremacy in the South and hosted speeches by regional leaders of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Moreover, his penchant for selling other people's properties was not unique to his tenure in Panama.

In 2005 Holbert was wanted for stealing a car in Montana, forging the vehicle title and reselling it. In early 2006 a North Carolina warrant was issued for Holbert's arrest after he obtained a false license and posed as a doctor in order to forge a deed to a house belonging to an elderly female retiree. He subsequently sold the house, and he and his wife used the \$200,000 profit to flee to Kentucky under assumed names. There they purchased another home, vacationed in Ireland and traveled across the U.S. Southwest, looking for sites to open a gym, they told people. Sensing the U.S. Marshals Service's Fugitive Task Force was closing in on them, they fled Kentucky. A few days later they were pulled over by a Wyoming highway patrolman who had run the plates on a vehicle stolen in West Virginia, but Holbert managed to lose the policeman in a high-speed chase.

Investigators suspect that Holbert and Reese began the first leg of their journey to Central America via a 14-foot U-Haul truck stolen in Bismarck, North Dakota and found abandoned in North Palm Beach, Florida. Their first stop was Costa Rica, a country from which, Panamanian police say, they also fled under mysterious circumstances surrounding a missing lawyer from whom they had rented a house.

Holbert and Reese have never been charged with a homicide in the U.S., and the FBI refuses to comment on any federal

murder investigations it may be conducting in the States, other than to say the couple is "cooperating" with Panamanian authorities. Yet the former head of the FBI's Behavioral Science Unit, serial-killer hunter William Hagmaier, tells me it would not surprise him if Holbert's U.S. rap sheet was a mere prelude to the discovery of "even more heinous crimes in America." He adds, "People in their 30s don't just suddenly decide to become serial killers."

No one in Bocas del Toro, naturally, had any idea of this backstory when the Browns, Bo Icelar and Cher Hughes went missing. Cortez told people Hughes had decided to sell her island home as well as the properties on Isla Carenero after falling in love with a man she'd met in Panama City. She had, he added, made the deal with him, again for cash, the night before joining her new lover on his sailboat for a long sea voyage. Werle did not buy it. When he confronted Cortez about his belongings still on the island in Cauchero—construction equipment, fishing gear, a couple of generators—Cortez told him that per his contract with Hughes, everything was now his. This included Werle and Hughes's two shih tzus and their brown Doberman. Werle knew his wife would never leave her dogs in the hands of this couple.

Moreover, unlike the Browns and Icelar, Werle and Hughes had placed their properties in a legal trust in Hughes's name. Werle demanded to see the contract Cortez said he had signed with her. Cortez countered that he and Hughes had also signed a confidentiality agreement. If Werle didn't like it he could take it up with Hughes upon her return, whenever that might be. The next day, in Bocas Town, Cortez tracked down Werle and threw one of the shih tzus at him. The dog was emaciated and near death.

Meanwhile, Werle and Hughes's houses on Isla Carenero across the narrow strait from Isla Colón were receiving the full Casa Cortez pirate makeover. Cortez fired the longtime property manager, installed his own and put the rooms up for rent. Out front he erected a sign—white lettering on a bloodred background and illustrated with the by now familiar skull and crossbones in conquistador helmet—labeling the guesthouse a DELIGHTFULLY WICKED PLACE. On the small private dock he placed another hand-lettered warning, in English and Spanish, in the same color scheme: PARKING AND/OR TOUCHING MAY RESULT IN DEATH. In case this message was not clear, he added, TRESPASSERS AND/OR THIEVES MAY BE EXECUTED.

Prior to Hughes's disappearance Werle and she had continued to text each other fairly often. "The usual love-hate stuff after a breakup," he says. "I still love you,' 'No, I hate you.' 'You're a dick.' 'No, you're not.' But then the texts just stopped. Then there was her family. They contacted me, wanted to know if I knew where she was. You see, she missed her father's birthday. She always called him on his birthday.

"A couple of days after I had the confrontation with Bill about getting my stuff back, the texts started again, but their flavor had changed. Misspellings. Messages all in capital letters. Words Cher would never use. Other friends of ours were getting the same kind of texts. They were from her iPhone,



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but I knew it wasn't her. That was the first time I thought she might be dead, that Bill had killed her."

Werle was at a loss. He went to the Isla Colón police, but, as he puts it, drawing on an analogy from his youth in New York, "that was like asking the Montauk PD to investigate a string of gang homicides in the Bronx. They just weren't equipped. They were used to handling domestic disputes, shoplifting, small drug deals."

Cortez, meanwhile, learned that Werle had approached the authorities. Soon thereafter Werle's friends and associates around Bocas started to warn him of threats Cortez was making.

"I'd run into people who would tell me that Bill was going around town saying he was going to 'get that motherfucker Werle for slandering' him."

Werle moved out of his rented house and into a hotel that employed a 24-hour security guard.

"I was scared shitless. I'm waiting for this guy to pull up one day at the dock and blow my brains out. He'd said as much. And there's still no sign of Cher. By now the texts had stopped."

Then, in July, another friend—the wife of the man who had originally brought Werle to Bocas to build his house—called. She told him that an American expat with a popular blog in Panama City was posting questions about Bill and Jane Cortez. His name was Don Winner and he was looking into the discovery of the body of a Costa Rican lawyer who had rented his home to the Cortezes. Werle called Winner that afternoon and boarded a puddle jumper to the capital to meet him the next day. Coincidentally, Hughes's aunt and sister had also flown into the country to investigate her disappearance.

"I was just on a fishing expedition, seeing if anyone knew anything about Wild Bill," Winner would tell me later. "Something didn't smell right. All the people were

disappearing, and the common denominator was this asshole Cortez."

Winner advised Werle and Hughes's relatives to file a missing person's report with the U.S. embassy in Panama City but not to hope for any American investigative assistance for a disappeared gringo. Werle and the Hughes women went to the national police headquarters to file against Cortez what the Panama judicial system terms an official *denuncia*, a sort of accusatory sworn deposition. Panama's laws prevented Werle from accusing Cortez of Hughes's murder—there was no body. But Winner explained to him that he might get all of Cortez's properties searched if he had proof that the American had broken Panamanian laws. Werle remembered Wild Bill's fondness for spraying off clips from his AK-47. Assault rifles are illegal in Panama.

It unraveled swiftly. Werle's *denuncia* was enough for a judge to issue a warrant to search the Cortez properties. When a team of detectives arrived in Bocas a few days later, on July 20, Bill and Jane were nowhere to be found. Since Werle had instigated the investigation, the authorities asked him to accompany them to the former Brown family farm. When the group arrived in Cauchero by boat, Werle and Hughes's brown Doberman, Jackie, was sitting on the dock.

"You know Dobermans aren't big water dogs, right?" Werle asks me, the amazement in his voice still evident months later. "He swam the mile from our island—apparently he was doing it every day and Bill had to keep returning him—and he's sitting there on the dock, whimpering."

The house was turned upside down. The toilet had overflowed, and dirty dishes and used syringes littered the kitchen. Clothes were strewn across floors, and three (counterfeit) passports in the name "Brown" were discovered in a desk drawer. A small jar of

gold-capped teeth, apparently ripped from someone's mouth, sat on a window ledge above the kitchen sink. As the search party moved across the living room, one of the police officers nearly tripped over a glass. The glass rolled to a corner and came to rest against a filthy towel. Under the towel a detective found Cher Hughes's passport.

Outside, Jackie the Doberman was in distress. Several times he dashed part way up the steep hill beyond the house before returning to the yard with a yelp. Finally, with the dog howling ever louder, Werle and the police decided to follow him. Jackie led them on a dirt path up the hill and began circling an old garbage pit. Creeping fire-red Holy Ghost orchids, Panama's national flower, emitted a sweet odor. The dog pawed at the ground. The police plunged spades and shovels into the jungle floor. Jackie had led them to Cher Hughes's grave.

Another team of officers began digging through nearby garbage pits. Bo Icelar's skeleton, later identified through dental records, was buried in one. The skeletal remains of the Brown family were dug out of another. The coroner later determined that Icelar and the Brown wife and teenage son had been shot at close range in the back of the head. It was difficult to tell what had killed Michael Brown. His head remains missing. Many in Bocas remember Brown—despite his secretive nature—for his distinctive mouthful of gold teeth.

"Is your office investigating Keith Werle as a suspect in the murder of Cheryl Hughes?"

Angel Calderon awaits the translation of my question into Spanish despite the fact that he understands perfectly well what I said. The Panamanian prosecutor general is fluent in several languages, including English, but formalities must be adhered to. Ruth Alvarado, Werle's attorney, is this afternoon acting as my translator in Calderon's office in Panama City. She repeats the question. The prosecutor's head begins to shake before she has finished speaking.

Calderon says in Spanish, "It has not been established that other people besides William Holbert and his wife collaborated in these crimes. So no."

"And Holbert's contention that Bocas del Toro is a hotbed of drug smuggling, gun-running, pedophilia, money laundering and human trafficking run by an international organized crime syndicate that includes Keith Werle? A 'Mafia' that hired him to commit these five murders?"

A hint of a smile cracks one corner of Calderon's mouth. He is a handsome man in his mid-40s, with thick gelled black hair and a glint in his eye that I have seen in other men who put people in jail for a living. He pushes his chair away from his polished wood desk, stands and tugs at the shirtsleeves of his perfectly starched white dress shirt. This time he does not wait for Alvarado's translation.

"The deaths of the five Americans benefit only one person, William Holbert," he says. "His intention was to keep the money and property he stole for himself. There is no major element of evidence to back up his accusations of organized crime."



Calderon speaks precisely, cautiously. Panamanian police and prosecutors have never before dealt with a serial killer, and the country's news media have inflamed this case to white heat. They also, in a way, abetted in the capture of the couple known as Wild Bill and Jane Cortez. As Calderon explains the time line to me, when the Holberts learned Keith Werle had contacted the Panamanian National Police, they fled Bocas, crossing illegally into Costa Rica. They were looking at rental properties in that country, perhaps shopping for more victims, when they were recognized from news reports. The two had not counted on the media frenzy that would ensue after the discovery of five bodies in Bocas del Toro.

On the run again, they holed up in a rented cabin near the San Juan River that separates Costa Rica from Nicaragua before hiring a boatman to ferry them across. The owner of the cabin recognized them from television reports and notified authorities. When their boat was flagged down at a Costa Rican river checkpoint, Cortez tossed the boatman overboard, took the helm and made for the mouth of Nicaragua's Sarapiquí River. A Nicaraguan army patrol boat gave chase. The couple surrendered when a stream of automatic weapons fire from the patrol boat arced over their bow. Within days Nicaraguan authorities, happy to be rid of the two freakish gringo killers, extradited them to Panama, where they now sit in solitary confinement in separate prisons.

As Panama has no death penalty, Calderon tells me with a certainty inherent to prosecutors the world over that Holbert will be tried and convicted for five murders and sentenced to 50 years in prison. His wife will be tried as an accomplice, and depending on what evidence the ongoing investigation turns up, will serve either a 25-year bit or a 50-year bit as a primary accessory. There are, in Calderon's world, no other options.

Once in jail Holbert began his string of confessions—officially to Panamanian prosecutors and unofficially to several local media outlets, including a rambling late-night phone call to Don Winner. In these he has become increasingly whiny and paranoid, complaining about the lack of regular meals, the confines of his cell, the

incompetence of his public defender and alleged shakedowns by his prison guards.

He also teases out tidbits of conspiracy theories. He admits to the five slayings, for instance, but swears his wife had nothing to do with them. He says he will "blow the lid" off the Bocas crime cartel only when Jane is safely back in the States. He has also issued veiled pleas to the United States government to begin extradition hearings.

Of this last, says an American source in the embassy in Panama City, "Put yourself in his place and balance the ideas of walking the yard in a stateside federal pen with his Aryan Nation pals and watching big-screen TVs in the rec room, versus a gringo with Nazi and Klan tattoos being thrown into a general population that's 90 percent black in Central America."

missing head and the jar of gold teeth. When the Brown money began to dwindle, he adds, it was on to Bo Icelar, who did not have the cash Holbert and his wife expected. Thus the Hughes murder following so swiftly. Hughes's autopsy, he tells me, indicates she was tied by the wrists before being executed—this also constitutes torture under Panamanian law—and was likely shot in Holbert's boat as he took her to the Brown farm.

As the American embassy source tells me, "Panama may not have a death penalty, but they'll convict. That's when the death countdown starts for Wild Bill among all those prisoners."

On my final trip to Cauchero I dropped by the farm Wild Bill and Jane Cortez stole from the Brown family. It was still a crime scene, and two local police officers, whose facial features suggested Indian heritage, toted American-made M-16 rifles. They eyed me warily from the dock as my panga floated up. When I explained my purpose they offered to let me into the house—it was still a pigsty—and pointed me in the direction of the steep hillside that led to the graves of the five American expats.

The police would permit me to inspect the graves at the top of the hill but declined to accompany me. They eyed my flip-flops with grins and conversed in Spanish I barely understood. I did catch one word, however—"bushmaster." They considered my white gringo toes suitable as lunch for these thick-bodied venomous snakes, the largest pit vipers in the world, which inhabit the Panamanian jungle.

It was only at the end of my visit that I noticed the two policemen had pitched tents on the dock. When I asked why they slept and cooked outside, they hesitated for a moment before admitting they believed the place was haunted. They heard noises, like human cries and screams at night, the most frightful sounds one could imagine.

"A lot of Panamanians, particularly country people, still hold a deep belief and deep fear of witches and goblins and ogres," my translator explained with a shrug. I was not so quick to dismiss the thought. It occurred to me that these Panamanian specters had nothing on Wild Bill Cortez.

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# NATIONAL ENQUIRER

(continued from page 44)

starting to shift, *The New York Times* drew flak for quoting an *Enquirer* scoop about Simpson supposedly confessing in a jailhouse meeting with his minister.

Levine joined the tabloid in 1999, and his career seemed to trace the inexorable rise of the gossip media. A onetime sportswriter for the old *News-American* in Baltimore, he signed on to the *Star* after Rupert Murdoch launched it in the 1970s as a rival to the *Enquirer*. As tabloid television continued to be the rage in the 1990s, Levine was tapped as managing editor of *A Current Affair* on Murdoch's Fox network. He occasionally bought *Enquirer* interviews for the show, and the editors he dealt with later lured him to the paper.

That paper was now under more corporate management. A consortium led by Boston Ventures, which had bought the *Enquirer* from Pope's estate in 1988 for \$412.5 million, morphed into a fledgling company called American Media Inc. By the end of 1999, the new publisher also owned the *Star* and the *Globe*, bringing the country's once-warring supermarket papers under the same roof. (Currently AMI owns 15 publications and also handles certain business operations for PLAYBOY, though it has no editorial involvement in the magazine.)

While the *Enquirer* occupies an unmarked one-story building behind a peach-color Dunkin' Donuts in Boca Raton, Levine works out of American Media's Manhattan headquarters at 1 Park Avenue, in a small, dark, cluttered office overlooking an alley frequented by flocks of pigeons and not much else. About all that distinguishes his space from an ordinary worker cubicle are the taped-up tabloid covers, the safe under his desk and the metal file drawers with such labels as CLINTON FEMALES.

Levine, whose photographic memory made his bulging file cabinets almost redundant, proved to be a good fit with the new owners. He nudged the *Enquirer* toward more political fare, most notably the disclosure in 2001 that Jesse Jackson had fathered a child with one of his aides. Little did anyone know that in the coming decade he would scoop the rest of the media on two of the biggest stories in the *Enquirer's* history.

But scoping out scandals doesn't necessarily equal financial success. Just weeks before Elizabeth Edwards died, the *Enquirer's* parent company, American Media, filed for bankruptcy protection. After a difficult meeting with his staff, Levine wondered whether the filing would lead to cutbacks or a more cautious approach to his brand of dirt digging.

## HUNTER BECOMES THE HUNTED

The John Edwards tale began, like so many *Enquirer* investigations, with a phone call. When the tip line rang in the paper's Santa Monica office, reporters often raced to answer it. Rick Egusquiza grabbed it late one afternoon in fall 2007, knowing full well that nine out of 10 calls were worthless, just wackos promising the story of the decade. Egusquiza, 44, had been a Venice Beach bartender, his only writing experience

reviewing porn movies for *Adult Video News*. But he quickly learned the *Enquirer* culture; his first scoop was that Angelina Jolie had gotten a BILLY BOB tattoo on her arm.

The caller haltingly explained—she felt bad about spilling the beans—that John Edwards seemed to be having an affair.

"What proof do you have?"

She claimed to have e-mails from a woman named Rielle Hunter. Half an hour later, having gotten the source's name and number, Egusquiza typed up a lead file—the typical *Enquirer* procedure—and faxed it to Barry Levine and the Boca headquarters.

The next day, the woman sent the four e-mails. Hunter didn't name the politician—she referred to him as Love Lips—but said he was married with kids and was unhappy.

That was enough for Levine. Hunter, after all, had been the videographer for Edwards's campaign, shooting footage in which the grinning candidate flirted with the camera. It was September, and Edwards was running neck and neck with Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton in the upcoming Iowa caucuses.

This, of course, was not just another allegation about a handsome politician who couldn't keep his zipper zipped. The emotional heart of Edwards's candidacy was his wife's battle against cancer. If John was indeed cheating on the smart and likable Elizabeth, his career was over.

Now the paper's challenge was to find Hunter. Levine dispatched Alexander Hitchen, a 35-year-old British reporter with a shaved head, pastel shirts and charm to spare, to a home in South Orange, New Jersey, where, they had learned, Hunter was living with her friend and business partner, Mimi Hockman. Hitchen, who had once worked for the British tabloid *News of the World* and handled press for the Egyptian business magnate Mohamed Al-Fayed, wanted her to play, and he was ready to pay for the privilege.

Hockman answered when he knocked. Hitchen said he was from the *Enquirer*, had information that Hunter was having an affair with Edwards and wanted to see if she would cooperate. Hockman quickly closed the door.

Hitchen knew that people in trouble sometimes had second thoughts, so he waited awhile, knocked again and gave Hockman his card. "This will probably come as a shock to Rielle," he said. "I'm going to stay in the area for an hour. I don't want to trouble you further. Just call me and I'll come straight around." There was no call.

Instead, Hunter made a different call, to Andrew Young, an Edwards confidant who had worked for him since his first run for the Senate, in 1998. He patched her through to the candidate, who later told Young he was worried she would spill the beans to the *Enquirer*. Edwards asked the married aide to allow Hunter to move into his North Carolina home, and Young agreed.

The campaign was determined to stop the story. Edwards made two impassioned calls to Roger Altman, a former deputy Treasury secretary under Bill Clinton whose investment firm had taken a controlling stake in American Media, and pleaded with him to

quash the piece. Elizabeth Edwards, whom Altman had never met, called in tears, pleading with him to intercede during a long, painful conversation (though it turned out her husband had already confessed to a one-night stand with Hunter). Altman, who never interfered with the paper's reporting when he was an owner, did not mention that his firm had given up its stake two years earlier. He checked with David Pecker, American Media's chief executive, who assured him the paper had taken its usual precautions.

As it turned out, David Perel, then the *Enquirer's* editor in chief, was troubled by the lack of direct evidence. A wry, sometimes acerbic man who never seemed to lose his boyish enthusiasm for hot stories, the 47-year-old Perel did not want to be reckless. Even as his reporters developed further information from people around Hunter, he remained unconvinced.

"I don't think you have enough to name her," Perel told Levine. "I also don't think you have enough to put it on the cover. If you want, you can run it inside." The tipster was given a few hundred dollars; had the story made the cover, the *Enquirer*, with its own version of the minimum wage, would have paid at least a thousand. (The paper has forked over more than \$100,000 on occasion but purchased the famous Elvis Presley coffin photo from a cousin of the King for just \$18,000.)

The piece, about Edwards's "shocking mistress scandal," landed with a thud. Levine was upset, convinced that Perel had buried the article by not even allowing a headline on the cover.

But Perel was not giving up. A onetime sportswriter for *The Washington Post* and Gannett newspapers, he had joined the *Enquirer* in 1985 because he craved the sense of adventure that came with being able to charter a plane or a helicopter in pursuit of a sizzling lead. In 2005, after four years as editor in chief, he was fired, then restored to the job a year later, and one thing he had learned over the years was patience. Perel assembled what he called a ghost team to quietly pursue Hunter, floating on the edges of her secretive world.

Egusquiza eventually developed a second source who knew Hunter fairly well. She had the photos and phone records to prove it and also divulged a highly pertinent piece of information: Hunter was pregnant.

Levine was skeptical. Could Hunter be setting up Edwards after getting pregnant by someone else? The paper kicked into love-child mode, because what Levine desperately needed was a photo. When he learned that Hunter had been moved to another home in the Governors Club, Young's gated community in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Levine had his team rent a cottage there.

At the Boca headquarters, Perel assembled a series of Google Earth satellite photos of Hunter's neighborhood, placing them on a board he covered with a white sheet except when team members gathered for a meeting. He had to be able to visualize the buildings, examine the entrances, weigh the options, track her movements so they could maximize their chances of success.



Perel was growing obsessed with the chase. During a video conference with Pecker in New York, Perel outlined the plan from Florida and declared, "I think this is going to be the *Enquirer's* greatest political story ever."

Egusquiza's source had said Hunter was six months pregnant—and had an upcoming doctor's appointment—so the *Enquirer* team spent days sitting in four rental cars, staking out the offices of the two closest gynecologists. They grew bored and got into fights that Perel had to referee. As they waited, they were armed only with a photo of Hunter and a description of the BMW she was driving. Perel had run through the likely scenarios and drawn up a list of seven options, based on their quarry's movements.

When Hunter walked out of one of the medical offices, she was wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and jeans in the mild weather, and a baby bump was visible. A photographer snapped away through the car window while the reporters summoned another car as backup. But Levine had given strict orders.

"If we had hit her coming out of the doctor's office, she would've jumped right in the car," says Levine, who can sound like a mobster ordering someone bumped off. "That would have been a risky venture. I didn't want to get in a high-speed chase."

Instead the cars followed Hunter to a Whole Foods across the street—that was one of Perel's predicted scenarios—and when she emerged and started loading groceries into the trunk, *Enquirer* reporter Alan Smith raced over and identified himself.

"We know you're having John Edwards's baby," he said. "We're publishing a story."

His colleague, Alan Butterfield, approached from the other direction: "Are you dating John Edwards? Is that John Edwards's baby?"

"I don't know who you're talking about," Hunter said. The two men said they knew precisely who she was.

Smith tried a softer tone: He knew that this was an ordeal. Perhaps they could have coffee and talk off the record? But he got nowhere.

Butterfield called Levine for instructions. "You need to go hit up Andrew Young," Levine said.

It was pitch-black when the reporters arrived. They mistakenly went to the side door of the large two-story house. When they finally found the front door and knocked, Young's wife, Cheri, dialed 911 and asked for help dealing with two intruders.

"They said they're with the *National Enquirer*," she told the dispatcher. "They're press. And they're at our...on our private property, peeking in our windows."

Moments later her husband arrived at the 50-foot driveway, blocking their Jeep Liberty with his car. "Go get my gun!" Andrew Young told his wife, though they didn't own one.

He broke a broomstick in half to make a threatening sound. The reporters rushed from the front door to the driveway, where Young was standing. "You're trespassing," he warned them. They denied it, trying to coax the comment they needed. "Does Elizabeth know you're covering for John?"

Butterfield demanded. But Young would not so much as confirm his identity.

Butterfield came face to face with Young and felt they were on the verge of coming to blows. No way he was going to let that happen, Butterfield thought. He got paid well, but he wasn't going to hit some weasel who was covering for a married man.

As the standoff continued, Butterfield called a company lawyer in Boca Raton for advice. A portly sheriff's deputy arrived, and the reporters argued that there was no sign warning against trespassing. A supervisor showed up next and concluded he could not arrest them for doing their jobs. But, he said ominously, "you can get shot out here in North Carolina just knocking on someone's door."

The mission had been accomplished, albeit in madcap fashion: The paper, at the insistence of its attorneys, had given both Hunter and Young a chance to comment.

Young and Hunter quickly lawyered up. Their attorneys called Levine and said that while Hunter was indeed pregnant, it was not John Edwards's baby—it was Young's. Levine asked if the two would take polygraphs, but the request was rejected.

The paper was ready to pull the trigger. Levine placed a call to Jonathan Prince, a top Edwards campaign official. Prince had been flatly denying the rumors for weeks, based on a personal assurance from Edwards that there was no affair. He tried to dissuade mainstream journalists from writing about the matter, arguing that they couldn't run something based solely on the *Enquirer*, which, he said, had printed plenty of false accusations.

When Levine reached him, Prince insisted that a story about Hunter would destroy both John and Elizabeth Edwards. This was nothing but an affair between two campaign workers. Why was that worth publishing?

"Jonathan, you're all being lied to," Levine said. "This is a cover-up." Prince told him he was completely wrong.

The Edwards team made one last-ditch move, floating the idea of giving the *Enquirer* a sworn affidavit affirming that Young was the father of the unborn child. Perel was stunned by how preposterous the suggestion was. While his ghost team had been monitoring Hunter, they saw she had gone to Young's home for dinner. What kind of man brings his pregnant mistress to dinner with his wife and kids? Perel knew the cover was a farce.

In the December 31, 2007 issue, the *Enquirer* published its LOVE CHILD SCANDAL! cover—over a larger headline about Kelly Ripa's marriage supposedly being in trouble—and reported that Hunter had "told a close confidante that Edwards is the father of her baby!" Hunter was shown in the supermarket shots wearing a snug black shirt with a peace symbol embedded in a heart, along with photos of John and Elizabeth and the Governors Club. The paper included a statement in which Hunter complained that the "innuendos and lies" were "completely unfounded and ridiculous."

But the bombshell, to use a favorite tabloid word, immediately entered a strange limbo. It had exploded and virtually everyone in America knew about it, but mainstream news organizations steadfastly refused to acknowledge it. This was not, as some conspiracy theorists believed, because the liberal press was protecting a favored Democrat but because the story relied entirely on anonymous sources whose allegations could not be confirmed by other journalists. And it was, after all, in the *Enquirer*.

But a funny thing happened. The media gatekeepers could no longer slam the door shut. Over the next few months bloggers for Slate and the Huffington Post openly debated the story and taunted the mainstream press for its resistance. Some North Carolina papers, led by *The Charlotte Observer*, nibbled at the edges of the tale. But the national newspapers remained silent, with



"Beware of the Ides of March...April...May...June...."

a *Los Angeles Times* editor telling his bloggers “not to cover the rumors or salacious speculations” because “the only source” was the *Enquirer*. Journalists incessantly debated the subject in their newsrooms but, because they lacked independent proof, felt compelled to keep the story from a public that already knew all about it.

“PUSH HARDER”

A few months later, in July 2008, long after John Edwards had quit the campaign, Rick Egusquiza was spending a week in the New York office when his second source delivered some real-time intelligence: Edwards was about to visit his mistress and newborn baby at the Beverly Hilton.

“Holy shit,” Levine said. But Egusquiza felt stranded on the wrong coast. It was, he said, like missing your kid’s birthday party.

Alexander Hitchen was dispatched to lead the stakeout. Alan Butterfield, who was based in California, joined the team as well. The 44-year-old Butterfield, who first hooked up with the *Enquirer* when he was repossessing a car for Toyota’s financing department that belonged to Larry Fortensky and learned the man was dating Elizabeth Taylor, was something of a legend at the paper. After 9/11 he went to Pakistan, landed interviews with Taliban fighters and posed for a picture next to a rocket launcher.

The team members, equipped with walkie-talkies, arrived at the Beverly Hilton and checked in as guests. The place was crawling with celebrities because NBC was making its annual presentation to the television critics; Butterfield saw Keith Olbermann, Brooke Shields and Hayden Panettiere. Around 8:30 P.M. he spotted a friend of Hunter’s named Bob McGovern, a 64-year-old Californian who described himself as a New Age healer. Great, he thought, this guy is going to pick up Edwards. Butterfield hid in the parking garage and, within 15 minutes, saw their dark BMW pull in. As Edwards headed toward a staircase to the basement, where he could catch an elevator without attracting attention, the reporter followed from a safe distance before dropping back. “We had to let him commit the act,” Butterfield says.

The hours dragged on as Edwards met his daughter for the first time. Hitchen, having thoroughly cased the hotel, decided to plant himself on a couch next to a basement staircase, gambling that Edwards would have to pass by on his way back to the garage. It was just after 2:30 A.M.

Three minutes later, Edwards walked by. Hitchen sprang up, identified himself and shouted, “Would you like to explain why you were with your mistress Rielle Hunter and your love child tonight?” Edwards went white, briefly stared at the Brit and continued up the stairs toward the main lobby.

Hitchen hoped to prompt a human reaction about the man’s flesh and blood: “Mr. Edwards, for the sake of your child, don’t you think you should admit to being the child’s father?” Edwards kept walking, so Hitchen waved to Butterfield, who came sprinting over with his video camera and began shouting questions as well. A photographer was shooting pictures from down the hall. Edwards promptly turned around, raced back down the stairs, ducked into a restroom and slammed the door.

The scene was downright comical. Hitchen, unable to pull the door open, brusquely reminded his prey that the reporter was a guest at the hotel and he was not. Edwards, or at least his body, was unmoved by this logic.

Levine called Perel, woke him up and apprised him that Edwards was in the bathroom and blocking the door.

“What should we do?” Levine asked.

“Push harder,” Perel said.

Two security guards, who had happened to pass by, assessed the situation, entered the bathroom and emerged with the unsurprising news that Edwards did not want to talk to his pursuers. Nearly a dozen reinforcements arrived, pushed the reporters back up the stairs and escorted Edwards out of the hotel, one guard holding up a jacket as a shield. “He did something so stupid,” Hitchen says. “A man who’s clearly an incredibly smart lawyer, who has amassed millions of dollars and was going for the highest office in the land, tripped himself up.”

The paper had missed its Monday night deadline, but there was no holding this one. The sun had barely come up in California on Tuesday when Perel posted the story on the tabloid’s website, adorned only with head

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*“A man who’s clearly an incredibly smart lawyer, who has amassed millions of dollars and was going for the highest office in the land, tripped himself up.”*

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shots of a grinning Edwards and a dazed-looking Hunter, taken at the Whole Foods stakeout. Edwards met the “blonde divorcée,” the story said, while his “wife Elizabeth continues to battle cancer—and the *National Enquirer* was there!” The sheer immediacy of the posting, Perel felt, would launch the revelations into the stratosphere.

But there was no liftoff. The media blackout continued. For Perel, it was downright depressing. He started calling his contacts at news organizations, lobbying them to run something. I’m telling you, he said, this story is rock solid. The general reaction was that it was indeed a terrific tale, but the other outlets couldn’t match it, couldn’t prove it.

The *Enquirer* had one more trick up its journalistic sleeve. Egusquiza had arranged in advance for what he called a spy photo, to be surreptitiously shot by someone inside Hunter’s hotel room. A week later he opened an e-mail and there it was: a blurry picture of Edwards, in a sweat-stained blue T-shirt, holding up his daughter Frances Quinn against the telltale backdrop of the Hilton drapes.

Damn, Egusquiza thought, this is it. He can call us trash, but there’s no way he can get out of this. Perel paid thousands of dollars for the picture, but he considered it a bargain. Still, there was a great internal debate over whether

the *Enquirer* could be legally liable for running pictures taken on private property.

The paper posted the photo on its website on August 6, 2008. Two days later Edwards went on *Nightline* and finally admitted to the affair. Levine and Hitchen watched from the Park Avenue office and then went out to Elaine’s for celebratory drinks.

American Media chief David Pecker told Perel he had been right; it was their greatest political scoop. Yet Edwards still insisted—as he did that night to ABC’s Bob Woodruff—that he was not the baby’s father. After all, he said with a smirk, the report was “published in a supermarket tabloid.”

The paper’s public posture of sanctimony—“For the sake of your child!”—could be a bit rich. The *Enquirer* hardly qualified for the high-minded role of safeguarding American morality. The holier-than-thou stance was a combination of street theater and shtick, a way to harass its famous targets in the name of some lofty standard of fidelity. The tabloid lived off bad behavior, exploiting it to the fullest for the entertainment of its readers. If no one was having affairs—check that, if no one famous was having affairs—the paper would be out of business.

In the aftermath of the Beverly Hills confrontation, journalists and bloggers began to pressure Perel to release all the pictures and videos, but he wasn’t ready to show his cards. Perel was married to a psychotherapist, and he had been studying what made Edwards tick. Edwards never admitted anything unless he absolutely had to. Perel wanted to flush him out, and the best way to do that was to let him wonder what else the paper had, to let it prey on his mind. Unbeknownst to most of the *Enquirer* staff, Perel had a small team stay on the case, telling Edwards’s political pals that the chase wasn’t over, that their man had to come clean.

The team got results. Days later the tabloid reported that Hunter had been “secretly receiving \$15,000 a month as part of an elaborate cover-up,” and other journalists confirmed the funds had come from Fred Baron, the former finance chairman of Edwards’s two presidential campaigns. In April 2009 the *Enquirer* disclosed that a federal grand jury was investigating possible campaign finance violations involving the fees funneled to Hunter. In July came the headline JOHN EDWARDS SEX TAPE SHOCKER, and Young would eventually surrender the X-rated video to a federal court. (Although the story said Edwards and Hunter were accusing Young of secretly taping them, he’d actually found the tape among the trash in a home where Hunter had stayed with his family.) In October Levine wrote that Young’s forthcoming book would reveal that Edwards once discussed trying “to fake a DNA report to cover up the paternity of his love child!”

In the January 25, 2010 issue, Alexander Hitchen and Rick Egusquiza reported that Edwards had been prowling the bars of Figure Eight Island, North Carolina and repeatedly “attempted to bed a female bartender.” Hitchen had paid the divorced bartender, Stephanie Breshears, for her account. “She named a figure,” he says.

Days later Edwards acknowledged what anyone with a pulse already knew, that he had clung to a second lie, that the *Enquirer* had

been right all along about the baby's paternity. With Young's book on the verge of publication, Edwards told the *Today* show in a statement that "it was wrong for me ever to deny she was my daughter." In another week Elizabeth Edwards let it be known through *People* magazine that she and her husband were splitting up.

Levine was flabbergasted to click on an e-mail and see a note from Young: "Barry, good luck on the Pulitzer!" Young, who had fallen out with Edwards, called Levine the next day, and they chatted like two opposing generals after the war. Levine forwarded the e-mail to his editors with the header "Now I know pigs can really fly..."

After the denouement, the tabloid's pickings on the story seemed to grow slim. At one point it was reduced to running a story on the "lonely life" of Hunter's two-year-old daughter, complete with a picture of a toddler.

And the *Enquirer* sometimes undercut its own credibility by running thinly sourced stories that never quite cleared the bar. When the paper carried the headline ELIZABETH EDWARDS' CHILLING CONFESSION TO A PAL: "JOHN BEAT ME!" the words to a pal were in tiny type. The charge was attributed to an unnamed "close friend."

After Hunter was spotted lurching at a Los Angeles café called Toast, Rick Egusquiza called several of his sources—he had paid them over time, though now the reward money was down to a couple hundred bucks—and heard that Hunter had told friends she had secretly met with Aaron Sorkin. The *West Wing* creator, not coincidentally, was making a movie about her romance with Edwards, and she believed she might win a small part in the film, the sources said. Sorkin denies any such meeting, raising questions about whether Hunter was indulging in a fantasy. In fact, Egusquiza says, Hunter—who posed without her pants for *GQ* magazine—later told friends she didn't get the part because she would have to be nude.

Egusquiza also learned that Hunter had tried to look up some famous ex-boyfriends, including actor John Cusack and former *Friends* star Matt LeBlanc, leading to this screaming cover line shortly before Thanksgiving: RIELLE "CHEATING" ON JOHN EDWARDS.

Soon after the passing of Elizabeth Edwards, who cut her estranged husband out of her will, the *Enquirer* reported that in an "outrageous disregard for his wife Elizabeth's deathbed wish," John has proposed to Rielle—which an Edwards spokesman flatly denied.

Levine staunchly defends the accuracy of each piece. "To some people it may be an old scandal. John's admitted it; now it's over," he says. "But at the *National Enquirer* it's never over."

#### ENQUIRING MINDS

How did the tabloid clean everyone else's clock on Edwards and Woods, two of the biggest scandal stories in recent years? Paying off sources helps loosen tongues, of course, but the *Enquirer* functions like a detective agency, conducting surveillance, surreptitiously shooting photos, administering lie-detector tests, turning recalcitrant witnesses and confronting targets with incriminating evidence. In an era when newspapers, magazines and networks have slashed their budgets, the tabloid will keep a group of reporters on the streets for weeks in pursuit of a major scoop.

Despite the fact that AMI emerged from

bankruptcy in December, certain challenges remain. The *Enquirer* has already downsized. Circulation, which peaked at more than 6 million in the 1970s, is down to 750,000. But by raising the newsstand price 200 percent over the past decade (it's now \$3.69) and recruiting more consumer-products giants (roughly doubling advertising revenue, to nearly \$8 million), the tabloid has remained viable.

Journalistically not every story has turned out as well as Edwards's fall from grace. After the 2008 election David Perel spent six months checking out an allegation that the newly elected president had once had an affair. The supposed episode, back in 2004, was said to involve a Senate campaign fund-raiser named Vera Baker—who, inconveniently, had long ago denied any romance with Barack Obama. Perel and his team talked to a limo driver who said he'd driven Obama and Baker to Washington's Hotel George one night and that she never asked to be taken home. But Perel concluded there was nothing there and was wary of the allegation because the people pushing it had a political agenda.

In May 2010, months after Perel had left and Tony Frost, a former editor of the *Star* and *Globe*, took the helm at the *Enquirer*, Levine decided it was worth reporting that anti-Obama operatives were still pursuing the allegation. But the *Enquirer* trumpeted the tale as true, declaring that the president "has been caught in a shocking cheating scandal" involving Vera Baker, though the real shock was the lack of confirmation. Alexander Hitchen, who had spoken to the unnamed limo driver, reported that "on-site hotel surveillance camera footage could"—*could!*—"provide indisputable evidence."

Despite a *Drudge Report* headline, there was absolutely no evidence to support the claim, and even gossipy media outlets dumped on the unsubstantiated tale. If you aim at the

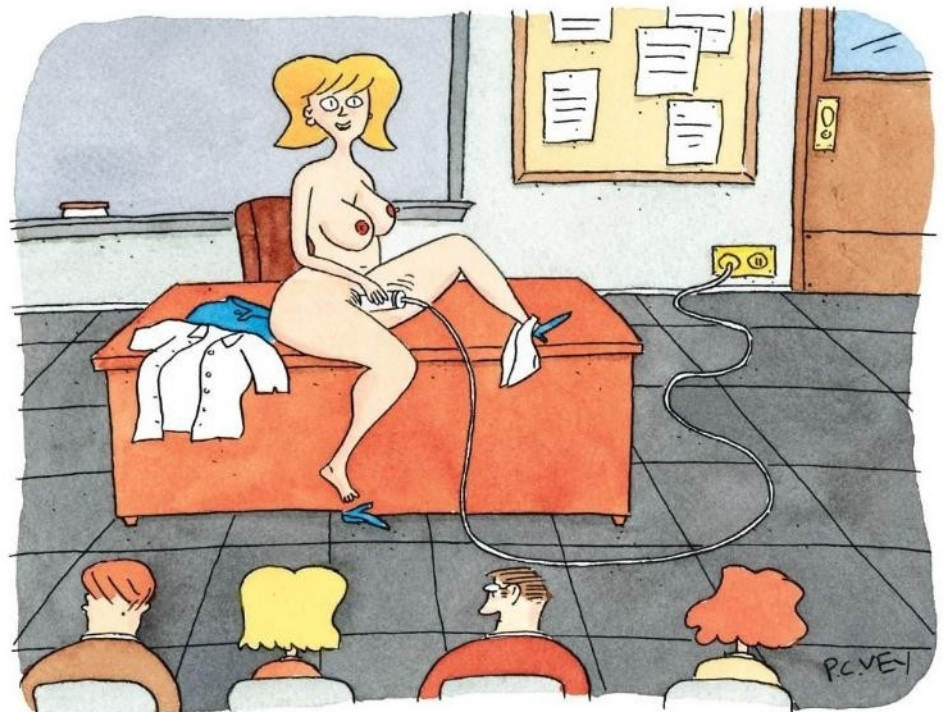
president, you'd better have the goods, and the *Enquirer*, simply put, did not.

The tabloid was on somewhat firmer ground last June when it carried a claim by a Portland, Oregon masseuse that Al Gore had sexually assaulted her, because the allegation was confirmed in police records. But Molly Hagerty had waited weeks to report the alleged incident and declined to be interviewed by detectives for two years, after which the authorities cited insufficient evidence to launch an investigation. The *Enquirer* paid for her on-the-record account—that Gore was "a pervert and a sex predator"—and those familiar with such transactions put the sum at a quarter of a million dollars. But Levine would not call the former vice president's office for comment for fear of losing his exclusive. This time, though, major news organizations followed the tabloid's lead, despite Gore's unequivocal denial, and police investigated again before closing the probe.

As the *Enquirer* boosted its profile, Levine appeared on *Nightline*, National Public Radio and even *The View*. But Barbara Walters ripped into him for a story she called "just baloney"—that she and Frank Langella had moved in together and were planning a summer wedding, with the blessing of the actor's ex and Walters's co-host Whoopi Goldberg.

Levine put his hands over his face, trying to laugh it off: "All I can say, Barbara, is that we trust our sources."

Trust: That, in the end, is the question about the *National Enquirer*. When its sources are spot-on, the paper can lap the field and bring down major celebrities. At other times, the sources make sensational claims that never quite pan out. For all its recent success, the storied tabloid still labors under a shadow partly of its own making.



"Today, class, we're going to talk about electricity."

# GOOD HOME

(continued from page 58)

was wearing huaraches, his toes as blackened as a corpse's.

Royce nodded. "What's happening?"

So there were rabbits. The kid's hobby. First there'd been two, now there were 30. They kept them in one of those prefab sheds you get at Home Depot, and when the kid pulled back the door the stink hit you in the face like a sucker punch. Joey was saying, "Oh, wow, wow, look at them all!" but all Royce was thinking was *Get me out of here*, because this was the kind of rank, urine-soaked stench you found in some of the street fighters' kennels, if they even bothered with kennels. "Can we take two?" Joey said, and everybody—the father, the kid and Joey—looked to him.

He gave an elaborate shrug, and how many times had they been through this charade before? "Sure," he said, "why not?" A glance for the father. "They're free, right? To a good home?"

The father—he wasn't much older than Royce, maybe 34, 35—just nodded, but on the way out Royce bent to the kid and pressed a five into his palm, feeling magnanimous. The next stop yielded a black Lab, skinny, with a bad eye, but still it would have to have its jaws duct-taped to keep it from slashing one of the dogs, and that was fine except that they had to sit there for half an hour with a cadaverous old couple who made them drink lukewarm iced tea and nibble stale anise cookies while they went on about Slipper and how she was a good dog, except that she peed on the rug—you had to watch out for that—and how sad they were to have to part with her, but she was just too much for them to handle anymore. They struck out at the next two places, both houses shuttered and locked, but all in all it wasn't a bad haul, considering these were just bait animals anyway and there was no need to get greedy.

Back at home, the minute they pulled up under the oaks in front, Joey was out the door and dashing for the house and his stash of Hansen's soda and barbecue chips, never giving a thought to the rabbits or the black Lab confined in their cages in the back of the Suburban. That was all right. There was no hurry. It wasn't that hot—85 maybe—and the shade was dense under the trees. Plus, he felt like a beer himself. Just driving around the Valley in all that traffic was work, what with the fumes radiating up off the road and Joey chattering away about anything and everything that entered his head till you couldn't concentrate on the music easing out of the radio or the way the girls waved their butts as they sauntered down the boulevard in their shorts and blue jeans and invisible little skirts.

He left the windows down and kicked his way across the dirt expanse of the lot, the hand-tooled boots he wore on weekends picking up a fine film of dust, thinking he'd crack a beer, see what Steve was up to—and the dogs, the dogs, of course—and then maybe grill up some burgers for an early dinner before he went out. He'd have to lift the Lab down himself, but Joey could handle the rabbits, and no, they weren't

going to bait the dogs tonight no matter how much Joey pleaded, because tonight was Saturday and he and Steve were going out, remember? But what Joey could do, before he settled down with his video games, was maybe give the bait animals a dish of water, or would that be asking too much?



The house was in Calabasas, pushed up against a hillside where the oaks gave way to chaparral as soon as you climbed up out of the yard on the path cut through the scrub there, the last place on a dirt road that threw up dust all summer and turned into a mud fest when the rains came in December. It was quiet, private, nights pulled down like a shade, and it had belonged to Steve's parents before they were killed in a head-on collision with a drunk three years back. Now it was Steve's. And his. Steve paid the property taxes and they split the mortgage each month, which for Royce was a whole lot cheaper than what he'd be paying elsewhere—plus, there was the barn, formerly for horses, now for the dogs. They had parties every couple of weeks, various women circulating in and out of their lives, but neither of them had ever been married, and as far as Royce was concerned, he liked it that way. Tonight, though, they were going out—cruising, as Steve liked to call it, as if they were in some seventies disco movie—and Joey would be on his own. Fine. No problem. Joey knew the score: Stay out of the barn, don't let anybody in, bed at 10, call him on the cell if there were any problems.

Steve drove. He'd never had a DUI, but Royce had, and Royce needed his license up and running in order to ferry people around to his various listings, as if that would make a difference since nobody in his office had sold anything in recent memory. Or at least he hadn't, anyway. They took the 101 into town, wound their way down Laurel Canyon and valeted the car in a lot off Sunset. It was just getting dark. A continuous line of cars, fading to invisibility behind their headlights, pulsed up and down the boulevard. This was the moment he liked best, slamming the car door and stepping out into the muted light, the street humming with the vibe of the clubs, the air so compacted and sweet with exhaust it was like breathing through your skin, the night young, anything possible.

Their first stop was a Middle Eastern restaurant that hardly served any food, or not that he could see anyway. People came here to sit at the tables out front and smoke Starbuzz or herbal *shisha* through the hookahs the management provided for a fee. Every once in a while you'd see a couple inside the restaurant picking over a lamb kebab or pita platter, but the real action was outside, where just about everybody surreptitiously spiked the tobacco with something a little stronger. The waitress was slim and young, dark half-moons of make-up worked into the flesh under her eyes and a tiny red stone glittering in one nostril, and maybe she recognized them from the week before, maybe she didn't. They ordered two iced teas and a hookah set-up and let the smoke, cool and sweet, massage their lungs, their feet propped up on the wrought-iron rail that separated them from the sidewalk, eyes roaming the street.

After a moment, just to hear his own voice over the shush of tires and the rattling tribal music that made you feel as if you were running on a treadmill, Royce said, "So what nationality you think these people are—the owners, I mean? Iranian? Armenian?"

Steve—he was a rock, absolutely, six-two, 180, with a razor-to-the-bone military haircut though he'd never been in the military—glanced up lazily, exhaling. "What, the waitress, you mean?"

"I guess."

"Why, you want a date with her?"

"No, I just—"

"I can get you a date with her. You want a date with her?"

He shrugged. "Just curious, that's all. No biggie. I just figured, you're the expert, right?" This was a reference to the fact that Steve had dated an Iranian girl all last winter—or Persian, as she liked to classify herself, and who could blame her? She was fleshy in all the right places, with big bounteous eyes and a wide-lipped smile that really lit her face up, but she'd wanted things, too many things, things Steve couldn't give her.

"Yeah, that's me, a real expert, all right. I don't know why you didn't just hit me in the face with a two-by-four the minute Nasreen walked through the door"—he held it a beat, grinning his tight grin—"Bro." He was about to bring the hose to his lips, but stopped himself, his eyes fixed on a point over Royce's shoulder. "Shit," he breathed, "isn't that your brother-in-law?"

Feeling caught out all of a sudden, feeling exposed, Royce swung round in his seat to shoot a glance up the boulevard. Joe—Big Joe, as Shana insisted on calling him after she came back from Russia with Joey, who was just a baby in diapers then—was nobody he wanted to see. He'd left Shana with a fractured elbow and a car with a bad transmission and payments overdue and she'd been working double shifts on weekends ever since to catch up. Which was why Royce took Joey Friday through Sunday—Joey needed a man's influence, that's what Shana claimed, and besides, she couldn't afford a babysitter. "Ex-brother-in-law," he said.

But there he was, Big Joe, easing his way in and out of the clusters of people making for the clubs and restaurants, his arm flung over the shoulder of some woman and a big self-satisfied grin on his face, just as if he was a regular human being. Even worse, the woman—girl—was so pretty the sight of her made Royce's heart clench with envy. If he was about to ask himself how a jerk like Joe had managed to wind up with a girl like that, he never got the chance because Steve was on his feet now, up out of his seat and leaning over the rail, calling out, "Joe, hey, Joe, what's happening?" in a voice deep-fried in sarcasm.

Joe was no more than 20 feet away and Royce could see him exchange a glance with the girl, as if he was going to pat down his pockets and pretend he'd left his credit card on the bar at the last place, but he kept on coming because he had no choice at this point. He wasn't that big—just big in relation to Joey and Shana—but he carried himself with a swagger and he had one of those faces that managed to look hard even when he was smiling at you. Which he definitely

wasn't doing now. He just froze his features, tightened his grip on the girl and made as if to ignore them. But Steve wouldn't have it. Steve was over the railing in a bound, waving his arms like a game show host. "Hey, man, good to see you," he was crowing in his put-on voice. "What a coincidence, huh? And look, look who's here"—and now the voice of wonder—"your brother-in-law!"

That moment? Nobody really liked it. Not the couple with the pita platter or the waitress or the other smokers, who only wanted to suck a little peace through a tube and dissolve the hassles of the day, and certainly not Joe. Or the girl he was with. She was involved now, giving him a look: *brother-in-law?*

"Ex," Joe said, looking from her to Royce and shooting him a look of hate. He was stalled there, against his will, the girl about to say something like *Aren't you going to introduce me?* and people beginning to turn their heads. Steve—he was amped up, clowning—kept saying, "Hey, come on, man, come on in and have a toké with us, like a peace pipe, you know?"

Joe ignored him. He just kept staring at Royce. Very slowly, in disgust, he began to shake his head, as if Royce were the one who'd walked out on his wife and kid and refused to pay child support or even leave a forwarding address, then he tightened his grip on the girl's arm, sidestepped Steve and made a show of strutting off down the street as if nothing had happened. And nothing had happened. What was he going to do, have Steve fight his battles for him? It wasn't worth it. Though if he was Steve's size, or even close, he would have gone over that rail himself, and he would have had a thing or two to say, and maybe more—maybe he would have gone for him right there on the sidewalk so people made way and the pretty girl let out a soft strangled cry.

By the time they settled in at the first bar up the street, he'd put it out of his head. Or mostly. He and Steve talked sports and spun out a couple of jokes and routines and he found himself drifting, but then Joe's face loomed up in his consciousness and he was telling himself he should have followed him to see what he was driving, get a license plate number so Shana could clue the police or child services or whoever. Something. Anything. But he hadn't, and the moment was gone. "Forget it," Steve told him. "Don't let that fucker spoil the night for you."

They went to the next place and the next place after that, the music pounding and the lights flashing, and for a while there he felt loose enough to go up to women at random and introduce himself, and when they asked him what he did for a living, he said, "I'm a dog man." That got them interested, no doubt about it, but it was the rare woman who didn't turn away or excuse herself to go to the ladies' when he began to explain just what that meant. Still, he was out on the town and the alcohol began to sing in his blood and he didn't feel tired or discouraged in the least. It was around 11 when Steve suggested they try this hotel he'd heard about, where they had a big outdoor pool area and a bar scene and you could sit out under the stars and watch girls jump in and out of the pool in their bikinis. "Sure," he heard himself say, "why not?" And if he

thought of Joey, he thought of him in bed, asleep, the video remote still clenched in his hand and the screen gone blank.

He was feeling no pain as he followed Steve up the steps of the hotel and into the darkened lobby. Two doormen—studiously hip, mid-30s, with phone plugs in their ears and cords trailing away beneath their collars—swung back the doors on a big spreading space with low ceilings, concrete pillars and a cluster of aluminum and leather couches arranged in a grid against the wall on the right. People—various scenesters, mostly dressed in black—lounged on the couches, trying their best to look as if they belonged. Beyond them, the pool area opened up to the yellow night sky and the infinite lights of the city below. A minute later he and Steve were crowding in at the pool bar—glasses that weren't glass but plastic, a rattle of ice cubes, scotch and soda—while the music infected them and the pool sucked and fell in an explosion of dancing blue light. Girls, as promised. And swimming like otters. "Pretty cool, huh?" Steve was saying.

He nodded, just taking in the scene, thinking nothing at this point, his mind sailing free the way it did when somebody else's dogs were fighting and he had no betting interest in the outcome. Suddenly he felt

a wave of exhaustion sweep over him—or was it boredom? After a moment he excused himself to find his way to the men's, and that was when the whole world shifted on him.

Right in the lobby, set right there in the wall above the long curving sweep of the check-in desk, was a lit-up glass cubicle, maybe eight feet long, four high, with a mattress and pillow and a pale pink duvet turned back on itself—how could he have missed it on the way in? It was like the window of a furniture store, or no, a stage set, because there was a girl inside, propped up against the back wall as if she were in her own bedroom. She was wearing pajamas—nothing overt like a teddy or anything like that—just pajamas, button-up top and drawstring bottoms rolled up at the ankles. She had a cell phone stuck to one ear and a book open in her lap. Her hair was dark and long, brushed out as if for bed—a brunette, definitely a brunette—and her feet were bare and pressed to the glass so you could see the pale flesh of her soles. That was what got him, that was what had him standing there in the middle of the lobby as if he'd been nailed to the floor: the soles of her feet, so clean and white and intimate in that darkened arena with its scenesters and hustlers and everybody else doing their best to ignore her.



"Oh, by the way...my wife says you've been forgetting to dust the tusks."

"Can I help you?" The man behind the desk—big-frame glasses, skinny tie—was addressing him.

"I was"—but this was genius, wasn't it, the hotel advertising what you could do there, in private, in a room, if you had a girl like that?—"just looking for the men's...."

"Down the hall to your right."

He should have moved on, but he didn't, he couldn't. The guy behind the desk was studying him still—he could feel his eyes on him—probably a heartbeat away from informing him that he couldn't stand there blocking traffic all night and another heartbeat away from calling security. "Does she have a name?" Royce murmured, his voice caught low in his throat.

"Chelsea."

"Does she—?"

The man shook his head. "No."

When Steve finally came looking for him, he was squeezed in at the end of one of the couches in the dark, just watching her. At first, she'd seemed static, almost like a mannequin, but that wasn't the case at all—she blinked her eyes, flipped the hair out of her face, turned the pages of her book with a flick of enameled nails, each gesture magnified out of all proportion. And then, thrillingly, she shifted position, stretching like a cat, one muscle at a time, before flexing her arms and abdomen and pushing herself up into the lotus position, her feet tucked under her, the book in her lap and the cell cupped to one ear. He wondered if she was really talking to anybody—a boyfriend, a husband—or if it was just part of the act. Did she eat in there? Take bathroom breaks? Brush her teeth? Floss?

"Hey, man, I've been looking all over for you," Steve said, emerging from the shadows with the dregs of a drink in one hand and all trace of his grin gone. "What are you doing? You know what time it is?"

He didn't. He just shook his head in a slow absent way as if he were waking from a deep sleep, and then they were down the steps and out on the street, the cars crawling past in a continuous illuminated loop and a sliver moon caught like a hook in the jaws of the yellow

sky. The cell in his left front pocket began to vibrate. It was Joey. "What's up, big guy?" he said without breaking stride. "Shouldn't you be asleep? Like long asleep?"

The voice was soft, remote. "It's the Lab."

"What about her?"

"She's crying. I can hear her all the way from my bedroom."

"Yeah, okay, thanks for telling me—really—but don't you worry about it. You just get to sleep, hear me?"

Even softer: "Okay."

He wanted to add that they'd work the dogs in the morning, that they'd devote the whole morning to them because there was a match next weekend and if Joey was good he was going to bring him along, first time ever, because he was old enough now to see what it was all about and why they had to put so much time into training Zoltan and Zeus the way they did, baiting them and watching their diet and their weight and all the rest of it, but Joey had broken the connection.

Most of them were creeps, pure and simple—either that or old men who stood there gaping at her when they checked in with their shrink-wrapped wives—and she never had anything to do with any of them, no matter if they sent her 10-page letters and roses and fancy candy assortments, the latter of which she just gave to the maids in any case because sweets went straight to her hips and thighs. In fact, it was against the rules to make eye contact—Leonard, the manager, would jump down your throat if you even glanced up at somebody because that was like violating the fourth wall of the stage. *This is theater*, he kept telling her, *and you're an actress. Just keep that in mind*. Right. The only thing was, she didn't want to be an actress, unlike 99 percent of the other girls clawing their way through the shops and bars and clubs seven days a week—she was two years out of college, waitressing mornings in a coffee shop and doing four nights a week here, representing some sort of adolescent wet dream while saving her money and studying for her LSATs.

Was it demeaning? Was it stupid? Yes, of course it was, but her mother had danced topless in a cage during hippie times—and that was in a bar where people could hoot and throw things and shout out every sleazy proposition known to humankind. She wasn't an actress. Anybody could be an actress. She was going to go into immigration law, help give voice to people who didn't have a say for themselves, do something with her life—and if using her looks to get her there, to get paid to study, was part of the deal, then that was fine with her.

So she was in her cubicle, embracing the concept of the fourth wall and trying to make sense of the logical reasoning questions TestMasters threw at her, good to go sometimes for an hour or more without even looking up, but she wasn't blind. The scene drifted past her as if she were underwater, in a submarine, watching all the strange sea creatures interact, snatch at each other, pair up, stumble, glide, fade into the depths, and her expression never changed. She recognized people from time to time, of course she did, but she never let on. Matt Damon had been in one night, with a girl and another guy, and once, just after she clocked in, she thought she'd seen George Clooney—or the back of his head, anyway—and then there were people she'd gone to college with, an older couple who were friends of her parents, even a guy she'd dated in high school. Basically, and it wasn't that hard, she just ignored them all.

On this particular night, though, a Saturday, when the throngs were out and the words began to blur on the page and nobody, not even her mother, would answer the phone, she stole a glance at the lobby and the guy who'd just stood there watching her for the last five minutes till Eduardo, the deskman, said something to him. In that instant, when he was distracted by whatever Eduardo was saying, she got a good look at him and realized, with a jolt, that she knew him from somewhere. Her eyes were back on the page but his image stayed with her: a lean short tensed-up guy with his hands in his pockets, blond hair piled up high on the crown of his head and a smooth detached expression, beautiful and dangerous at the same time, and where did she know him from?

It took her a while. She lost him when he drifted across the room in the direction of the lounge and she tried to refocus on her book but she couldn't. It was driving her crazy: Where had she met him? Was it at school? Or here? Had she served him at the coffee shop, was that it? Time passed. She was bored. And then she snatched a look again and there he was, with another guy, moving tentatively across the lobby as if it were ankle-deep in mud—drunk, both of them, or at least under the influence—and it came to her: He was the guy who'd adopted the kittens, the one with the little kid, the nephew. It must have been six weeks ago now. Missy had had her second—and last—litter, because it was irresponsible to bring more cats into the world when they were putting them down by the thousands in the shelters every day and she'd decided to have her spayed once the kittens were weaned, all nine of them, and he'd showed up in answer to her ad. And what was his name? Roy or something. Or



"...And when it comes to my marital status, I'm a bit of a 'don't ask, don't tell' kind of guy!"

no: Royce. She remembered because of the boy, how unusual it was to see that kind of relationship, uncle and nephew, and how close they seemed, and because Royce had been so obviously attracted to her—couldn't keep his eyes off her, actually.

She'd just washed her hair and was combing out the snarls when the bell rang and there they were on the concrete landing of her apartment, smiling up at her. "Hi," he said, "are you the one with the kittens?"

She looked from him to the boy and back again. She'd given one of the kittens away to a guy who worked in the hotel kitchen and another to one of her girlfriends, but there were seven left and nobody else had called. "Yeah," she said, pushing the door open wide. "Come on in."

The boy had made a real fuss over the kittens, telling her how cute they all were and how he couldn't make up his mind. She was just about to ask him if she couldn't get him something to drink, a glass of lemonade, a Coke, when he'd looked up at his uncle and said, "Could we take two?"

They were in a hurry—he apologized for that—and it was just a chance encounter, but it had stayed with her. (As had three of the kittens, which she hadn't been able to find homes for.) Royce told her he was in real estate and they'd lingered a moment at the door while the boy cradled his kittens and she told him she was looking to buy a duplex, with her parents' help, so the rent on the one apartment could cover her mortgage—like living for free—but she hadn't pushed it and he hadn't either.

Now, as she watched him square up his shoulders at the door, she wondered if he'd recognized her. For an instant her heart stood still—he was going, gone—and then, on an impulse, she broke her pose, set down the book and flicked off the light. In the next moment she was out of the cubicle, a page torn from her book in one hand and her pen in the other, rushing across the cold stone floor of the lobby in her bare feet. She scribbled out a note on the back of the page—*How are the kittens? Call me. Chelsea*—and handed it to Jason, the doorman.

"That guy," she said, pointing down the street. "The one on his cell? Could you run and give this to him for me?" In her rush, she almost forgot to include her number, but at the last second she remembered, and by the time Jason put his fingers to his lips and whistled down the length of the block, she was hurrying back across the lobby to the sanctuary of her cubicle.

It took three cups of coffee to clear his head in the morning, but he was up early all the same and took time to make an omelette for Joey—"No onions, no tomatoes," Joey told him, "just cheese"—before they went out to see to the dogs. The Lab was in her cage outside the door to the barn, still whining, and he didn't even glance at her. He'd have Joey feed her some of the cheap kibble later, but first he had to work Zoltan and Zeus on the treadmills and make sure Zazzie, who'd thrown six pups out of Zeus's sire, the original Zeus, got the feed and attention she needed while she was still nursing. Zeus the first had been a grand champion,

ROM, Register of Merit, with five wins, and the money he'd brought in in bets alone had been enough to establish Z-Dogz Kennels—and a dozen or more of his pups were out there on the circuit, winning big in their own right. Royce had never had a better pit dog, and it just about killed him when Zeus couldn't scratch after going at it with Marvin Harlock's champion Kato for two and a quarter hours and had to be put down because of his injuries. Still, he'd been bred to some 16 bitches and the stud fees alone had made up a pretty substantial part of Royce's income—especially with the realty market dead in the water the last two years—and Zeus the second, not to mention his brother Zoltan, had won their first matches, and that boded well for stud fees down the road.

The dogs set up their usual racket when he and Joey came in—happy to see them, always happy—and Joey ran ahead to let them out of their cages. Aside from the new litter and Zoltan, Zeus and Zazzie, he and Steve had only three other dogs at the time, two bitches out of Zeus the first, for breeding purposes with the next champion that caught their eye, and a male—Zeno—that had lost the better part of his muzzle in his first match and would probably have to be let go, though he'd really showed heart. For now, though, they were one big happy family, and they all surged round Royce's legs, even the puppies, their tongues going and their high excited yips rising up into the rafters where the pigeons settled and fluttered and settled again. "Feed them all except Zeus and Zoltan," he shouted to Joey over the noise, "because we're going to work them on the mills first, okay?"

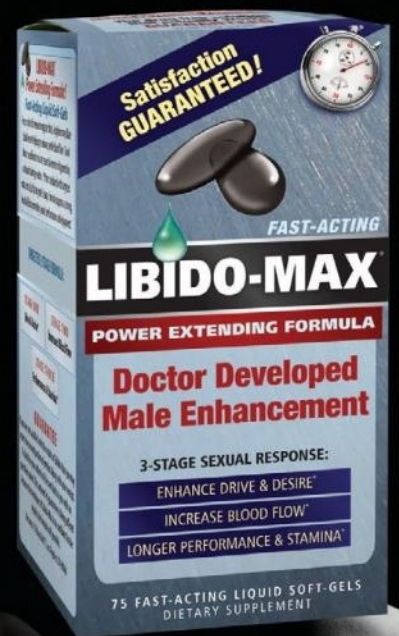
And Joey, dressed in yesterday's blue jeans with smears of something on both knees and a T-shirt that could have been cleaner, swung round from where he was bending to the latch on Zeno's cage, his eyes shining. "And then can we bait them?"

"Yeah," he said. "Then we'll bait them." The first time he'd let Joey watch while they set the dogs on the bait animals, he'd been careful to explain the whole thing to him so he wouldn't take it the wrong way. Most trainers—and he was one of them—felt that a fighting dog had to be blooded regularly to keep him keyed up between matches and if some of the excess and unwanted animals of the world happened to be lost in the process, well, that was life. They were just going to be sent to the pound anyway, where some stoner working for minimum wage would stick a needle in them or shove them in a box and gas them, and this way was a lot more natural, wasn't it? He no longer remembered whether it was rabbits or cats or a stray that first time, but Joey's face had drained and he'd had to take him outside and tell him he couldn't afford to be squeamish, couldn't be a baby, if he wanted to be a dog man, and Joey—he was all of nine at the time—had just nodded his head, his mouth drawn tight, but there were no tears, and that was a good sign.

He didn't want to wear the dogs out so close to their next match, so he clocked half an hour on the treadmill, then put Zeus in the pit he'd erected in the back corner of the barn and had Joey bait him with one of the rabbits, after which it was Zoltan's

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turn. Finally, he took the Lab out of her cage, taped her jaws shut and let both dogs have a go at her, nothing too severe, just enough for them to draw some blood and get the feel of another body and will, and whether it fought back or stood its ground or rolled over to show its belly didn't matter. Baiting was just part of the regimen, that was all. After five minutes, he had to wade in and break Zeus's hold on the animal. "That's enough for today, Joey—we want to save the Lab for maybe two days before the match, okay?"

Joey was leaning against the plywood sides of the pit, his expression unreadable. There was something in his hair—a twig or a bit of straw the dogs had kicked up. He didn't say anything in response.

The Lab was trembling—she had the shakes, the way dogs did when they'd had enough and wouldn't come out of their corner—and one of her ears was pretty well gone, but she'd do for one more go-around on Thursday, and then they'd have to answer another ad or two. He bent to the dog, which tried to look up at him out of its good eye but was trembling so hard it couldn't quite manage to raise its head, clipped a leash to its collar and led it out of the pit. "Put her back in her cage," he told Joey, handing him the leash. "And you can feed and water her now. I'll take care of Zeusy and Zoltan. And if you're good, maybe later we'll do a little Chicken McNuggets for lunch, how's that sound? With that barbecue sauce you like?"

He turned away and started for the house. He hadn't forgotten the note in his pocket—he was just waiting till a reasonable hour (10, he was thinking) before he called her, figuring she'd been up even later than he and Steve. *Call me*, she'd written, and the words had lit him up right there on the street as if he'd been plugged into a socket—it was all he could do to keep himself from lurching back into the hotel to press his face to the glass and mouth his assent. But that would have been uncool, terminally uncool, and he'd just floated on down the street, Steve ribbing him, all the way to the car. The mystery was the reference to the cats, and he'd been trying to put that together all morning—obviously he and Joey must have answered an ad from her at some point, but he couldn't remember when or where, though maybe she did look familiar to him, maybe that was part of it.

He crossed the yard and went in the kitchen door, but Steve was sitting at the table in the breakfast nook, rubbing the bristle of his scalp with one hand and spooning up cornflakes with the other, so Royce stepped out back to make the call on his cell. And then, the way these things do, it all came back to him as he punched in the number: the kittens, a potted bird-of-paradise on the landing, the condo—or no, duplex—she was looking to buy.

She answered on the first ring. Her voice was cautious, tentative—even if she had caller ID and his name came up it wouldn't have meant anything to her because she didn't know him yet, did she?

"Hi," he said, "it's me, Royce, from last night? You said to call?"

She liked his voice on the phone—it was soft and musical, sure of itself but not cocky,

not at all. And she liked the fact that he'd been wearing a nice-fitting sport coat the night before and not just a T-shirt or athletic jersey like all the rest of them. They made small talk, Missy brushing up against her leg, a hummingbird at the feeder outside the window like a finger of light. "So," he said after a moment, "are you still interested in looking at property? No obligation, I mean, and even if you're not ready to buy yet, it would be a pleasure, a privilege and a pleasure, to just show you what's out there..." He paused. "And maybe buy you lunch. You up for lunch?"

He worked out of an office on a side street off Ventura, not 10 minutes from her apartment. When she pulled up in the parking lot, he was there waiting for her at the door of a long dark bottom-heavy Suburban with tires almost as tall as her Mini. "I know, I know," he said, "it's a real gas hog and about as environmentally stupid as you can get, but you'd be surprised at the size of some of the family groups I have to show around... plus, I'm a dog man."

They were already wheeling out of the lot, a book of listings spread open on the console between them. She saw that he'd circled a number of them in her price range

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*He took the Lab out of her cage, taped her jaws shut and let both dogs have a go at her, nothing too severe, just enough for them to draw some blood and get the feel.*

---

and the neighborhood she was hoping for. "A dog man?"

"A breeder, I mean. And I keep this vehicle spotless, as you can see, right? But I do need the space in back for the dogs sometimes."

"For shows?"

A wave of the hand. They were out in traffic now and she was seeing him in profile, the sun flaring in his hair. "Oh, no, nothing like that. I'm just a breeder, that's all."

"What kind of dogs?"

"The best breed there is," he said, "the only breed, pit bull terriers," and if she thought to ask him about that, which she should have, she didn't get the chance because he was already talking up the first property he'd circled for her and before she knew it they were there and all she could see was possibility.

Over lunch—he took her to an upscale place with a flagstone courtyard where you could sit outside beneath a huge twisting sycamore that must have been a hundred years old and listen to the trickling of the fountain in the corner—they discussed the properties he'd showed her. He was polite and solicitous and he knew everything there was to know about real estate. They shared a bottle of wine, took their time over their food. She kept feeling a mounting excitement—she couldn't wait to call her mother, though the

whole thing was premature, of course, until she knew where she was going to law school, though if it was Pepperdine, the last place, the one in Woodland Hills, would have been perfect. And with the sun sifting through the leaves of the trees and the fountain murmuring and Royce sketching in the details of financing and what he'd bid and how much the attached apartment was bringing in—and more, how he knew a guy who could do maintenance, cheap, and a great painter too, and didn't she think the living room would look a thousand percent better in maybe a deeper shade of yellow, gold, really, to contrast with the oak beams?—she knew she would get in, she knew it in that moment as certainly as she'd ever known anything in her life.

And when he asked if she wanted to stop by and see his place, she never hesitated. "It's nothing like what you're looking for," he said as they walked side by side out to the car, "but I just thought you'd like to see it out of curiosity, because it's a real sweet deal. Detached house, an acre of property, right up in the hills. My roommate and I, we're co-owners, and we'd be crazy to sell, especially in this market, but if we ever do both of us could retire, it's that sweet."

The thing was—and he was the one to ask—did she want to stop back at the office for her car and follow him? Was she all right to drive? Or did she just want to come with him?

The little decisions, the little moments that can open up forever: She trusted him, liked him, and if she'd had any hesitation three hours ago he'd more than won her over. Still, when he put the question to her, she saw herself in her own car—and she wouldn't have another glass of wine, though she was sure he was going to offer it when they got there—because in her own car she could say good-bye when she had to and make sure she got to work on time. Which on a Sunday was eight P.M. And it was what, 3:30 now?

"I'll follow you," she said.

The streets were unfamiliar, narrow twisting blacktop lanes that dug deeper and deeper into the hills, and she'd begun to wonder if she'd ever be able to find her way back again when he flicked on his signal light and led her onto a dirt road that fell away beneath an irregular canopy of oaks. She rolled up her window, though it was hot in the car, and followed at a distance, easing her way over the washboard striations that made the doors rattle in their frames. There was dust everywhere, a whole universe of it fanning out from the shoulders of the road and lifting into the scrub oak and mesquite till all the lower leaves were dulled. Mailboxes sprang up every hundred yards or so, but the houses were set back so you couldn't see them. A family of quail, all skittering feet and bobbing heads, shot out in front of her and she had to brake to avoid them. Scenery, a whole lot of scenery. Just as she was getting impatient, wondering what she'd got herself in for, they were there, rolling in under the shade of the trees in front of a low rambling ranch-style house from the forties or fifties, painted a deep chocolate brown with white trim, a barn set just behind and to the right of it and painted in the same color combination.

The dust cleared. He was standing there



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beside the truck, grinning, and here came the boy—Joey—bouncing across the yard as if he were on springs. She stepped out of her car, smelled sage and something else, too, something sweet and indefinable, wildflowers, she supposed. From the barn came the sound of dogs, barking.

Royce had an arm looped over Joey's shoulder as they ambled toward her. "Great spot, huh? You want end of the road, this is it. And you should see the stars—nothing like the city where you get all that light pollution. And noise. It's quiet as a tomb out here at night." Then he ducked his head and introduced Joey—or reintroduced him.

The boy was taller than she'd remembered, his hair so blond it was almost white and cut in a neat fringe across his eyebrows. He gave her a quick smile, his eyes flashing blue in the mottled sun beneath the trees. "Hi," she said, bending to take his hand, "I'm Chelsea. How are you doing?"

He just stared. "Good." And then, to Royce, "Mr. Harlock's been ringing the phone all day looking for you. Where have you been?"

Royce was watching her, still grinning. "Don't you worry," he said, glancing down at the boy, "I'll call him first chance I get. And now"—coming back to her—"maybe Chelsea'd like to sit out on the porch and have a nice cold soda—or maybe, if we can twist her arm, just one more glass of that Santa Maria chard we had over lunch?"

She smiled back at him. "You really have it? The same one?"

"What you think, I'm just some amateur or something? Of course, we have it. A whole case straight from the vineyard—and at least one, maybe two bottles in the refrigerator even as we speak...."

It was then, just as she felt her resolve weakening—what would one more hurt?—that the screen door in front sliced open and the other guy, the taller one from last night, stuck his head out. "It's Marvin on the phone," he called, "about next week. Says it can't wait."

"My roommate, Steve," Royce said, nodding to him. "Steve," he said, "Chelsea." He separated himself from her then, spun around on one heel and gestured toward the porch. "Here, come on, why don't you have a seat out here and enjoy the scenery a minute while I take this call—it'll just be a minute, I promise—and then I'll bring you your wine. Which, I can see from your face, you already decided to take me up on, right?"

"Okay, you convinced me," she said, feeling pleased with herself, feeling serene, everything so tranquil, the dogs fallen silent now, not a man-made sound to be heard anywhere, no leaf blowers, no backfiring cars or motorcycles or rattling TVs, and it really was blissful. For one fraction of a moment, as she went up the steps to the porch and saw the outdoor furniture arrayed there, the glass-topped table and the armchairs canted toward a view of the trees and the hillside beyond, she pictured herself moving in with Royce, going to bed with him and waking up here in the midst of all this natural beauty, and forget the duplex—she'd be even closer to school from here, wouldn't she? She settled into the chair and put her feet up.

And then the door slammed, and Joey,

having bounced in and back out again, was standing there staring at her, a can of soda in his hand. "You want some?" he asked, holding it out to her. "It's good. Kiwi-strawberry, my favorite."

"No, thanks. It's a tempting offer, but I think I'll wait for your uncle." She bent to scratch a spot on the inside of her calf, a raised red welt there, thinking a mosquito must have bitten her, and when she looked up again her eyes fell on the cage standing just outside the barn door in a flood of sunlight. There was a dark figure hunched there, a dog, and as if it sensed she was looking, it began to whine.

"Is that one of your dogs?" she asked.

Joey gave her an odd look, almost as if she'd insulted him. "That? No, that's just one of the bait animals. We've got real dogs. Pit bulls."

She didn't know what to say to that, the distinction he was making—a dog was a dog as far as she was concerned, and this one was obviously in distress. "Maybe it needs water," she said.

"I already watered her. And fed her, too."

"You really like animals, don't you?" she said, and when he nodded in response, she added, "And how are the kittens doing? Did you litter-train them? And what are their names—you name them yourself?"

She was leaning forward in the chair, their faces on a level. He didn't answer. He shuffled his feet, his eyes dodging away from hers, and she could see the lie forming there—*bait animals*—even before he shrugged and murmured, "They're fine."

Royce was just coming through the door with two glasses of white wine held high in one hand and a platter of cheese and crackers in the other. His smile died when he saw the look she was giving him.

"Tell me one thing," she said, shoving herself up out of the chair, all the cords of her throat strung so tight she could barely breathe, "just one thing—what's a *bait* animal?"

The darkness came down hard that night. It was as if one minute it was broad day, bugs hanging like specks in the air, the side of the barn bronzed with the sun, and then the next it was black dark. He was out on the porch, smoking, and he never smoked unless he was drunk, and he was drunk now, because what was he going to do with an open bottle of wine—toss it? He hadn't made Joey any supper and he felt bad about that—and bad about laying into him the way he did—but Shana would be here soon to pick him up and she could deal with it. Steve was out somewhere. Everything was still but for the hiss and crackle of Joey's video game leaching down from the open bedroom window. He was about to push himself up and go in and put something in his stomach when the Lab bitch began to whine from across the yard.

The sound was an irritant, that was what it was, and he let out a soft curse. In the next moment, and he didn't even think twice about it, he had the leash in his hand. Maybe it didn't make sense, maybe it was too late, but Zeus could always use the exercise. And when he was done, so could Zoltan.

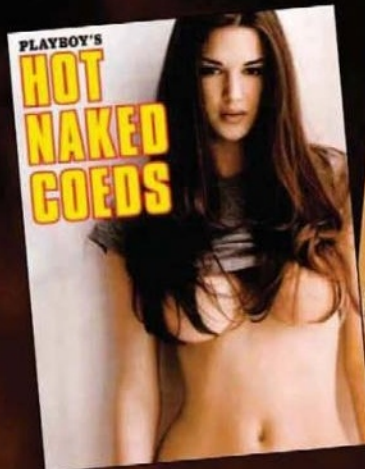




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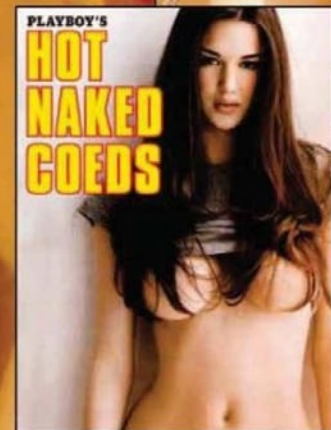
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# NEANDERTHAL LOVE

(continued from page 78)

45,000 years ago in east Asia, which could explain regional variations in our genome. In December Pääbo announced that, based on DNA tests, the pinkie bone from Siberia belonged to an individual from a species dubbed the Denisovans, after the cave where the bone was found. This branch descends from hominins who left Africa about 400,000 years ago—those who went west evolved into Neanderthals and those who went east into Denisovans. But the most startling discovery was that the DNA of present-day New Guineans is 4.8 percent Denisovan, indicating that whatever direction the winds took us, we always managed to seduce the locals.

We don't have any idea what Denisovans looked like. But scientists have found enough Neanderthal skulls for anatomical sculptors to summon faces from the prehistoric past. Would you have slept with a Neanderthal woman? Before you answer, let's get to know her better. The first thing that strikes you (perhaps literally, if you're leaning in for a kiss) is her supraorbital torus, the thick, double-arched brow that protects the eyes from downward blows and/or absorbs tension during chewing, like our forehead. She finds your chin alluring, since she doesn't have one. We may have reminded Neanderthals of their own children, with our prominent foreheads and small, flat faces, both of which are signs of immaturity among mammals that elicit feelings of tenderness. "If this is so, the Cro-Magnons must have looked very cute to the Neanderthal," writes paleoanthropologist Juan Luis Arsuaga. *She thinks you're cute!*

While making out near the fire pit, you notice her incisors are worn. That's because Neanderthals from a young age probably used their front teeth as a "third hand," such as when scraping a hide. Inside her skull she has an enormous nasal cavity, which may act like a radiator to humidify and warm the frigid northern air. She stands about five feet tall and her body is compact, with broad hips, short forearms and short lower legs. Her skin is lighter than yours—pale skin absorbs more sunlight, which helps synthesize vitamin D during the long winters. She may be a brunette, a blonde or a redhead—the same hair colors you find in Caucasians today. She may also be cannibalistic, but no one's perfect.

Can she speak? She can grunt, but can she process your words or just your tone, like a dog? "Neanderthals were probably as intuitively smart as it's possible to get, but they didn't leave a record that screams symbolic reasoning," says Ian Tattersall, a paleoanthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. "We may have met in body, but we never met in mind." Even if they could comprehend language, Neanderthals probably couldn't speak. While the upper and lower part of the vocal tract are the same size in *Homo sapiens*, the Neanderthals' jutting faces made their upper tracts longer and their necks too short to accommodate vocal cords. The

architect of this hypothesis, anthropologist Philip Lieberman, has on his website a jarring audio file that is either the mating call of a castrated frog or what a Neanderthal might have sounded like trying to form the vowels in the word *see*.

None of this is to say your date is stupid. The Geico caveman could not have dominated an area that stretches from the Atlantic to Uzbekistan and perhaps into China for 150,000 years in fluctuating and unforgiving climates. By contrast, the African tundra where we evolved was perpetually sunny and the environment and animals and plants unchanged for millions of years. Based on our use of symbols and our artwork and weapons, *Homo sapiens* was clearly the smartest human yet. The historian Marcel Otte observes that one of prehistoric man's great achievements was to turn animals' own tusks and horns against them. Would your hunter girlfriend be impressed? The Neanderthals also used tools and carried portable art, but did they just collect these items from our trash? That is a common conclusion, but João Zilhão, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Bristol, notes that at least two dozen sites in France and Spain contain artifacts and art that predate the arrival of Cro-Magnons. Painted shells found in recent years in Spain appear to have been parts of a necklace, an "identity card," he says, and Neanderthal females may have worn makeup. A few researchers ask why the Cro-Magnons appear to have flourished only after they came in contact with Neanderthals.

Some scientists believe the only way we will discover whether Neanderthals and *sapiens* formed human relationships is in the bones—or, as the joke goes, in a grave where a modern human and a Neanderthal are buried side-by-side holding hands. In 1998, at Lagar Velho, a site in central Portugal, a team led by Zilhão found what some paleoanthropologists believe is the next best thing—the fragmented bones of a four-year-old child who died some 24,500 years ago. In these remains they see the short, thick limb bones of a Neanderthal and the teeth, jaw and chin of a modern human. Since the child lived long after *neanderthalensis* had vanished, the scientists argue hybridization must have been widespread before the extinction—a mixing of cultures. Ian Tattersall diplomatically calls that conclusion "a brave and imaginative interpretation." But this reading of the evidence sits well with paleoanthropologist Erik Trinkaus of Washington University in St. Louis, who takes the position that Neanderthals and *sapiens* shared so many behaviors they would have thought nothing of mixed couples. As evidence, he points to 30,000-year-old fossils from Romania, France and the Czech Republic that, like the Lagar Velho child, appear to have features from both species. It was not an abrupt, violent end for the Neanderthals, he insists, but "extinction through absorption." If you're going to become extinct, it's the best way to go.

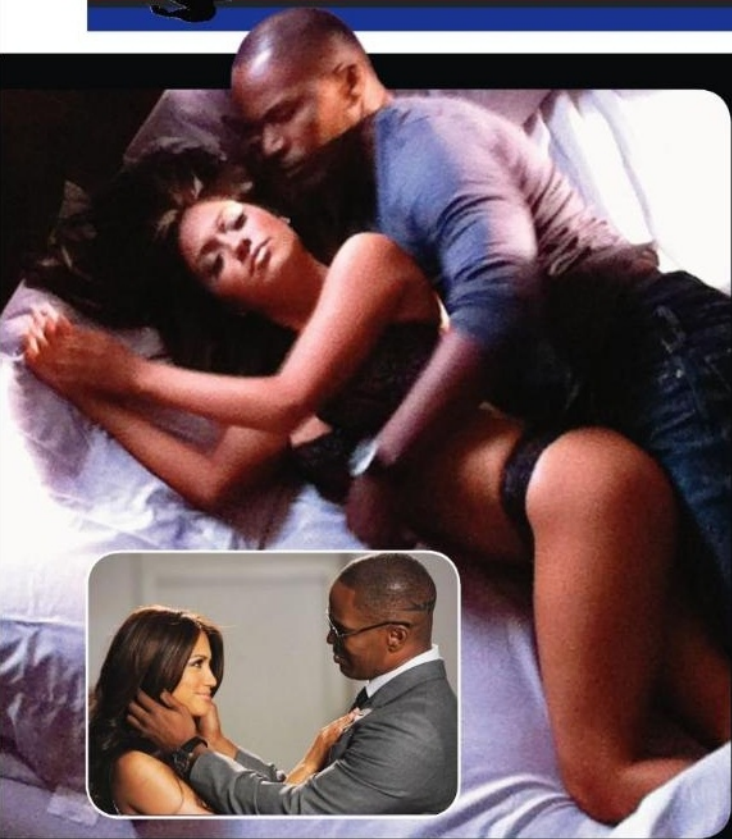


—CUE COURT—

"Gee, Al—you really are a short order cook!"



# PLAYMATE NEWS



## FOXXY LADY

Jamie Foxx's type? Playmates of Mexican, Irish and French descent. The Oscar and Grammy winner cast Miss February 2009 Jessica Burciaga as his girlfriend in the video for his single "Fall for Your Type," which is on his new album, *Best Night of My Life*. In the video Jessica and Foxx spend considerable time in bed together. But they also show the flip side of that passion as Jessica destroys his apartment in a fit of anger. "The director told me to think of an ex-boyfriend who had hurt me, to channel that rage and take it out on Jamie." As for Jessica's type: "I used to be into bad boys, but I have grown out of that. Now I'm looking for a nice guy who looks like a bad boy."



## GREAT, BRITT

Former *Girls Next Door* star Kendra Wilkinson-Baskett might be front and center on her E! reality series *Kendra*, but Miss June 2007 Brittany Binger is never far behind. Kendra and the brunette Playmate first grew close when Kendra was living at the Mansion. And now, as Kendra navigates motherhood and the nomadic life that comes with being married to an NFL player,



Brittany has been one of the few constants in Kendra's life. For support, Brittany has organized girls-only excursions, which have brought back Kendra's infectious laugh. She has settled some turmoil in her own personal life as well. The college student who stole nude photos of Brittany's boyfriend, Cleveland Indians star Grady Sizemore, has been formally charged, allowing Brittany's private life to once again be exactly that—private.

## FLASHBACK



Ten years ago this month we met Miss March 2001 **Miriam Gonzalez**. Immediately **PLAYBOY** readers who prefer curves were awestruck by her 34DDD breasts, 24-inch waist and 35-inch hips—physical attributes that led to Miriam's appearance in a number of Playboy videos and Special Editions. She also unfurled her amazing wit on Playboy Radio, where she co-hosted *The Playmate Hour* for three years. She recently appeared back in front of the camera on an episode of *CSI: Miami*.

**Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates?** You can check out the Club at [club.playboy.com](http://club.playboy.com) and access the mobile-optimized site [playboy.com](http://playboy.com) from your phone.

## DID YOU KNOW ?

PMOY 1994 **Jenny McCarthy** co-hosted *Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve* with *American Idol*'s Ryan Seacrest.

Miss September 1979 **Vicki McCarty** (now Iovine) has written several *Girlfriends' Guides* to pregnancy and parenting.

Miss December 2010 **Ashley Hobbs**'s favorite Hawaiian beach is Lanikai, which is on the island of Oahu.



Here are two surefire ways to turn on Miss January 2001 **Irina Voronina**: "Show me an awesome iPhone app and don't try too hard to impress me."

## MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

### BY BRANDON LANG

—handicapper and the inspiration for Matthew McConaughey's character in *Two for the Money*



"My wife always asks me why I love thigh-high boots so much, and I always tell her it's because of Miss January 1979 **Candy Loving**. For her pictorial in the magazine, photographer Dwight Hooker had Candy wear a pair of white thigh-high boots that were the hottest things I'd ever seen on a woman. It might also explain why my wife has 11 pairs of thigh-high boots!"



## INVASION OF THE BODY SCANNERS

No one, it seems, likes the TSA's new Advanced Imaging Technology—the airport body scanners that can see through clothing. Miss September 1995 Donna D'Errico had an especially awful experience with the devices during a recent trip. "I immediately asked why I had to go through an extra search when no one else did," she told AOL News. "In a sarcastic tone, the TSA agent responded, 'Because you caught my eye, and they'—pointing to the other passengers—'didn't.'" She was justifiably apoplectic: "It isn't right to hide behind the veil of security and safety to take advantage of women."



## VINTAGE HOMAGE

From one classic beauty to another. Bettie Page Clothing, a company that makes women's apparel infused with the iconic pinup's sensibility and style, has selected Miss October 2010 Claire Sinclair as its new spokesmodel. Says Claire, who counts Page among her inspirations, "Bettie was the epitome of a woman with curves and character."

Men's lifestyle website Crave named PMOY 2007 **Sara Jean Underwood** one of the Internet Hotties of 2010.

## PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Celebrities have celebrity crushes too. When entertainment news agency Bang Showbiz asked Playmate of the Year 2010 **Hope Dworaczyk** whom she fancies, she answered, "I'd



really like to meet Gerard Butler. I don't know if he's my ideal man, but I certainly find him charming. It's the mysterious part of him that's attractive. I also like tall guys and guys with darker hair." Currently Hope is vying for the attention and respect of another man—Donald Trump—as she appears on the next installment of *Celebrity Apprentice*.... While we're on the subject of dark locks, online fashion magazine Style Bistro loved Playmate of the Year 2005 **Tiffany Fallon**'s coiffure at the 2010 American Country Awards. In particular, the site raved that Tiffany's soft chestnut curls were cut just the right length for her heart-



shape face. It went on to note that songstresses Christina Aguilera and Katy Perry are following Tiffany's lead.... Two sisters in the Playmate sorority—Miss February 1986 **Julie McCullough** and Miss August 1982 **Cathy St. George**—reconnected in November outside Boston at Super Megafest, a memorabilia show.... A bevy of other Playmates (Miss July 2002 **Lauren Anderson**, Miss April 2005 **Courtney Rachel Culkin** and Miss May 2006 **Alison Waite** among them) recently gathered to throw a baby shower for Miss March 2006 **Monica Leigh**.



Celebutante Paris Hilton hosted Miss July 1999 **Jennifer Rovero**'s 32nd birthday party at Pure Nightclub in Las Vegas.

**DID YOU KNOW ?**

## GREEN

(continued from page 57)

Q5

PLAYBOY: But why do women find this appealing? What's in it for them?

GREEN: For women, getting into this stuff is almost subversive. They can apply the conventions of being a lady and still play a mean game of *Halo*. What's nice is it plays perfectly into fully formed male fantasies, whether it's about Baroness from *G.I. Joe* or Lara Croft. When you see a real girl dressed up as one of those characters, it's sort of the actualization of all those feelings you've had since you were 10 years old. But shit, *Family Guy* and *Robot Chicken* are both pretty nerd friendly and get some hilariously attractive women fans—not the least of whom is my wife.

Q6

PLAYBOY: How did you meet her?

GREEN: Funny enough, we met at a comic-book store in Los Angeles about three years ago. We're ridiculously compatible. She has a toy collection that rivals mine in size. She loves *Final Fantasy* and *Sailor Moon* and DC Heroes and all that stuff. The first time she came over to my house she said, "No way! I have those *Empire Strikes Back* figures too! Do you mind if I pose them?"

Q7

PLAYBOY: Do you ever dress up and play dirty superhero?

GREEN: We don't need any of that. We're not like "All right, honey, tonight you're the schoolteacher and I'm a Transformer." But we'll put on costumes to go to parties and stuff. Of course when she puts on a costume, she usually likes to wear heels. She's normally two inches taller than I am, and with heels she's quite a bit taller. But it's fine.

Q8

PLAYBOY: Is there any advantage to being short?

GREEN: I love people's reactions sometimes. When we go out somewhere and my wife looks great, I like to think everybody's saying, "Hey, how come she's fucking that guy?" But I've been short all my life, so it is what it is, and I don't have an issue with it. The only thing it determines is what parts I can play. I'm not going to be the intimidating asshole cop who shakes down the entire precinct.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Is there some serious dramatic role you secretly want to play?

GREEN: Let me be specific about that. The way I pick parts is never about "Oh man, I'd really love to do this." I just get excited about a particular story or character or concept that pops up or comes to me. But I don't have a plan. The most exciting thing about what's available to artists now is that the options are limitless and you've never been more in control of your destiny. You can have an idea and make something with your own money and distribute it across any platform. You have the same ability to get views as a major studio with hundreds of millions of dollars behind it. You can be viral in an hour, international in a day. If you're really good or make something really smart or funny—whether it's animation, TV or film—it will get seen, and nobody can stop you.

Q10

PLAYBOY: When is the *Robot Chicken* 3-D movie coming out?

GREEN: If we ever make a *Robot Chicken* movie, we won't make it in 3-D. We'll make it in glorious 2-D because that's what fits the show. I think part of what people like about *Robot Chicken* is that even though it is highly complicated and professionally produced, it looks a little homemade.

Q11

PLAYBOY: You're working with Lucasfilm on a top secret comedy project set in the *Star Wars* universe. What can you say about it?

GREEN: Nothing really, because it keeps changing. What I can talk about is working with George. People don't realize he's a very normal guy. He's taken a lot of beatings because people don't understand him as a personality. He's shy, though, and on top of that, imagine what it's like to be George Lucas. Every day for the past 30 years every male on the planet who meets George just gets glitched, bugged out. I did. I was like, "Duh," when I first met him. I made him sign my laminate. But now I just go, "Hey, George, good to see you." And he makes fun of me. He knows I love the toys, so he'll give me shit about that. I just say, "Man, that's money in your pocket. Don't give me shit about buying your toys!"

Q12

PLAYBOY: Do you think you like toys so much because you never got to have a childhood? After all, you were nine when you made *The Hotel New Hampshire*, which co-starred Nastassja Kinski as a sexy lesbian in a bear suit.

GREEN: That's an interesting theory. But no, I had good relationships with my parents. Nobody was chaining me to a chair or forcing me to tap-dance when I really wanted to go to the school prom. I was like normal kids. I spent most of my childhood being alienated and getting beat up and being persecuted for things I thought were important.

Q13

PLAYBOY: What did you think was important?

GREEN: Liking Spider-Man and watching movies and wanting to sing and act. I always found adult relationships more satisfying than the goofy social microcosms of school. One of the benefits of working as a kid is that you quickly see beyond high school. I said, "I ain't fucking wasting my time here."

Q14

PLAYBOY: Was it hard going through puberty with hot co-stars?

GREEN: That's the thing. From a young age I was allowed to get close to attractive women. I started dating when I was young. I've studied the species and our mating habits and all that. I didn't have the same kind of peeking-into-the-shower desire many teenagers have. By the time I was on the set of *Austin Powers*, interacting with the fembots, I was already calm enough as a man not to ogle them or run to my trailer to take care of business.

Q15

PLAYBOY: How did you avoid the coke-snorting, 7-Eleven-robbing plight of other child stars?

GREEN: I was always kind of scientific about the whole world of partying and stuff. I remember going to Hollywood parties and seeing the

effects drugs had on people. I was probably 12 or 13 when I saw cocaine for the first time. People were smoking all kinds of pipes and one-hit cigarettes and joints. For a long time I'd just watch and observe. And I'd also read scientific studies of LSD and its effects.

Q16

PLAYBOY: What about a time when you weren't so controlled with controlled substances?

GREEN: I had a huge eye-opening experience on LSD when I was 17. I realized how much I had become self-consumed, how much attention I was paying to my own details and not enough to the world or people around me. It was like, Oh my gosh, there are worlds upon worlds directly before my eyes and all I've got to do is interact. I would never do acid again, but I'm actually glad I did it when I did.

Q17

PLAYBOY: What about now? Your comedy is definitely stoner friendly.

GREEN: Oh man, I meet a lot of people who want to get high with me. Every time I get approached by people they're like, "Yo, bro, let's hit this thing." I'm like, "That's just not what's happening, man." People try to give me pot or paraphernalia. I tell them, "You've got to think about this. We're strangers, you're handing me a controlled substance, and I don't know shit about you. Is there anthrax in this? Because I'm not going to party down with you and your fucking anthrax."

Q18

PLAYBOY: What do you like to do when you're not working?

GREEN: Travel. That's how I spend my money. A buddy of mine and I took a trip from Africa to Micronesia. It was awesome. Thailand, Palau. I don't buy watches or jewelry, but I'll spend a shitload on a trip to Dubai.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Did people recognize you?

GREEN: Shit, yeah. Dubai was crazy. I'm weird famous in Dubai because there's so much Western business there and the people are adopting Western culture. Everywhere I went, I got tagged. I passed by this straight-up sheik with the full getup. He walked past me and went "Hey" with the little head nod. I was like, "No shit. All right, man. Good to know *The Italian Job* and *Austin Powers* made it this far." We're living in crazy times.

Q20

PLAYBOY: Finally, share with us your most awkward celebrity run-in.

GREEN: I was invited to Julia Roberts's birthday at [producer] Jerry Weintraub's house when they were making *Ocean's Eleven*. I brought my buddy Dan. I said, "We'll probably be the only guys at this party who aren't above the title. I'm just putting that out there." And it wasn't just any cast; it was the fucking cast of *Ocean's Eleven*. We were both freaking out, so I said, "Let's just pretend we're going to my friend Phil's birthday." As we drive up, Dan says, "I hope Phil likes our present. I hope Phil has good cake." Jennifer Aniston pulls in right behind us and Dan goes, "Oh look, there's Phil Aniston." Anyway, we started laughing and felt comfortable. Next thing I know George Clooney's talking to us and we're like, Oh yeah, we're the shit!





# PLAYBOY FORUM

## PLAYBOY VALUES

EXAMINING THE SOCIAL AGENDA OF THE 112TH CONGRESS

FROM THE EDITORS



**A**t this moment in Washington—in the early days of the 112th Congress—promises of austerity dominate the political discourse. As we enter year three of financial turmoil, the newly emboldened Republicans—now the majority party in the House of Representatives—vow to limit federal spending and make sure money flows downward via a strict adherence to their capitalist ideals, i.e., by keeping government out of big business's business and keeping taxes as low as possible. Directly to that point: In his first week of holding the gavel new Speaker of the House John Boehner of Ohio symbolically put forward a measure to cut the House's office budgets by five percent.

Yet governing does not begin and end with the economy, even when the economy is in the tank. Legislation is still debated and crafted about pertinent domestic issues—including those that fall directly into *PLAYBOY*'s bailiwick (e.g., the First Amendment, reproductive rights and sexual freedoms). So what will be the new Congress's social agenda? And how powerful are the Democrats—who have been, per President Barack Obama, "shellacked" at the polls and are now minus stalwart civil libertarians like Senator Russ Feingold—to blunt it?

On the surface at least, the 112th Congress's cultural

values don't seem to be closely aligned with the evangelical right. "The strength of the [latest conservative] movement is the focus on fiscal issues, which tend to be a unifying factor among a vast majority of Americans, especially given the current economic climate," FreedomWorks president Matt Kibbe, one of the engines of that movement, opined during a recent online chat at [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com). "Social issues have distracted and proven divisive in close races."

Also to be determined: whether the newest and most vocal Republican constituency, the anti-Washington Tea Party, will give in to its libertarian tendencies—you know, "Government keep out!"—on issues such as censorship, gay marriage and abortion, or if it is simply the evangelical right in sheep's clothing. That, of course, also presumes the populist ire that inspired the creation of the Tea Party will continue to burn hot and political realities won't extinguish it. Here's what you can expect from our new Congress.

### FREEDOM OF SPEECH

What is the tonic to monstrous political disharmony? WikiLeaks. The Republican reaction to the group's document dump of classified State Department and

military files might go further to the extreme—House Intelligence Committee chairman Mike Rogers favors executing Army private Bradley Manning, the alleged WikiLeaks, while House Homeland Security Committee chairman Peter King wants WikiLeaks declared a foreign terrorist organization. (More on King later.) But they get



The First Amendment is still in peril.

no argument from Democrats. “The release of these documents damages our national interests and puts innocent lives at risk,” California senator Dianne Feinstein wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*. “[WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange] should be vigorously prosecuted for espionage.”

But if you charge Assange under the Espionage Act—even if it is amended so as to apply to WikiLeaks, something the Democrat-controlled 111th Congress held hearings about in its waning days—you stir all sorts of First Amendment tempests. “This whole notion that we want to prosecute [Assange] for treason,” Texas Republican representative Ron Paul, Assange’s loudest congressional defender, told Fox Business in December. “Aren’t they jumping to a wild conclusion? This is media, isn’t it? Why don’t we prosecute *The New York Times* or anybody who releases this?”

Paul is right. Whatever the government does to Assange it can also do to *The New York Times*, which likewise published the leaked documents (albeit in abridged form), and any other media entity—however amorphous and unconventional—that dares to challenge

government secrecy in a way the feds deem inappropriate.

Lurking deeper is the issue of openness. How transparent a society do we want to live in? Currently, our overbearing methods of classification are the country’s greatest censor. As Thomas Blanton, director of George Washington University’s National Security Archive, recently testified before the House Judiciary Committee, “We have to recognize that right now we have low fences around vast prairies of government secrets, when what we need are high fences around small graveyards of the real secrets.”

Unfortunately, such recognition won’t come from the 112th Congress, which will press for Assange’s extradition. This sort of overreaction will mute tougher questions regarding freedom of the press and Washington’s mania for concealment.

#### DRUG RIGHTS

Maybe it should be called the *420 Club*. In December Pat Robertson, that demon of conviviality, preached to his *700 Club* viewers that the country should go easier on pot offenders. Robertson was singing the refrain of the new conservative chorus. Lately, Glenn Beck, Sarah Palin and former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson have, if not called outright for legalization of marijuana, distanced themselves from the hardcore drug warriors of the 1980s.

None of them, however, is currently a politician, and they are way out in front of the base. Only 25 percent of Republican

voters support legalization, and even supposedly liberal California voters soundly defeated a proposition to legalize (and tax) pot sales this past November. Meanwhile, newly elected Kentucky Republican senator Rand Paul, considered a Tea Party ideologue, made it plain that when it comes to legalization he favors “a more local approach to drugs.... It’s a state issue.”

That’s politician for “I’m not going anywhere near this.”



Legalization has surprising new supporters.



#### GUN RIGHTS

It’s comforting to think people shape events. But usually it’s the other way around. Case in point: the January shootings in Tucson that injured 14 people, including Democratic representative Gabrielle Giffords, and killed six others. Until then, the idea that the 112th Congress might reinstate the federal assault-weapons ban (off the books since 2004) was absurd. Certainly the Obama administration hadn’t shown the will to make it a priority. But because the high-capacity magazine attached to Jared Lee Loughner’s Glock was illegal to manufacture under the previous ban, discussion of its return intensified after the shooting.

#### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

It’s clear that candidates who won on a message of limited government never intended for that message to apply to a woman’s right to choose. Already the GOP majority in the House is renewing efforts to remove tax benefits on any private insurance plan that includes abortion coverage—in other words, 87 percent of *all* private plans.

And it is peddling two especially egregious provisions. One would prevent anyone over the age of 18 who charges a family member with incest from receiving an abortion with public funds, and another would prevent a date-rape survivor from receiving an abortion with similar funds. The kicker? The woman would be able to receive federal assistance to treat related injuries—just not for a resulting abortion.

The current Congress has nearly 300 members (out of 535) who out-and-out oppose abortion, a net gain of 48 from the previous Congress. Boehner has said he wants to be “the most pro-life Speaker ever,” and newly elected Pennsylvania senator Pat Toomey wants to outlaw abortion and put doctors who provide them in jail.

What’s more, antichoice incumbent Hal Rogers of Kentucky was tapped to chair

the Appropriations Committee, which oversees spending on women's health programs, and Joe Pitts of Pennsylvania now controls the Energy and Commerce Committee's health subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over family-planning services and other important women's health programs.

There are some bright spots. Several key reproductive rights allies were reelected, including senators Barbara Boxer (California), Patty Murray (Washington) and Michael Bennet (Colorado). Also, in a reversal of a George W. Bush-era measure, federal taxpayer dollars no longer fund "abstinence only" education programs. And for the second time, Colorado voters overwhelmingly struck down a proposed constitutional amendment that would have established legal protections for fertilized eggs, with the goal of outlawing abortion, common forms of birth control and certain stem-cell research. Finally, despite protests from anti-contraception groups, the FDA approved Ella, a new prescription-only emergency contraceptive (see *Newsfront*).

### FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Back to Peter King. "To some in the strata of political correctness, I'm a

pretty bad guy," he wrote in *Newsday*, his home district's paper. "To be blunt, this crowd sees me as an anti-Muslim bigot." These days the "anti-Muslim bigot" label has been affixed to his name because of his promise—in his capacity as chairman of the House Homeland



Alms for the poor—or tithing for terror?

Security Committee—to hold hearings about Al Qaeda recruitment within the American Muslim community. "I will do all I can to break down the wall of political correctness and drive the public debate on Islamic radicalization," he explained. "These

hearings will be a step in that direction. It's what democracy is all about."

Realistically, however, the hearings are all about fearmongering—or, if politeness isn't your thing, a witch hunt redolent of McCarthyism. (And we'll even grant King that contemporary norms of political correctness have suffocated speech.) To be sure, the asymmetrical warfare waged by Al Qaeda has created a new security dynamic. A decade after 9/11 we're still lousy at talking rationally about what that means for civil liberties and religious freedoms, especially with Muslim Americans. (To say nothing about the discussion of what causes terrorism, homegrown or otherwise.) If anything, the dialogue is as poor as ever—see the hysteria surrounding the so-called Ground Zero mosque and the proposed move of Guantánamo Bay detainees to stateside prisons.

Now King is pointing fingers. "[Al Qaeda] is recruiting Muslims living legally in the United States—homegrown terrorists who have managed to stay under the antiterror radar screen," he claimed in the *Newsday* op-ed. Perhaps such bluster is red meat for the Republican base, but it's counterproductive for everyone else.

### SEXUAL RIGHTS

Gays and lesbians can now serve openly in the military, but many other inequalities continue. For instance, they can still be fired from their jobs for being gay, and married same-sex couples cannot jointly file income taxes, meaning they contribute far more to U.S. coffers than married straight couples.

Change will be slow going. Speaker of the House Boehner, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell all scored zero on the most recent congressional scorecard of Human Rights Campaign, an LGBT lobbying group. Similarly, Minnesota's John Kline, the new chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, opposes the Employment Non-Discrimination Act—legislation that would have to originate from his committee. (The act would make it illegal to fire someone based on his or her sexual orientation.)

As for gay marriage, in 2009 New York Democratic representative Jerrold Nadler introduced a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act, which prohibits

the government from recognizing same-sex relationships. Surprisingly, however, Democrat Barney Frank of Massachusetts, the longest-serving openly gay representative, rejected Nadler's proposal. He reasoned that a repeal of DOMA would have better luck in the courts than in the Senate—not a bad strategy.

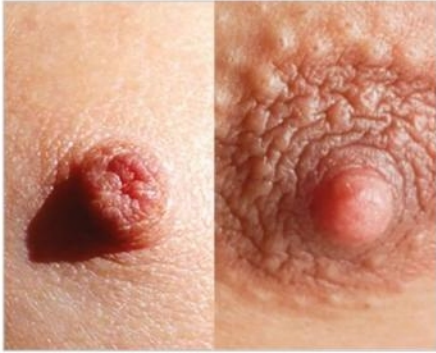
Court challenges to DOMA and California's Proposition 8—that state's ban on same-sex marriage—are pending. If either goes before the Supreme Court, pay attention to Justice Anthony Kennedy, whose voting record indicates he could be swayed to the side of equal rights.



# READER RESPONSE

## NIPPLE TEST

PLAYBOY could create a buzz about censorship by displaying a grid of nipples on its cover with the headline ONE OF THESE NIPPLES MAY BE A WOMAN'S. They could all belong to men, but you wouldn't say that, and the controversy



The nipple at left can't be shown in public. would be invaluable. If a news organization were to show the cover, would it blur every nipple, even knowing it might be unnecessary in some cases? This would make obvious and absurd the fact that you can't distinguish between allowed and forbidden images.

Mitch Nelson  
Portland, Oregon

## THE NRA: NOT DEAD YET

Daniel Wattenberg argues in "Obsolete Weapons" (December) that with a handgun ban off the table as a result of the Supreme Court's *District of Columbia v. Heller* and *McDonald v. Chicago* decisions, gun owners will become immune to the National Rifle Association's alarmist rhetoric and embrace a more genteel golden age focused on litigation. Strangely enough, some gun-control advocates offer a similar—albeit inverse—analysis: that with a handgun ban off the table, activist gun owners and pro-gun policy makers will be less receptive to NRA doomsday scenarios and more open to legislation. Unfortunately, neither view acknowledges the mind-set of the hard-core pro-gun activist. Legal decisions offer little reassurance to NRA-indoctrinated advocates who view themselves as modern-day "citizen soldiers" and warn of scenarios in which bans will be enforced extrajudicially. This is why the NRA's alleged "UN Global Gun Grab" has such resonance among the pro-gun grassroots. And faced with dramatic drops in gun ownership—the percentage of U.S. households with at least one gun dropped to 35 percent in 2006 from

54 percent in 1977—the primary role of today's NRA is as a trade association for the firearms industry. The NRA focuses its legislative muscle on policies that expand the markets for concealable handguns, assault weapons and armor-piercing .50-caliber sniper rifles, the only bright spots for an industry in decline. While the NRA's influence will inevitably wane, it will be because of demographic and cultural trends, not because of the *Heller* case, which one NRA lobbyist dismissed as a "class project."

Josh Sugarmann  
Washington, D.C.

*Sugarmann is executive director of the Violence Policy Center (vpc.org) and author of National Rifle Association: Money, Firepower and Fear.*

In my 20 years of researching America's gun culture, I have read many premature obituaries for the NRA. Critics seem unwilling to understand that the NRA is an organizational convenience and informational clearinghouse for the gun culture, not its central committee. Analysts tend to see the NRA as a top-down lobbying and extremist interest group. They celebrate imagined dissension within its ranks, misfeasance and alleged alienation of the average gun owner. That's all nonsense. While its critics pronounce from on high, the gun culture meets in the catacombs of virtual space. This culture has contrived political miracles—e.g., the concealed-handgun movement that has licensed 5 million people in 40 states, thereby



NRA headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia.

constituting a de facto recognition of an individual's right to go armed well before *Heller* or *McDonald*.

Brian Anse Patrick  
Toledo, Ohio

*Patrick, a professor of communication at the University of Toledo, is author of The National*

*Rifle Association and the Media: The Motivating Force of Negative Coverage.*

Commentaries such as "Obsolete Weapons" are one reason NRA members such as myself distrust the vast majority of what our foes have to say. Wattenberg claims a 2007 ABC News poll found great "public support" for a semiautomatic-handguns ban. But he doesn't provide any other information about the poll. Nor does he back up his claim that a 2008 CNN poll found that "86 percent of the public" favors waiting periods. Wattenberg



A sculpture outside the United Nations.

states there is "no such treaty" as the UN Global Gun Grab. Perhaps he can explain why the U.S. ambassador to the UN told the council any effort to remove private firearms in the U.S. would violate the Second Amendment and the U.S. would veto any such treaty, which is exactly what happened.

Tom Atkinson

Honesdale, Pennsylvania

*You can learn more about both polls through a Google search. There is no treaty; what the U.S. voted against in 2006 and again in 2008 were resolutions to study the feasibility of a treaty. In both cases the U.S. cast the lone dissenting vote. The most recent resolution, passed with U.S. support in October, calls for a conference in July 2012 to finalize an Arms Trade Treaty and includes a provision (inserted at U.S. request) acknowledging "the right of States to regulate internal transfers of arms and national ownership, including through national constitutional protections on private ownership." As Wattenberg points out, even if the UN wanted to ban guns here, as a practical matter it would never happen. For more, search at [factcheck.org](http://factcheck.org) for "gun ban."*

*E-mail via the web at [letters.playboy.com](http://letters.playboy.com). Or write: 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611.*

## NEWSFRONT

**No Glove, No Love**

STOCKHOLM—Julian Assange, founder of WikiLeaks, has been accused of violating national security, but another story follows close behind: allegations that he sexually assaulted two women during a business trip to the Swedish capital. Although the encounters began consensually, Assange is accused of pinning one woman's arms so she couldn't grab a condom and then damaging the condom so it ripped. The second woman told police Assange penetrated her without a condom while she slept after they'd had sex with one. Refusing to wear protection, a lawyer for both women said, is "a violation of sexual integrity" that can be seen as rape. (Assange denies the allegations.) Swedish law is expansive when defining sexual assault; it recognizes "withdrawal of consent" and three grades—severe, regular and less severe. In general U.S. laws require evidence of force, sometimes to extremes. In September prosecutors in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina dropped rape charges against a former high school football player, citing a 1979 state supreme court decision that a woman cannot say no once sex is under way.

**Jesus Christ, Socialist**

BEDFORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE—A couple pulled their 16-year-old son out of school after, they said, a teacher violated his civil rights by assigning a book that refers to Jesus as a "wine-guzzling vagrant and precocious socialist." *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich describes her attempt to live on the minimum wage. Ehrenreich admitted "wine-guzzling is a little unfair" but said "vagrant" is apt because Jesus was "an itinerant preacher, and he hung out with a lot of disreputable people." As for the accusation of socialism, she said, "He wanted you to sell all your stuff and give all your money to the poor. The disdain for material possessions is almost breathtaking."

**Saving Little Minds**

LONDON—The British government is pressuring online providers to block adult sites by default unless consumers indicate they want access to porn. Ed Vaizey, the communications minister, says internet service

providers must do more to "protect children." If the major ISPs do not block all porn sites voluntarily, he says, he will pursue legislation. Meanwhile, in Tokyo the city council passed an ordinance banning the sale to anyone under 18 of manga comics and anime films that depict rape, incest and other sex crimes in "unjustifiably glorified or exaggerated ways."

**No More Words**

LUCASVILLE, OHIO—A new regulation allows state prison officials to cut short an inmate's last words. The change came after Michael Beuke spent 17 minutes before his execution apologizing to the families of his victims, praying aloud and reciting the rosary. The policy allows the warden to impose "reasonable restrictions" on content and length and to cut off any statement meant to offend witnesses.

**After the Fact**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The FDA approved a new prescription emergency contraceptive pill, dubbed Ella, that works as long

as five days after sex—two days longer than Plan B—and reduces the chance of pregnancy to one in 50. For more information, see [ec.princeton.edu](http://ec.princeton.edu).

**Dread Locks**

OAKWOOD, VIRGINIA—Prison officials have moved several Rastafarian inmates who refuse for religious reasons to shave or cut their hair—including Kendall Gibson (below) and nine others who have spent more than a decade in solitary confinement—into their own cell block. The Virginia Department of Corrections has since 1999 banned all beards and hair longer than the collar, saying the policy is designed to prevent inmates from hiding weapons and drugs. Some inmates sued in 2003 but lost.



# GRAPEVINE

## Pretty as a Picture

Like blondes, the Polish have long served as an easy punch line. But countrywoman MARTHA ZAWISZA is no joke. First of all, she has amazing legs. Second of all, she can escape from any picture frame you attempt to place her in.



POPSTAR PICTURES

## Getting All Touchy-Feely

BRAD PITT clearly had his hands full walking partner ANGELINA JOLIE down the red carpet at the New York City premiere of her latest movie, *The Tourist*.



AMANDA SCHWAB/STARTRAKS

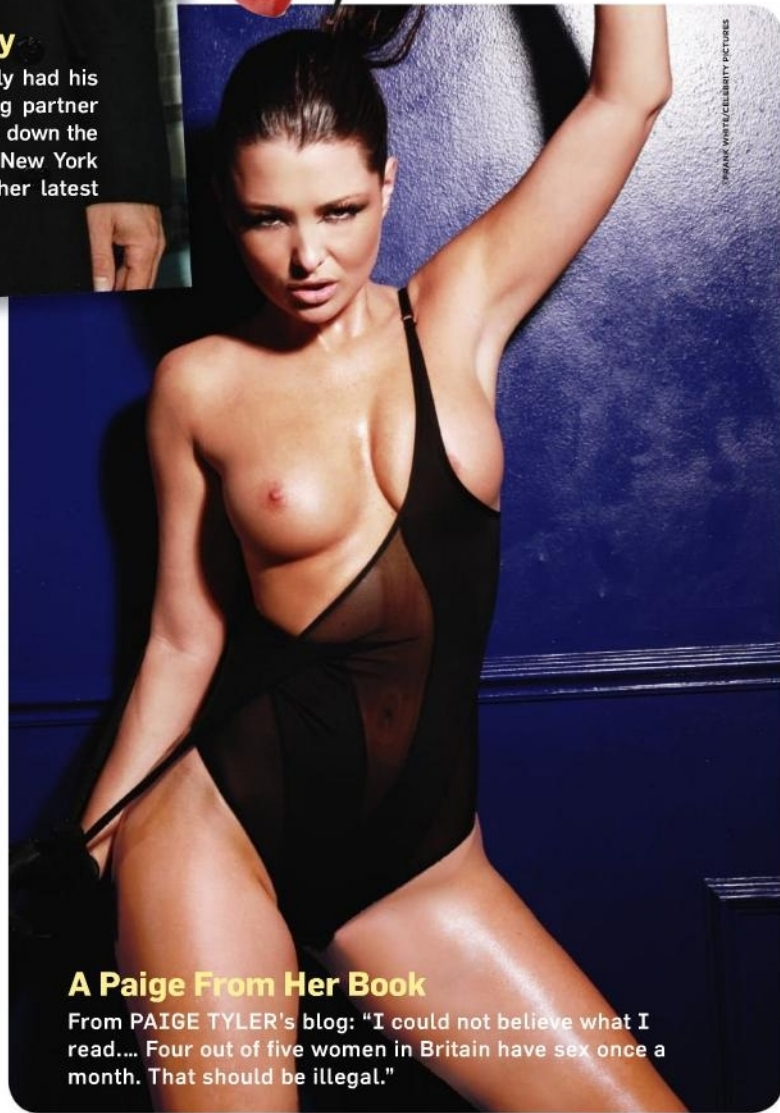
## Glamour Girl

DARIA WERBOWY earned \$4.5 million last year, making her the world's eighth-highest-paid supermodel. Most notably, the Canadian Walk of Fame inductee (she shares sidewalk space with Gordon Lightfoot, Alex Trebek and Wayne Gretzky) is the face of Lancôme. The rest of her is pretty impressive too.



## A Paige From Her Book

From PAIGE TYLER's blog: "I could not believe what I read.... Four out of five women in Britain have sex once a month. That should be illegal."



FRANK WIRTH/CELEBRITY PICTURES



GREGORY PACE/BEHANCES

### Stuffed Shirt

"My boobs are growing and my butt is growing," says super-model NICOLE TRUNFIO. "I am getting quite voluptuous, and I am very proud."



STEVE TORRES

CHARLES SYLES/REX USA/BEHANCES



### Feeling Rosie

At the Annoying-Voice Hall of Fame, we're told, you can watch Gilbert Gottfried perform stand-up comedy, hear Fran Drescher sing karaoke and—best of all—see ROSIE PÉREZ's bust.

### Hawaiian Dream

Look to the left! We've found next year's Christmas tree! Oh, the girl? Her name is SHELLEY DOW. Her looks and her locale—she lives in Hawaii—helped her score the role of Bikini Girl on the newest iteration of *Hawaii Five-0*.

### Colli Flower

A few things about JENNIFER COLLI: She played college basketball at Southern Methodist University, she craves anything intellectually stimulating and she loves animals—zebras most of all, apparently.



STEVE TORRES



HAWAII FIVE-O'S TARYN MANNING IS A PERFECT 10.

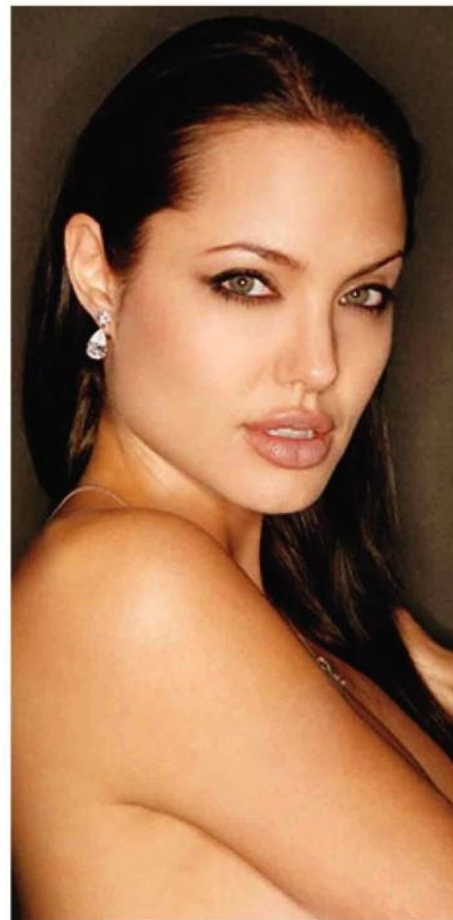


ROCK THE RABBIT FASHION: CEE LO'S GOT THE LOOK.



GEORGE JONES: THE HIT-MAKING POSSUM TRIUMPHS.

## NEXT MONTH



2011'S SEXIEST CELEBRITIES: THE HOT AND THE FAMOUS.

**TARYN MANNING**—THE SINGER AND *HAWAII FIVE-O* ACTRESS SHEDS HER CLOTHES AND REVEALS HER LITHE PHYSIQUE.

**ROCK THE RABBIT**—WANT TO DRESS LIKE A ROCK STAR? **CEE LO GREEN**, **BRYAN FERRY** AND OTHER ICONS SHOW YOU HOW.

**THE PASSENGER**—EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS ARE A DIME A DOZEN. BUT CONFESSING TO AN AFFAIR—EVEN WHEN SOMEONE'S LIFE COULD BE AT RISK—IS NEVER EASY. EXCITING NEW FICTION BY **JENNIFER DUBOIS**

**NO-SHOW JONES**—IN THE 1950S **GEORGE JONES** BURST OUT OF THE BIG THICKET OF EAST TEXAS AND CONQUERED THE WORLD WITH HIS GOLDEN VOICE. SINGER AND SONGWRITER **RODNEY CROWELL** OFFERS AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S ORIGINAL HARD-PARTYING OUTLAW.

**DANCING IN THE STREETS**—RIOTS WERE ALL THE RAGE IN EUROPE LAST YEAR. ARMCHAIR ANARCHIST **WILL SELF** CONTEMPLATES THE ALLURE OF POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS.

**FUTURE MUSIC**—WHAT DO SLEIGH BELLS, JAMEY JOHNSON AND JAY ELECTRONICA HAVE IN COMMON? NOT MUCH OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT THEY MAKE GREAT MUSIC THAT'S UNCOMMON AND UNEXPECTED. **ROB TANNENBAUM** ACQUAINTS YOU WITH THE INNOVATIVE ARTISTS TO WATCH IN 2011.

**25 BEST SONGS ABOUT SEX**—LOVE SONGS ARE A DIME A DOZEN. **ROB TANNENBAUM** COMPILES THE ULTIMATE LIST OF THE GREATEST TUNES ABOUT WHAT REALLY MATTERS: SEX.

**HELEN THOMAS**—HER CONTROVERSIAL COMMENTS ON ISRAEL ENDED HER LONG AND OTHERWISE DISTINGUISHED CAREER. IN THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW*, THE FEISTY JOURNALIST OPENS UP TO **DAVID HOCHMAN** AND ANSWERS HER CRITICS.

**2011'S SEXIEST CELEBS**—WHICH CELEBRITIES ARE THE FAIREST OF THEM ALL? WE KNOW, AND WE SHOW YOU.

**ASTEROIDS OF GOLD**—ONE DAY SOON, HUMANS WILL EXTRACT VALUABLE RESOURCES FROM ASTEROIDS ORBITING SPACE. **STEVEN KOTLER** BREAKS DOWN ASTEROID MINING—WHO'S DOING IT, HOW IT WORKS AND THE SHOCKING EFFECT IT COULD HAVE ON OUR GLOBAL ECONOMY.

**JOSH RADNOR**—IN *20Q* THE *HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER* STAR TALKS TO **STEPHEN REBELLO** ABOUT LOVE, LIFE AND NEIL PATRICK HARRIS.

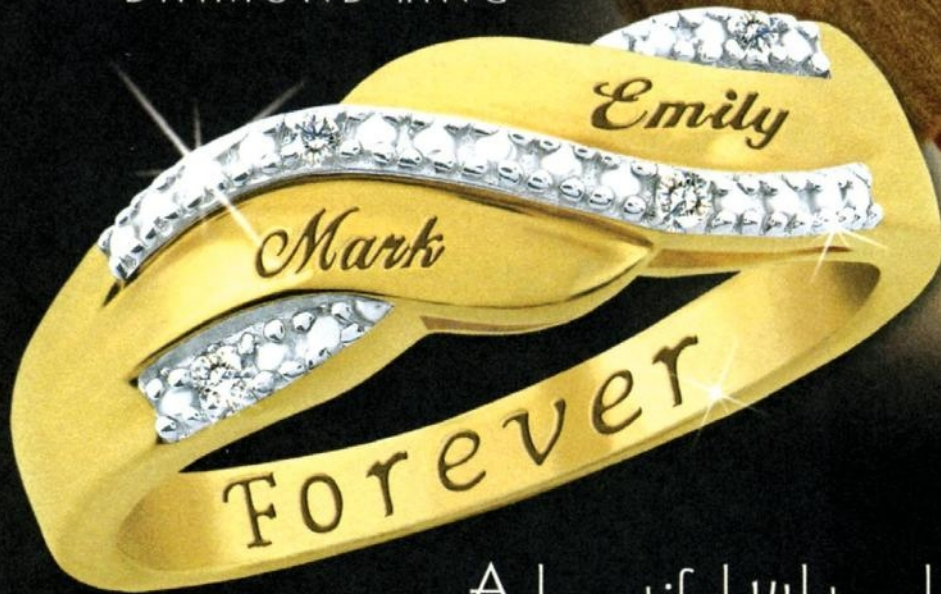
**PLAYBOY GARAGE**—WANT TO DRIVE THE CAR OF YOUR DREAMS? **KEN GROSS** OFFERS HIS NO-FAIL GUIDE TO INVESTING IN THE VINTAGE SPORTS CAR MARKET.

**PLUS**—THE LOVELY MISS APRIL **JACLYN SWEDBERG**.



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NAME #2

*I certify that the above capitalization is correct.*

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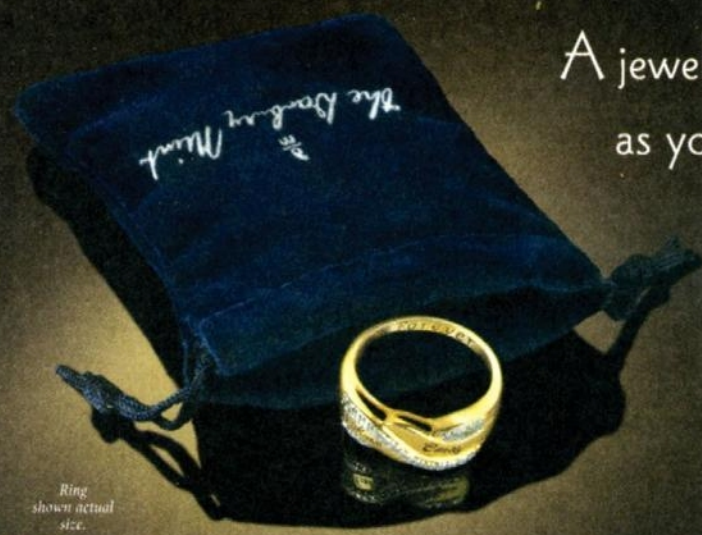
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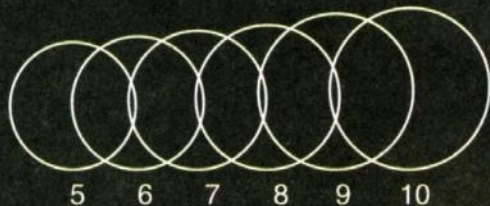
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