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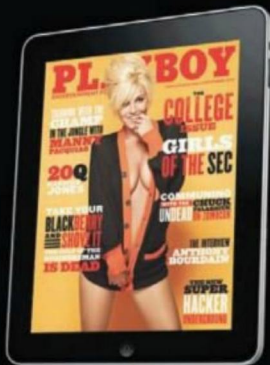
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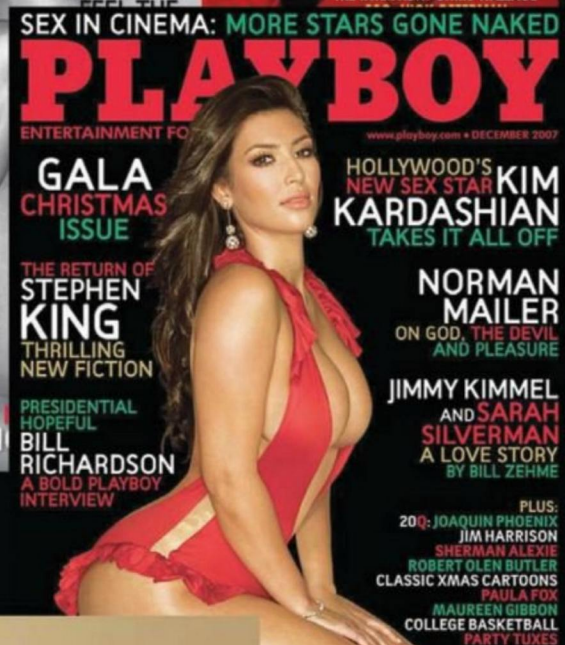
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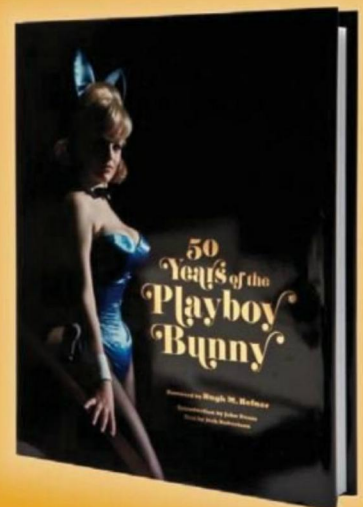


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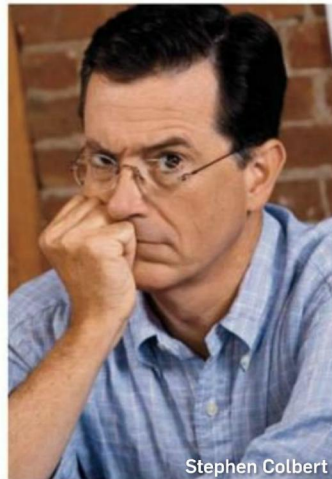
Damn, it's getting cold out there. Time to turn up the heat and indulge in your favorite indoor activities. Pour a scotch, kick back and escape in the pages of your favorite magazine, where you'll find wild adventures this month. It begins with the story of a golfer who penetrates the planet's most dangerous border, North Korea's demilitarized zone. Why? To play in an amateur golf tournament, why else? In *The World's Most Dangerous 18 Holes*, **Kevin Cook** tees off inside the axis of evil. Our fiction this month comes courtesy of the brilliant **Ron Carlson**, who delivers a playful romp of a Victorian vampire tale, *The Great Cumberbund Steeplechase*. The citizens of Stirrupshire grow frantic when a riding instructor is found exsanguinated. Whodunit? The answer is nearly as important as who wins the local horse race. You might have noticed there's an election this month—one of the most important in decades. Anyone who saw **Stephen Colbert** host the White House Correspondents' Dinner in 2006 knows how scarily sardonic he can be. We asked him to bring his A game for the *Playboy Interview*. Although talk shows like Colbert's cover election news, TV talking heads have taken the lead and now shape the narrative of political discourse, argues **John Meroney** in *Why Is Everyone Talking at Me?* The idiot box has taken over. Author and activist **Nancy L. Cohen** has some things to say about Obama vs. Romney. She makes the case in *Screwed* that this election will have a major impact on your sex life. If that doesn't get you to the polls, we don't know what will. To round out our election coverage, we offer a unique photo of Uncle Sam on our cover. Here's a secret: That's not really Uncle Sam. It's Miss November 2010 SHERA BECHARD camping it up as a cross-dressing patriot. Ain't that America? Thanks to photographer **Gavin Bond** for this wink to the U.S. of A. We kick off our 20Q with a hell of a question: What's it like being America's most famous bitch? **Krysten Ritter**, star of the sitcom *Don't Trust the B— in Apartment 23*, is just the woman to answer it. She speaks candidly about sex, fame and riding on cows. Longtime *PLAYBOY* contributor **Bill Zehme** has chronicled the life of Hugh M. Hefner with candor through the years. This month, Zehme boldly asks how to define "the magnetic mixed-company compartment of our one and only original Mr. Playboy." Find out in *Hef's Girlfriends*. In our latest installment in the series celebrating the 50th anniversary of the *Playboy Interview*, we bring you **Fidel Castro**. The interview originally ran in January 1967, but the revolutionary's polemics are even more surprising through the lens of history. Don't forget about all the nude photography in this issue too. Now there's our favorite indoor pastime: the celebration of gorgeous women. *Brrr*. It's cold out there.



Kevin Cook



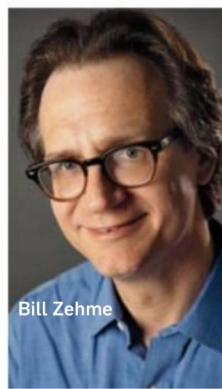
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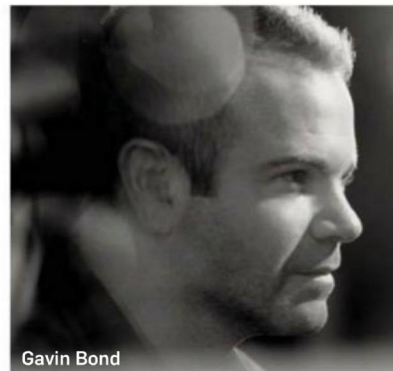
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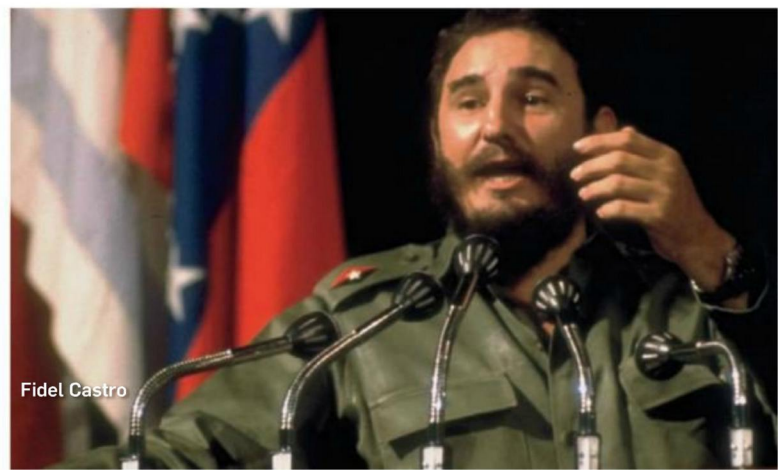
Krysten Ritter



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Nancy L. Cohen



Fidel Castro

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Shera Bechard is the kind of bipartisan bombshell who can rouse anyone to vote, be it for the left or right. That's our kind of political action, and as usual, our Rabbit votes to be on top.

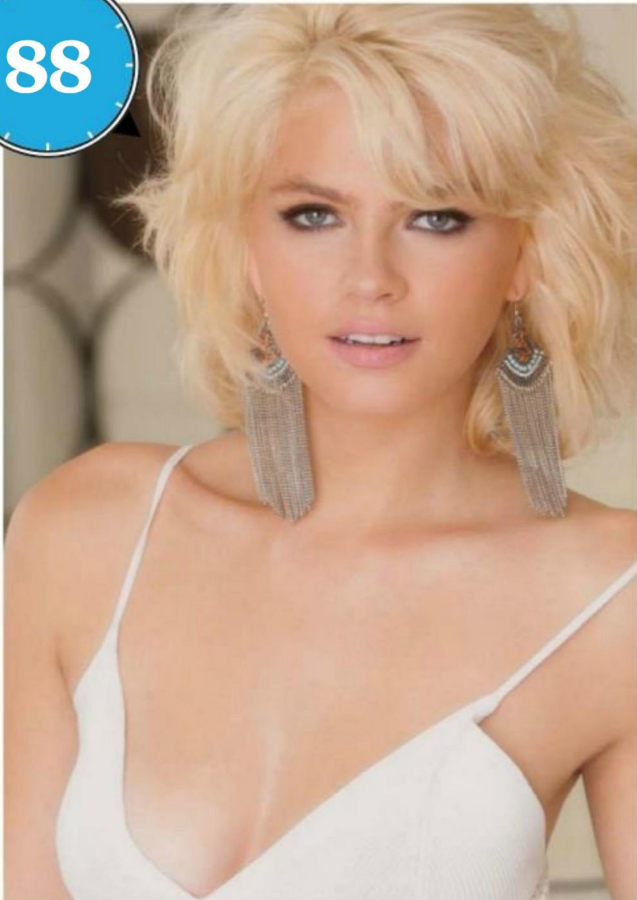
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PLAYBOY

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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS,
MANSION FROLICS
AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

JAGUAR X BUNNIES

The Jaguar XJL Ultimate made its U.S. debut at a Playboy event in Pebble Beach, California. "The big feature is the backseat," said *Mad Men* star Christina Hendricks. "You could travel the world in it—it's the ultimate luxury." Also in attendance to check out the latest Jaguars: Wyclef Jean, Adrien Brody and Cooper Hefner.



NEW PLAYBOY CLUB

Hef dispatched his son Cooper Hefner to Germany for Playboy Club Cologne's opening party. "Why am I excited about the future?" asked Cooper (at near right with PLAYBOY Germany editor Florian Boitin). "Because I get to reintroduce the Playboy Clubs to the world. We are giving a new generation an opportunity to be a part of that experience." The first-night Rhineland fete was also attended by Pamela Anderson and plenty of Bunnies.





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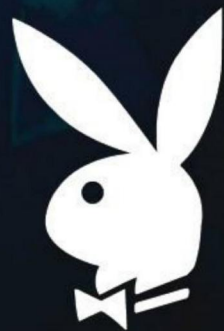


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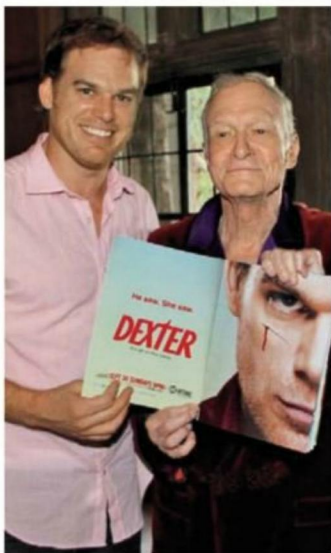
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HANGIN' WITH HEF

NEW DIGS IN BEVERLY HILLS

After decades with offices in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles, Playboy has consolidated operations in a single building on the West Coast. "We have been spread out for many years in several cities," says Hef, "and it's nice to bring everybody together in one place." Cooper Hefner also swung by the sparkling new offices to join Beverly Hills mayor William Brien in cutting the ribbon at Playboy's 45,000-square-foot headquarters on Civic Center Drive. "If Hef could rewrite his life," says Playboy chief executive officer Scott Flanders, "he might have started it right here in Beverly Hills. It is, after all, the most glamorous place in the universe."



HALL VISITS

Dexter star Michael C. Hall came to the Mansion Movie Night screening of *Lawless*. After enjoying the Shia LaBeouf and Tom Hardy gangster film with Hef and his girlfriends, Hall put everybody in the mood for more blood. "I'm a fan of *Dexter*," Hef said, "and with his visit, the girls are now interested in sampling the show. Luckily, I know I will enjoy watching it again."



OPUS DAY

"It's with great excitement that we embark on a journey to produce a publication on the history of Playboy that will be unlike anything we've done before," Hef said in announcing Playboy's agreement with Opus Media Group to publish *The Official Playboy Opus*. The large-format tome (available in 2013) will cover 60 years in 850 pages. "This will surely be a luxurious work of art," says Hef.

CALL TO ACTION

I want to thank Hugh Hefner for his editorial *Sexual Freedom* (September). After working through the litany of so-called women's magazines aimed at my demographic, I'm confident *PLAYBOY* is routinely the most supportive, literate and stimulating magazine on the shelf. To paraphrase filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder ("Talking With Harmony Korine," *Francofile*, September), *PLAYBOY* has built a house I can live in.

Alyssa Janikowski
Buffalo, New York

Sexual Freedom again confirms the intelligent, open-minded and progressive attitude of Hugh Hefner. I especially appreciate the comment "We have enjoyed freedom of religion as well as freedom from religion." Thanks to Hef for always speaking his mind, no matter the consequences, and using his personal platform to educate as well as entertain. Why is he not president?

Ryan Rebekah Corley
Fort Collins, Colorado

For more responses to Hef's editorial, turn to page 53.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Thanks for sharing the Harris Interactive/*PLAYBOY* survey results in *State of Man 2012* (September). I have a few quibbles. I wish you had asked men if they had ever availed themselves of an escort, and if they had, whether that counts as having sex with a person within 24 hours of being introduced. You asked men to define which activity produces the "most intense" orgasm but use the word *best* in the headline—the most intense is not always the best, and vice versa. How could four percent of men say they never go online yet complete an online poll? And 44 percent have never looked at porn on a computer? *Never*? Couple that with 50 percent claiming to work out at least four times a week and I can only conclude that American men have become giant, deceptive pussies.

Rick Gregory
Gaithersburg, Maryland

THE UNBELIEVER

Richard Dawkins says he considers it a "privilege" to exist. But who granted him that benefit in a world created only by chance and the right mix of chemicals? Evolution and religion can co-exist.

John Caspers
Essexville, Michigan

Dawkins is right, to an extent, when he argues religious people are ignorant in their beliefs. Far too many people never question what they believe. And at its worst, religion is used as a means of control. However, that is human nature and not the intent of religious

DEAR PLAYBOY

Proof God (May) Exist

As both a longtime subscriber and longtime atheist, I was looking forward to reading the *Playboy Interview* with Richard Dawkins (September). It was worth the anticipation, per the standard I have come to expect from your magazine. What I did not expect to find in the same issue was living proof of a benign creator in the face and form of British burlesque star Katrina Darling (*God Save the Queen*). Regardless of her relation to future queen Kate Middleton, I expect Katrina would have made headlines eventually.

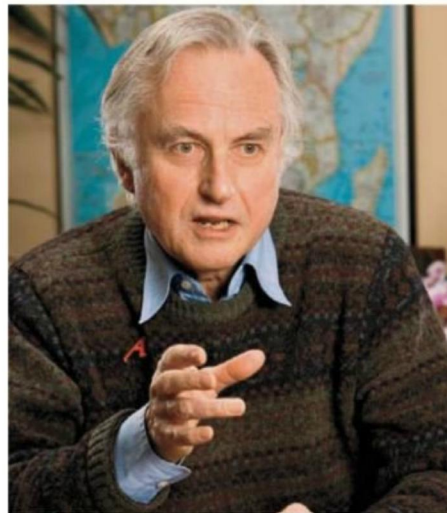
Stephen Bohlman
Chaska, Minnesota



doctrine. It irritates me when atheists and agnostics such as Dawkins and Bill Maher display such a cynical, better-than-thou attitude toward Christians.

Shawn Thomas
Tampa, Florida

Although the vast majority of biologists believe in evolution, appealing to the majority is a fallacious argument. The majority used to believe in the Ptolemaic model of the solar system, spontaneous generation and blood-letting. Good science is tentative and self-correcting, but this never happens



Dawkins: We were not created; we evolved.

in the case of evolution. Regardless of the data, it has been closed to debate. Students are allowed to ask "How did evolution occur?" but never "Did evolution occur?"

David Buckna
Kelowna, British Columbia

According to a Gallup poll released in June, 46 percent of Americans believe, despite all scientific evidence to the contrary, that God created humans in their

present form within the past 10,000 years. That figure has remained essentially unchanged over the past 30 years.

It's interesting that Dawkins, like Jesus, is aware of the human tendency to accept faith only after accepting the premise that miracles have occurred. But in John 4:48 Jesus scolds a nobleman, saying, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe." This implies spirituality need not be dependent on tricks or superstition. Although religion can cause division, it also gives birth to many of our noblest aspirations.

Peter Johnson
Superior, Wisconsin

You asked Dawkins why atheists have relatively little political power. We are trying to change that with the newly organized National Atheist Party (usanap.org). As Dawkins has said, organizing atheists is like herding cats. But though we think independently, we recognize it is time for us to be heard.

Shannon Kietzman
Knox, Indiana

Dawkins asks why God has gone to such lengths to hide himself. One explanation is that he suffers from attention deficit disorder. He can remain focused during stimulating parts of an activity, such as creating the world, but loses interest when faced with mundane duties such as maintaining the planet and its inhabitants. Creation may have been a typically impulsive project God started before wandering off to make another galaxy and losing track of time.

Aharon Shulimson
Salt Lake City, Utah

As a devout Catholic, I am appalled by Dawkins's comments about the

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church and the pope. He says he has no religious friends, only “educated, intelligent” ones. So not only would he object to me but also Socrates, Plato, Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan. Since Dawkins can't prove God doesn't exist, we of faith will take the gamble and receive some comfort in our belief.

Paul Pums Sr.
Temecula, California

It is so encouraging to see Dawkins in the pages of your great magazine. Anybody who has read *The God Delusion* and still believes in God is delusional.

Ken Schwartz
Centreville, Virginia

Dawkins asks why Jesus “couldn't think of a better way to forgive our sins than to have himself tortured to death.” As Christ said, there is no greater love than to lay down your life for your friends. Dawkins asks why God won't show himself. But God isn't hiding; atheists just ignore him. It's true you don't have to be religious to be moral, but as Paul states in Romans 2:15, all humans have God's law written in their hearts, so the fact that everyone has at least some sense of morality is proof God exists. Dawkins wants evidence, but the point of faith is to believe without it. I do not need to prove God exists; I know it to be true.

Sean Gravel
Pensacola, Florida

The trouble with being an atheist is that it sets up humans as the smartest entities in the universe. If that's true, the universe is in big trouble.

Bill Arthur
Hopkins, Minnesota

DANCING QUEEN

One day I see Katrina Darling walking around the town of Newcastle. The next time I see her is on the cover of *PLAYBOY*. And the next time I see her will be at one of her performances. Thank you!

Ryan Smith
South Shields, U.K.

Those eyes—it's almost as if she is looking right through me.

Ron White
Syracuse, New York

The shot of Katrina gazing into the mirror in red stockings, garter and red gloves is about the sexiest photo I have ever seen.

Craig Carnes
Clearwater, Idaho

Usually I find the Rabbit Head hidden on the cover fairly quickly. But September proved challenging. I studied the intricate lace patterns of Katrina's lingerie, the locks and tangles of her dark hair, the way the light reflects off her

skin—and then saw it in the pleats of the upholstery. It was time well spent.

Sean Hickey
Kimberton, Pennsylvania

SECOND THOUGHTS

Before foreigners snap up a pied-à-terre in Havana (“Cuba Libre,” *After Hours*, September) they should keep in mind that the rightful owners of apartments that were confiscated after the revolution may well return to a free Cuba to claim them.

Tomas Mulet
Miami, Florida

Yasufuku must be one hell of a steer to sire 40,000 offspring (“Meat the Future,” *After Hours*, September). A steer is a castrated bull.

Jerry Loeffelbein
Cashmere, Washington

When it comes to the sidelining of the “football lothario” (“A Plea for the



Rob Gronkowski and his very good friend BiBi.

Playboy Quarterback,” *After Hours*, September), don't forget Rob Gronkowski of the New England Patriots, who last year apologized after posting a photo he took of himself with adult performer BiBi Jones. What is the world coming to when a pro football player can't have his photo taken with a porn star?

Chris Johnson
St. Anne, Illinois

EASY RICHES, HARD FALL

I can't help but compare the tragic story of infomercial king Don Lapre (*Death of a Salesman*, September) to that of filmmaker Ed Wood. Both men had good intentions and passion for their work but got swallowed whole by poor business models and terrible luck. That Lapre was such a true believer made him the biggest mark in his own story.

Geoffrey Stines
Toronto, Ontario



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PLAYBOY

Afterhours

- NOVEMBER -
2012

BECOMING ATTRACTION

KRISTEN RENTON

• **ACTRESS** Kristen Renton takes off the gloves—and her clothes—to play tough porn star Ima Tite on FX's *Sons of Anarchy*. "She's a badass bitch," Kristen says. "Ima loves sex and uses her sexuality to get what she wants." Playing the bad influence among the baddest bikers has brought out a different side of the "insecure tomboy." Kristen recently installed a stripper pole, went skydiving and swam with sharks. "Ima forced me to look at myself the way other people look at me, which is never easy," she tells us. From our point of view, we have to disagree.



WHISKEY BUSINESS

BOTTLES OF SCOTCH BECOME THE NEW BULL MARKET

At an undisclosed location in midtown Manhattan, a new club will soon boast one of the most incredible selections of rare scotch around. Named after the first year whiskey was made, 1494 is as much an investment club as it is a drinking club. Started this spring by David Clelland, a Glasgow native and veteran of the scotch industry, 1494 charges \$15,000 a year for membership, with \$25,000 in start-up costs to build your "portfolio" of rare whiskeys. Yes, growing demand for whiskey, combined with poor returns in traditional markets, has created a situation in which the spirit is being treated as an investment.

The movement already has its own stock market of sorts: the World Whisky Index. Based in the Netherlands, the site allows members to trade bottles of, say, an \$86,000 Springbank 50-year as though it were no more interesting than a share of GE. To enable trading, the index verifies the bottles and requires them to remain in its cellar in the Netherlands (1494 also stores its members' bottles at its headquarters).

Some traders have reaped 20 percent annual returns, according to reports, but a spokesperson says the index as a whole has returned eight percent annually since launching in

2007. Last year the S&P 500 traded flat. "People are looking for alternative products to invest in because of the bad stock market," says the spokesperson. "Developing economies such as Asia, South America and Russia are new markets for luxury products."

Hopefully the buyers actually enjoy the stuff. Keeping products in their packaging so they increase in value is nothing new; we've been making fun of action-figure collectors for decades. With whiskey, it wouldn't seem so wrong if not for the wider implications.

"There is an investable value in whiskey, but the reason we make it is so you can sit back and enjoy it."

Capitalism is an effective way of allocating resources toward the production of goods, and goods such as whiskey are meant to be consumed—in fact, it was a Scot who popularized this economic system. The urge in the finance world to securitize just about everything has made it possible for investors to take goods out of circulation in an attempt to wring profit out of things that might actually be of use.

Supposedly that won't be the case at 1494. "I'm a Scotsman," says Clelland. "There is an investable value in whiskey, but the reason we make it is so you can sit back and enjoy it." There's the key difference: When things go bust, you can liquidate your portfolio neat or with a splash of water.—*Willy Staley*



LIFE OF REILLY

THREE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU LOVED ABOUT JOHN C. REILLY

Call it the Bill Murray effect: A beloved actor turns up in an array of projects, each of them unrelated, all of them sort of awesome. While we were rewatching *Step Brothers*, John C. Reilly took over pop culture. We couldn't be happier.



MENTAL CASE

In honor of the 50th anniversary of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Reilly performs all the characters—from disobedient patient Randle McMurphy to disciplinary Nurse Ratched, as well as the entire gallery of mental patients—in a new audiobook version of Ken Kesey's classic novel.



DOCTOR WHO?

Reilly appears as Dr. Steve Brule, a socially inept news correspondent, on the Adult Swim mind-bender *Check It Out! With Dr. Steve Brule*, a bizarre mock cable-access program featuring segments on everything from friendship to boats. Best viewed in an altered mental state.



COUNTRY BOY

Still walking hard, Reilly has crooned a handful of classic country tunes produced and released by Jack White. Reilly's band, John Reilly and Friends, recently toured with Willie Nelson, performing a mix of bluegrass, gospel and a wicked country version of Adele's "Rolling in the Deep."

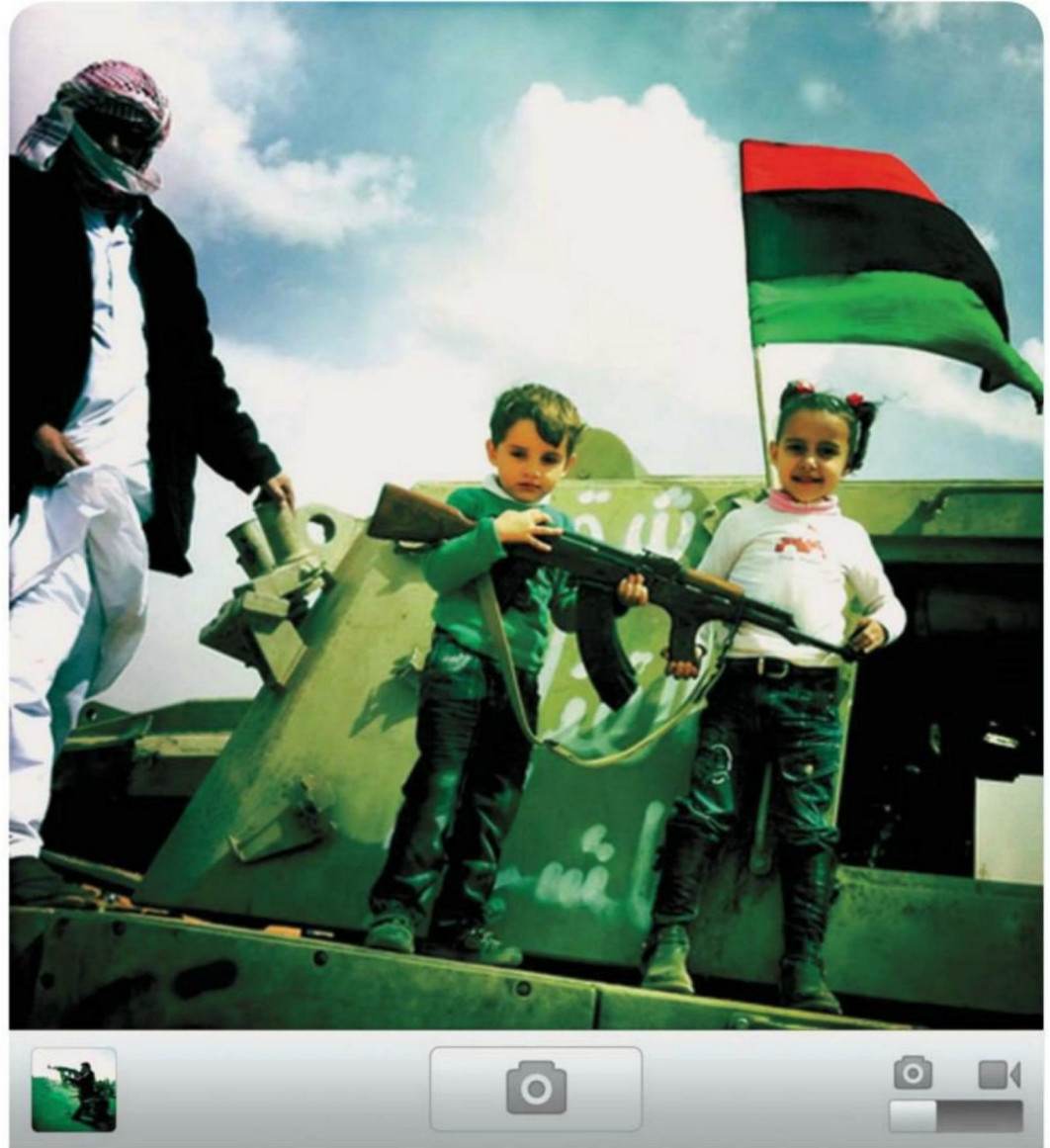


CENTERFOLD SCIENCE

A PLAYMATE'S REIGN AS THE FIRST LADY OF THE INTERNET

* Researchers in Singapore recently shrank a photograph down to 50 by 50 micrometers, roughly the width of a human hair. The image they used? Miss November 1972 Lenna Sjööblom (a.k.a. Lena Söderberg), of course. For nearly 40 years the photograph of Sjööblom from her original Playmate pictorial has been used by scientists around the world, earning her the title First Lady of the Internet and causing Carnegie Mellon's School of Computer Science to declare that "no image has been more important in the history of imaging and electronic communications." The photograph, referred to in science circles as "Lenna," began its journey in the summer of 1973 at the University of Southern California's Signal and Image Processing Institute after an assistant professor of electrical engineering, bored with the standard test images, grabbed a nearby PLAYBOY, tore off the top five inches of Sjööblom's Centerfold and attached it to the drum of a scanner. The results of this experiment in image compression paved the way for viewing photographs on the internet and cemented Lenna's status as the standard reference image for experiments involving everything from Gaussian blur to the use of polar coordinates. We're just glad we could help.

"No image has been more important in the history of imaging and electronic communications."



POINT AND SHOOT

A BATTLE AS THE IPHONE MOVES TO THE FRONT LINES OF PHOTOGRAPHY

* When *The New York Times* ran a series of iPhone photos from the war in Afghanistan on its front page in 2010, the paper ignited a small war of its own. The pictures, by photojournalist Damon Winter (who claimed he took them "kind of as a joke"), won third place in the Pictures of the Year International competition. Award-winning photojournalist Chip Litherland commented, "What we knew as photojournalism at its purest form is over.... It's now no longer photojournalism but photography." Was the iPhone the newest threat to the integrity of the profession? "No picture is really 'true,'"

says Ben Lowy, another award-winning conflict photographer whose iPhone photos have been used by the *Times*. "When photography first came out, painters were scared of it. When color photography first came out, people rallied against it. At the end of the day, it's just another tool everyone has access to."

Lowy (who shot the photo above) explains that the iPhone lets him update his blog from the field: "No middleman, no publisher." Creators of the hit iPhone photo app Hipstamatic will offer a lens bearing his name, with proceeds benefiting the company's photojournalism charity.

The most iconic war photos serve as summations of entire conflicts. Nick Ut's 1972 photo of American soldiers ignoring a naked girl screaming as she and other children flee their burning village became the

shameful backdrop of the Vietnam war. AP photographer Joe Rosenthal's *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* symbolized the hard-won victory of World War II.

But before winning the Pulitzer Prize, the "napalm girl" photo was cropped by the *Times* to remove photographers. Accusations persist that *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* was staged. (It wasn't.) In the end, the iPhone may be experiencing the same public scrutiny photojournalism has always experienced, as truth is impugned along with fiction.

"There's a fine line between having a theoretical conversation about this and what is exactly journalistically ethical, because those ethics change over time," Lowy says. "What was acceptable 50 years ago is different from what's acceptable today."
—Chauncey Hollingsworth



Mocks Crest park



PORTLAND AT PLAY

THE SPOOFABLE COUNTERCULTURE VALHALLA TAKES ITS CRAFTY, OUTDOORSY, FOODIE FUN SERIOUSLY

There's more to Portland than the washed-up rockers, militant yuppies, righteous hippies and angry lesbians populating the TV series *Portlandia* would have you believe. With its fresh air, independent spirit and easy-living ethos, this city-under-spoof is a destination

for anyone who appreciates a lush landscape and a well-crafted drink.

Engage in athletic pursuits rain or shine (probably rain). With a room at the **Nines** hotel near Pioneer Courthouse Square, not only can you set your sights on the tree line from rooftop bar

Departure, but you'll also have a central base from which to explore the city by foot, car or public transportation. In 10 minutes you could be renting a bike at **Fat Tire Farm** and in an hour shredding the new **Sandy Ridge Trail System** that has mountain bikers spun out. If (when) inclement weather interferes with conquering



on the charcuterie plate at **Beast**, the hand-cut beef jerky at the **Country Cat** and the citywide burger battle where French bistros (**Le Pigeon**) go up against Mexican joints (**Toro Bravo**) and Japanese *izakayas* (**Biwa**), it's clear carnivores have something to prove. Sit out the burger debate at the **Woodsman Tavern** over a fine New York strip with grilled romaine lettuce and pickled cherries.

Feeling full? It doesn't matter. You will make room for a sandwich from a food cart parked on North Mississippi called the **Big Egg**. If the gods of the daily special smile on you, it will be the Egg's version of the monte cristo: eggs, ham and Gorgonzola on panko-breaded-brioche french toast.

Post up at **Mocks Crest** park, also known as the Bluffs, and look out over the Willamette River train yards, downtown Portland and the West Hills. There's a lot to digest.—*Crystal Meers*

Mount Hood, cruise to the **Lumberyard**, a 48,000-square-foot indoor bike park with fast, slow and pump tracks as well as ramps and jumps.

Rife with vegans, freegans and celiacs, this town caters to more specialty diets than it would care to admit. No wonder it overcompensates in the meat department. With the trotters, tails and cracklings



PDX'S HIP SIPS TAP INTO THE CITY'S BEVERAGE BOOM



1. STUMPTOWN COFFEE
You can find Stumptown at serious cafés everywhere, but coffee geeks will tell you it's always fresher at the source.



2. HOPWORKS
Hopworks Urban Brewery marries the city's beloved bikes and brews in a cycle-themed bar complete with 75 bicycle parking spots.



3. CLYDE COMMON
This restaurant and bar at the Ace Hotel is home to the barrel-aged negroni, a marvel of modern mixology.

X STRIP SEARCH

Portland has more gentlemen's clubs per capita than anywhere else in the U.S. To refrain from visiting cool-kid dives such as Sassy's and Union Jacks would be culturally remiss. But our favorite is Acropolis (please, call it A-Crop), where the \$10 bacon-wrapped filet is as salivated over as the nerd-hot strippers.



euphoria Calvin Klein
men





LANE CHANGE

BOWLING ALLEYS SERVE UP STRIKINGLY GOOD FOOD

• That near perfect combination of bowling and beer has improved mightily in recent years, with alley proprietors polishing their menus with the same care as their lanes. One pioneer in this trend is Austin's Highball, an upscale diner, bowling alley, karaoke lounge and live music venue. We got the folks at Highball to give us the recipe for their legendary sweet and spicy Dr Pepper ribs.—*Lessley Anderson*

DR PEPPER RIBS

1 slab (about 2 pounds) baby back pork ribs, membrane removed

DRY RUB

2 tbsp. salt
2 tbsp. black pepper
2 tbsp. light brown sugar
2 tbsp. smoked paprika
1 1/2 tsp. chipotle chili powder
1 1/2 tsp. mustard powder
1/2 tsp. cayenne
1/2 tsp. ground allspice

DR PEPPER BARBECUE SAUCE

1 cup sliced yellow onion
1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 tbsp. canola oil
1 can Dr Pepper
1 cup ketchup
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
1 tbsp. salt
1 tbsp. sambal (Asian garlic-chili sauce)

GARNISH

1/2 cup roughly crushed roasted salted peanuts

DIRECTIONS

• Combine dry rub ingredients and rub a moderate amount over ribs. You will have extra. Refrigerate ribs at least three hours. Bring to room temperature before cooking.

Make the barbecue sauce: Sauté onion and garlic in canola oil until soft. Add remaining ingredients and cook, stirring, until reduced to desired consistency.

Preheat oven to 250 degrees. Place ribs on a baking sheet and cover with foil. Bake three hours, basting with Dr Pepper barbecue sauce every 45 minutes or until the meat starts to pull away from the bone and a knife cuts easily through the meaty part of the rib. Remove foil, preheat broiler and reapply a layer of sauce. Watching ribs carefully so they don't burn, broil to get a nice layer of caramelization. Remove from oven, let rest 15 minutes, slice, top with peanuts and serve.

BOWLED OVER

THREE COOL PLACES TO EAT, DRINK AND BOWL

MISSION BOWLING CLUB

San Francisco



Brought to you by half the duo behind the ultrahip Mission Chinese Food, the new Mission Bowling Club serves drunk food geared toward chefs and their pals. Snack on crispy pork belly or a burger seared in beef fat and sauced with caper aioli. Wash it down with a local microbrew or three.

LUCKY STRIKE LANES & LOUNGE

Hollywood



Food such as soft pretzel bites, customizable chicken wings and mini burgers have made Lucky Strike a big hit. Since opening in 2003, the Strike has gone national, but lanes and decor rescued from the former Hollywood Star Lanes, featured in *The Big Lebowski*, make the OG location special.

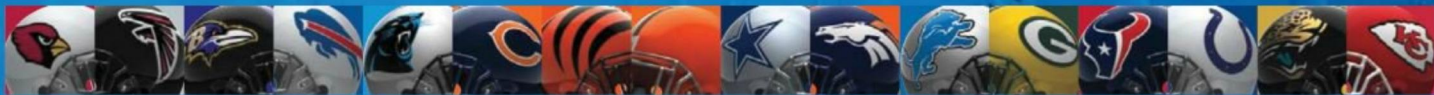
BROOKLYN BOWL

Brooklyn



Eric and Bruce Bromberg, the brothers behind the Manhattan and Brooklyn Blue Ribbon restaurant empire, do a crazy-big retro-Americana menu for this Williamsburg spot. Favorites include the fried chicken dinners, malted milkshakes and serious mac and cheese.





YEAR OF THE NFL FAN

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AND ALL THEY DO.



HERE WE GO



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BIG RED

**AUTUMN'S NO-BRAINER WINE STRATEGY:
BUY OLD, BUY BOLD, BUY ZINFANDEL**

* November is the month when men who seldom step foot in a wine store will be called upon to bring a nice bottle to Thanksgiving dinner. This year, simply memorize these three words: *old vine zinfandel*. It's affordable, goes well with turkey and is about as American as it gets, arriving in New England in the 1820s, about 200 years after the Pilgrims disembarked at Plymouth Rock. Today in Sonoma and Amador counties many of these gnarled old vines date back to the 1870s. But does "old" make a difference? According to Joel Peterson, founder of Ravenswood Winery in Sonoma, "old vine" refers to vines more than 50 years old. "Those vines produce red wines with darker, spicier flavors, better acid-to-tannin ratio." Translation: They're lush and just tart and bold enough to stand up to a hearty holiday dinner—and a delicious reminder that sometimes beauty does indeed come with age.—*Heather John*

DO DECANT
Even a young wine can benefit from decanting: It aerates the wine and helps all those delicious aromas blossom. Happy quaffing Thanksgiving.

THE TOP SIX OLD VINE ZINFANDELS



2009 BRAZIN, LODI (\$16)

Chocolatey, plummy and lush with black pepper flavors.



2010 GNARLY HEAD, LODI (\$12)

A powerhouse red with dark berry flavors and a spicy finish.



2010 RAVENSWOOD VINTNERS BLEND, CALIFORNIA (\$10)

Black cherry and blueberry flavors with mellow oak and smooth tannins.



2009 DRY CREEK VINEYARD, SONOMA COUNTY (\$30)

Elegant, with blackberry and black pepper notes.



2010 RIDGE LYTTON SPRINGS, DRY CREEK VALLEY (\$36)

A rustic red with earthy, jammy flavors.



2009 SEGHESSIO, SONOMA COUNTY (\$38)

Raspberry and peppery spice with floral aromas.

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Photography by Francesco Carrozzini



blucigs.com/StephenDorff



Full Leather Jacket

BUILT FOR SPEED, BELOVED FOR ITS STYLE, THE CAFÉ RACER IS THE ONLY MOTORCYCLE JACKET YOU NEED

Of all the badass motorcycle jackets a man can buy, the café racer stands out for its timeless appeal. Designed for racing (and named for the 1960s British rockers who wore them while speeding from café to café), the jacket is pure, stripped-down functional style. Still produced by heritage manufacturers Schott NYC and Harley-Davidson, the design continues to inspire versions from fashion houses such as Burberry and Belstaff and chains such as J. Crew. Our money's on the slightly roughed-up vintage jackets that show up on eBay and collector sites—bonus points for snagging one accessorized with road rash.



1. To a biker the mandarin collar is purely practical: It snaps up to block the wind and doesn't get caught inside a helmet.



2. The belled shoulders are designed to keep the sleeves from riding up when you're crouched in driving position—particularly useful on café racer motorcycles that feature low-slung handlebars.



3. The first zipper on a jacket debuted on a motorcycle jacket manufactured by New York-based Schott, which also produced the Perfecto jacket immortalized by Marlon Brando in *The Wild One*.



4. Durable horsehide was the material of choice in early designs. Before they're broken in, horsehide jackets are so stiff they can stand on their own. Most modern versions are made from softer cowhide.



NO BIKE? NO PROBLEM. Even if you don't ride, you can still look sharp in a café racer. The slim profile and minimalist style lend themselves to sartorial improvisation; you can rock the jacket like a Ramone with a striped T-shirt or dress it up like Justin Timberlake with a collared shirt and tie.



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TIGHT KNOTS

CASUALLY ELEGANT TIES FOR FALL

• Woven silk ties are certainly stylish, but sometimes you need something a little less formal. In this era of business casual, the knit tie is the most reliable way to dress up a shirt and jeans or dress down a suit. Keep in mind that scale is key: Most modern knit ties are slimmer than silk ties, so make sure the lapels on your jacket are similar in width. And this isn't the time to show off your Windsor knot skills. The basic four-in-hand knot is just the right size.



1

2

3

4

5

6

7

1. UNLEASH THE HOUNDS

Houndstooth cashmere knit tie, \$125, by Boss Selection Hugo Boss.

2. EARN YOUR STRIPES

Horizontal-stripe silk knit tie, \$59, by Tommy Hilfiger.

3. HEARTY BURGUNDY

Wine silk knit tie, \$15, by the Tie Bar.

4. GRAY MATTERS

Double-ply wool knit tie with vertical chain stitch, \$55, by Nautica.

5. PREP TIME

Cotton knit tie with embroidered dots, \$75, by Ivy Prepster.

6. TRIBE HARDER

Tribal-print wool knit tie, \$15, by the Tie Bar.

7. ANCHORMAN

Cotton knit tie with embroidered anchor, \$75, by Ivy Prepster.

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MOVIE OF THE MONTH **SKYFALL**

By Stephen Rebell

James Bond's 23rd spy adventure crashes into theaters with all the bells, whistles, firepower and sexy women we expect from the 50-year-old film franchise. Directed by Sam Mendes and starring Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Ralph Fiennes and, as Bond's deadly nemesis, Javier Bardem, the film features a premise *not* based on an Ian Fleming novel: Hell breaks loose when the identities of MI6 agents are leaked on the internet. Naomi Harris

plays Eve, a field-agent ally of Bond's. "I'm glad I trained nine months—jogging, kickboxing, stunt driving, shooting guns—because it took stamina to play a woman who would like to think of herself as Bond's match, though she is definitely not," says Harris. "She is a part of the new approach to Bond in which he wouldn't be interested in a woman who was merely decorative—not an equal or a challenge. I always admired Grace Jones in *A View to a Kill* because she was completely unexpected and yet distinctive and memorable. I hope I'm part of that tradition."



BLU-RAY OF THE MONTH **LAWRENCE OF ARABIA**

By Bryan Reesman

Fifty years prior to the digitized summer blockbuster, the Oscar-showered *Lawrence of Arabia* impressively told the saga of the British soldier (Peter O'Toole) who united Arab tribes against the Turks during World War I. The battle

scenes, exhausting journeys and intense human dramas unfold in a scorching desert landscape where superheroes and aliens would quickly burn up. Character—and plenty of it—defines all aspects of this four-hour

epic. *Lawrence* has never looked or sounded better than in this digitally restored director's cut. **Best extras:** The four-disc gift set has it all—soundtrack CD, coffee-table book, 70-millimeter film frame, featurettes and more. **★★★★**

ACTING PRESIDENTIAL



BILL PULLMAN

"A nation always gets the kind of politicians it deserves," or so goes the old saying, anyway. But does a nation always get the kind of movie politicians it deserves?

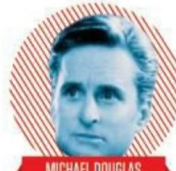
elects to lead them a five-time Ultimate Smackdown champion and porn superstar.



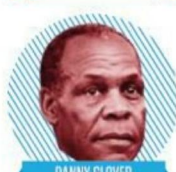
TERRY CREWS

Bill Pullman as President Thomas J. Whitmore in *Independence Day* Pullman delivers a rabble-rousing speech before climbing into a fighter jet to lead our brave flyboys in unleashing a mighty can of American whoop-ass on the space invaders.

Michael Douglas as President Andrew Shepherd in *The American President* Douglas is so convincingly presidential that a real-life Australian politician was caught stealing lines from one of *The American President's* most-quoted Aaron Sorkin-written speeches.



MICHAEL DOUGLAS



DANNY GLOVER

Terry Crews as President Dwayne Elizondo Mountain Dew Herbert Camacho in *Idiocracy* The NASCAR-loving populace in this satiric comedy

Danny Glover as President Thomas Wilson in *2012* Roland Emmerich's guilty pleasure is jam-packed with natural disasters, leaving Glover's poor president looking cranky, befuddled, caring and completely impotent.—S.R.

TEASE FRAME

Katherine Heigl looks for a few not-so-good men—and a little privacy—as a bail-enforcement agent in *One for the Money* (pictured). See her next as part of the huge ensemble comedy *The Big Wedding* with Robert De Niro.





GAME OF THE MONTH
FORZA HORIZON

By Jason Buhrmester

• Most racing games drive in circles: Choose car. Choose track. Floor it. **Forza Horizon** (360) breaks out of the track circuit and puts drivers in the center of a huge 24-hour music festival called Horizon that comes rife with racing opportunities. Think Coachella meets *Fast & Furious*. As you cruise the festival grounds, organizers invite you to hit the starting line for official contests, and rival drivers challenge you to unsanctioned races on roads and courses scattered around the Colorado setting. *Horizon* switches up the setting but doesn't sacrifice what the *Forza* series

is known for: realistic racing physics and drool-inducing cars. The garage full of cars to unlock is an opportunity to get behind the wheel of dream vehicles such as the powerful 2012 Mercedes-Benz C63 AMG Black Series, a classic 1964 Aston Martin DB5 and the 2009 Lotus 2-Eleven, a ride that isn't even street legal in the States. Choose the best car for the event—from point-to-point racing to drift contests—and beat your own path to the finish line by smashing through signs and kicking up dust on dirt-road shortcuts. It's racing refreshed. ♣♣♣

FALL'S BEST SEQUELS

THE THREE BIGGEST GAMES RETURN TO SEND 2012 OUT WITH A BANG



ASSASSIN'S CREED III
 (360, PC, PS3)

The series leaves Italy for Colonial America, where an assassin works through the Revolutionary War.



CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS II
 (360, PC, PS3)

Fight the Cold War through the 1970s, 1980s and into 2025 when the best military shooter returns.



HALO 4
 (360)

Five years after being set adrift in space, the Master Chief awakens to a strange planet and new threats.



ALBUM OF THE MONTH
THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

By Rob Tannenbaum

• Andy Warhol became the Velvet Underground's patron because he saw the band's music leave an audience "dazed and damaged." The harsh, confrontational **Velvet Underground & Nico** album, ignored

when it was released in 1967, became the blueprint for alternative rock. Expanding this debut into a six-CD box is excessive, but excess was part of the Velvet's glowering concept. Included: German model Nico's

blank-faced solo record, many alternate takes of "Heroin" and a 1966 concert in Columbus, Ohio that begins with minutes of feedback and that even now may leave you dazed, if not damaged. ♣♣♣

MUST-WATCH TV

BEST SHOWS NOT ON TV

By Josef Adalian

• Some of the best TV these days isn't even on TV: The internet overflows with high-quality fare virtually indistinguishable from what you'll find on cable.

Tom Hanks's **Electric City**, an animated sci-fi serial on Yahoo! Screen, is set in a low-tech dystopia. Great visuals, and you get to see a cartoon Hanks break necks (literally).

The Onion's **Sex House** on YouTube viciously (and hilariously) spoofs the sad fact that most "reality" shows are carefully choreographed exercises in human degradation. "There's no way [producers] are just going to give us food and not expect

something in return," one **Sex House** resident sighs. It's funny because it's true.

Everybody hates hipsters. **Hipsterhood** (hipsterhoodseries.com) both pokes fun at and humanizes the species by exploring the silent mating ritual of one potential couple.

SEX HOUSE
The Onion

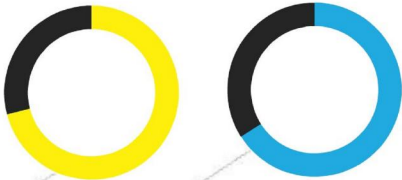


103

Beats per minute of the Bee Gees song "Stayin' Alive"—the perfect rhythm for performing CPR.



ON THE ROAD

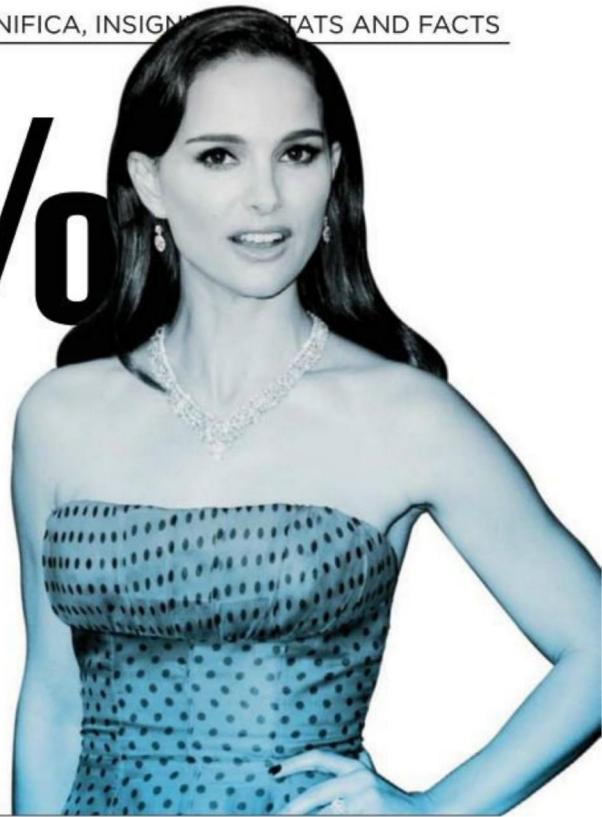


of people surveyed say business travelers drink too much.

say business travelers cheat on their spouses, neglect exercise regimens (43%) and use illicit drugs (31%).

19%

of men surveyed voted Natalie Portman the person they would most want to room with on their next vacation.



500 YEARS'
worth of YouTube videos are watched every day on Facebook walls.

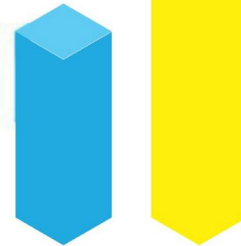


6,300%

Increase in full-frontal nudity on broadcast television in the past year.

2,700%

Increase in use of blurring and pixelation to cover body parts.



\$2.4 TO \$6.2 BILLION

Estimated tax revenue that would be generated if marijuana were legalized.

POP!

Pressure inside a champagne bottle:

90 psi

Average car tire:

32 psi

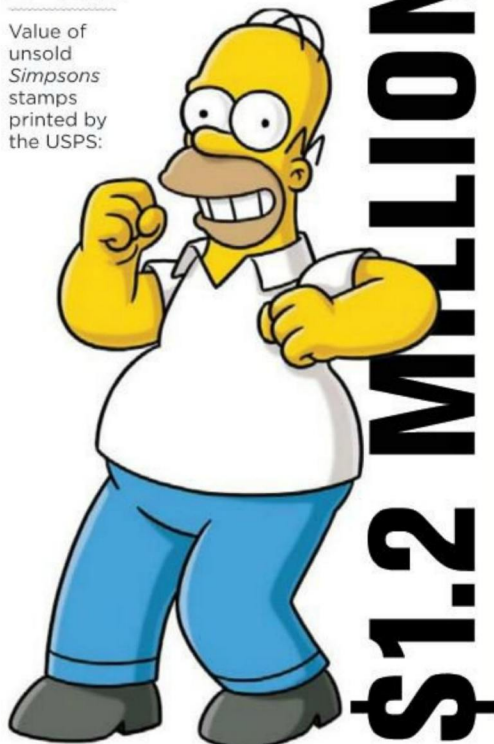
Average speed of a popped cork:

45 mph



D'OH!

Value of unsold Simpsons stamps printed by the USPS:



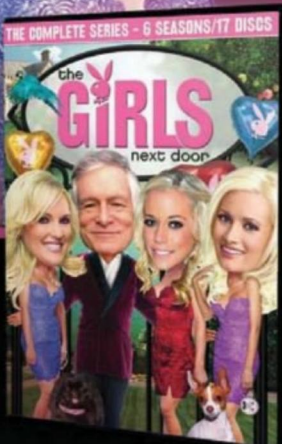
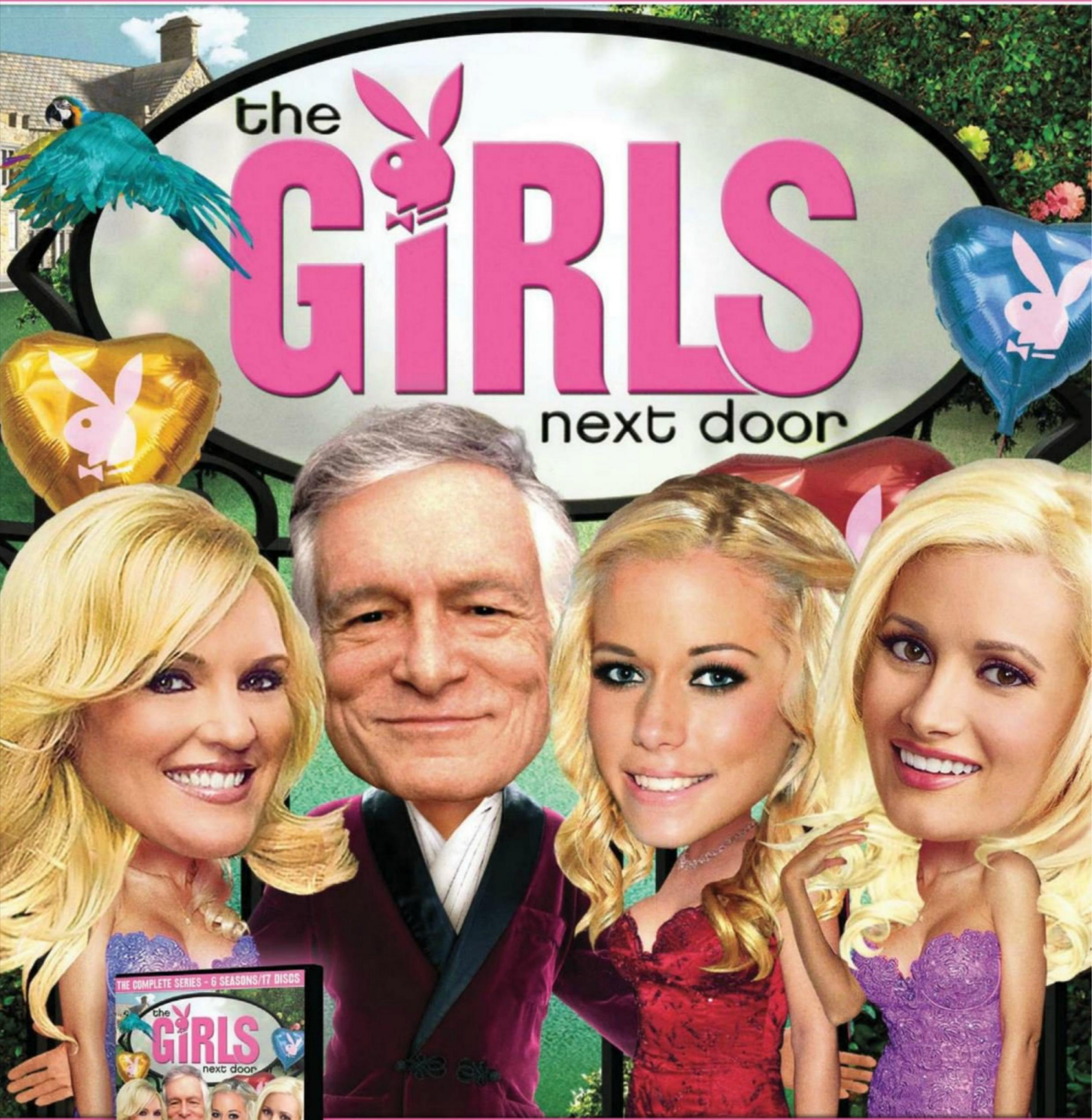
\$1.2 MILLION

Revenue the catchphrase "Let's get ready to rumble!" has earned boxing announcer Michael Buffer:



\$400 MILLION

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BEAUTY IS A BEAST

MCLAREN'S NEW ROADSTER MOTORS IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

“This car is about inspirational technology,” says Antony Sheriff, technology that delivers “a ridiculous level of performance on an everyday basis.” The managing director of U.K.-based McLaren

Automotive, Sheriff was standing by the 12C Spider at its unveiling at this year’s Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance. “It’s the result of nearly 50 years of technological development and winning in

Formula One,” he says of the car. McLaren’s new gem, in coupe and convertible, is the first auto the company will produce in any volume (about 1,000 convertibles in 2013). In the cockpit, summon the power

of 616 thoroughbreds with your toe. Top speed: 204 mph. There is an animal magnetism to this machine; you can hear it in the exhaust note. Wanna buy one? Good luck. Like all things McLaren, they’re going fast.

THE STATS:

3.8-liter twin-turbo V8,
616 hp, 443 ft/lbs torque,
3.1-second zero to 62,
204 mph top speed,
\$265,750.



“ This car is the result of nearly 50 years of technological development and winning in Formula One. ”

DRIVEN

VICTORY, DEATH
AND THE STORY
OF MCLAREN

FIRST F1 VICTORY

The Belgian Grand Prix in 1968, in a McLaren M7A (pictured).



F1 RECORDS

Eight constructors’ titles (third most of all time), 178 victories (second), 150 pole positions (second). Pictured: Team driver Lewis Hamilton wins the 2012 Canadian Grand Prix.



SECOND ROAD CAR

This year’s MP4-12C coupe and its topless sister (above and below). The seven-speed gearbox, steering wheel, driver’s seat pushed slightly toward the cockpit center—all of it is Formula One inspired.



FOUNDER

Stricken with a bone disease as a boy, New Zealander Bruce McLaren (left) began racing in a rolling bed at a home for disabled kids. After recovering, he went on to become a top Formula One racer, launching his team, McLaren, at the age of 26 in Britain in 1963.

FOUNDER’S LAST DRIVE

On June 2, 1970, Bruce McLaren crashed and died while testing a new race car. From his memoirs: “To do something well is so worthwhile that to die trying to do it better cannot be foolhardy.... Life is measured in achievement, not in years alone.” McLaren was 32. His company soldiered on.

FIRST ROAD CAR

The McLaren F1 (below). Only 100 were made, from 1992 to 1998, usually with a tag of more than \$1 million. At the time, it was the world’s fastest customer car (over 230 mph), hailed as the greatest of them all.



DOWN THE ROAD

Could McLaren challenge Ferrari as the go-to superexotic for wealthy speed fanatics? Stay tuned.





RUBBER SOUL

EVERY TIRE COMES WITH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. HERE'S HOW TO READ IT

1. SIZE MATTERS

Your holy rollers list their size, just like a T-shirt. Look for a number like this: P225/45R17. The *P* stands for passenger (*LT* means "light truck"). The number 225 refers to the tire's width (the part that meets the pavement) in millimeters. The 45 represents the aspect ratio of height to width. The *R* stands for radial, and 17 is the wheel's diameter in inches.

2. TOP SPEED

You're kissing 140 mph. Mortality speaks to you. What if one of your tires blows out? That would be bad. The max speed your rubber is meant to handle is listed in a code after the size code. Example: 87Z. Forget the number (it measures max load—long story). The letter equates to max speed: S=112; T=118; U=124; H=130; V=149; Z=over 149; Y=186. Go ahead, Mario, hammer it!

3. BIRTHDAY BOYS

How do you know if you've been sold old rubber? Your tire lists its birthdate. In small letters near the wheel's rim, you'll see *DOT* (meaning Department of Transportation) followed by an ID number. The last four digits mark the week and year of your tire's birth. Example: DOT U2LL LMLR4712. This baby was born in the 47th week of 2012. Congrats! You've got new treads.

4. UNDER PRESSURE

Your owner's manual will recommend a tire pressure. That said, juice your rubber with a dab more air (not too much!) and you might get higher performance and better mileage. The max inflation is listed in small type on the tire's inner edge. Example: "max pressure: 35 psi." Measure when the tires are at rest, before you drive on them. See you down the road.

POWER PLAYERS

GERMANY REVS UP FOR LUXE-CAR DOMINANCE

The hottest race in the auto game these days is the battle among German carmakers to lead the luxury category. BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz are duking it out in a global sales race. Competition is the impetus for innovation. As the companies roll out the greatest cars in their history, here's how they stand, with this fall's coolest ride from each.



1

BMW

Bavarian Motor Works started out as an airplane-engine maker in 1916. The logo looks like a whirling propeller against a blue sky, doesn't it? Global sales first seven months of 2012: 860,327. Pictured: the new M5, an \$89,900 rocket sedan.



2

AUDI

The Ingolstadt-based company has won the grueling 24 Hours of Le Mans in 11 of the past 13 years. All that engineering genius trickles down to your customer car. Global sales the first seven months of 2012: 852,900. Pictured: the RS5 (*RS* stands for *Rennsport*, or racing sport), \$68,900.



3

MERCEDES-BENZ

Mercedes isn't the biggest, but many say the Benz is the best. The company traces its heritage to the first gas-powered car, Karl Benz's 1886 Motorwagen. Global sales first seven months of 2012: 750,251. Pictured: the SL 63 AMG, NASA-worthy tech and speed, \$145,800.



CUT-RATE CINEMA

DIRECTOR JOE SWANBERG ON MAKING THE BIG SCREEN ON A SMALL BUDGET

Michael Bay would disagree, but you don't need \$200 million to make a movie. Just ask director Joe Swanberg. His films took him to Sundance on less than the price of a used car, and he shot part of indie horror flick *V/H/S* on MacBook Pro webcams, proving it's not the equipment that counts but how you use it.

—Tyler Trykowski

STEP 1

Tapes are so 1999. The Panasonic AG-HVX200A (\$4,295, panasonic.com) shoots cinema-quality footage directly to digital P2 memory cards for easy editing. "It's revolutionary—I go straight from camera to computer and start cutting almost immediately," says Swanberg.

STEP 2

Oscar-worthy dialogue is for naught if we can't hear it. A shotgun microphone captures audio directly in front of it while ignoring noise to its sides and rear. "A decent boom mike, pole and XLR cable are essential," says Swanberg. Mount the Sennheiser MKH 416-P48 shotgun microphone (\$1,000, sennheiser.com) on a boom pole to capture that sparkling dialogue.

STEP 3

Hide a few high-quality portable audio recorders around the room to hear every nuanced laugh and sigh. Swanberg suggests strategically stashing the Zoom H4n (\$270, samsontech.com). "Just be smart about where you hide it," he says.

STEP 4

After the wrap party, you'll have a moving story—in 500 two-minute chunks. Piece them together on a MacBook Pro (\$2,199, apple.com) using Final Cut Pro. "Try to find the old Final Cut Pro 7," says Swanberg. "The newer versions are more like iMovie." Which is great for vacation movies, but you're aiming for awards. Don't forget to thank us from the podium.





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LOCK UP

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GAME ON

Halo's hard-shooting space marine Master Chief deserves his own Xbox 360. The limited-edition *Halo 4* Xbox 360 (\$399, xbox.com) includes *Halo*-inspired graphics, built-in Wi-Fi, 320 gigabytes of memory and two custom controllers. An added touch: For the first time, Microsoft replaced the glowing green Xbox light with a *Halo* blue one. Hail to the Chief!

SOUND OFF

A hard drive full of the best tunes in history is worthless unless you have a way to blast them. Drop your iPod, iPad or iPhone into the retractable dock on the Marantz Consolette (\$1,199, marantz.com), or stream music wirelessly through your home network or via Apple's AirPlay technology. The 150-watt speaker system, including two four-inch bass drivers, pumps up the volume.



FOLD 'EM

Fold the Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga (\$1,199, lenovo.com) in half and the Windows 8 laptop transforms into a 13.3-inch tablet complete with touch screen. The dual-hinge design also lets the Yoga stand up in "tent mode" on a counter or desk. The future is folded.

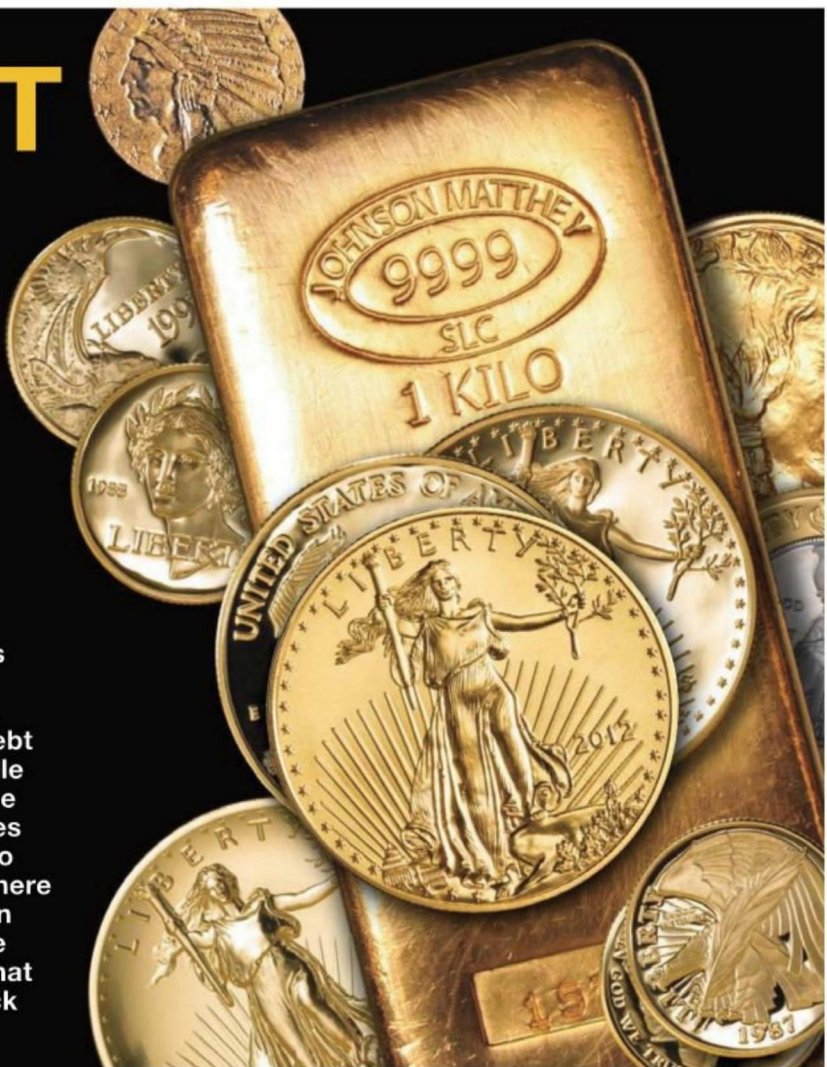


RUN FOR IT

GPS technology can guide you to a burger joint and then track the miles needed to run off the calories. Magellan's Switch Up (\$300, magellangps.com) monitors stats such as distance and speed for running, biking, swimming and more.

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The price of Gold has risen as much as 500% over the past decade. Current issues that include a weak U.S. dollar, predictions of inflation, a rising U.S. debt at \$16 trillion, and violence in the Middle East have many experts forecasting the precious metal to skyrocket from prices that have been as high as \$1,900/oz., to heights of \$10,000/oz. in the future. Where would you rather have your money — in declining paper currencies and volatile stock markets, or in a tangible asset that is liquid, reliable and has a proven track record of performance?



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FRANCOFILE

Talking With Jeffrey Eugenides

by James Franco

*A gang of brash young writers rattled the fiction world in the 1990s. Among them were David Foster Wallace, Jonathan Franzen and Jeffrey Eugenides, whose 1993 debut novel, *The Virgin Suicides*, would later be made into a critically acclaimed movie by director Sofia Coppola. *Eugenides* followed up with the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Middlesex* in 2002 and his most recent novel, 2011's *The Marriage Plot*. Contributing Editor James Franco talks with Eugenides about the dangerous science of turning real life into art.*

FRANCO: You grew up in Detroit and went to college at Brown and Stanford universities. Did you end up in New York because it's the place to start a literary career?

EUGENIDES: It became time to leave California. I had a bad breakup with a girl I'd met in Providence years before, and in a way that soured me on the whole town. I just wanted to get out of there so I wouldn't have to run into her. The only other place for me to go was New York. Most of my friends from Brown were living in the city, so I had a lot of connections there. I had kind of always wanted to live in New York, but I guess I was just too scared to do it. Finally, I did, at the age of 28. Once I got there, everything worked out for me.

FRANCO: Your first novel, *The Virgin Suicides*, is about five star-crossed sisters who commit suicide. It's told by a collective narrator made up of a group of young boys who obsess over the sisters. How did that style come about?

EUGENIDES: I just sort of started writing it that way. I wanted to write the book from the point of view of the entire town. As I started to write, I had this "we" voice, and it encompassed everybody—old people, young people. But as I continued to write, I realized that the best parts were from the point of view of the adolescent boys, the men who remembered their times. It was as though more heat was being generated by that part of the narration. I narrowed the focus of the "we" to just that, to just a male narrator—a many-headed male narrator. I didn't know where it came from.

FRANCO: To me, one of the most solid things to come out of it is all the details of time and place, specifically the portrait of Grosse Pointe, Michigan.

EUGENIDES: If you think about childhood and adolescence, your ego is not that well formed and you're kind of amorphous. You bleed into your friends, and you move in a pack. But your sensations are extremely vivid. In a way, the external world is really vivid and you are not that vivid. That's what those boys are like.

FRANCO: As a writer you're probably asked how much of what you write is based on real life. People don't seem to understand that, when something is put into a creative work, it's completely changed. The significance has changed. The context is different.

EUGENIDES: Those questions are annoying because either they want to get gossip out of you or, worse, they want to simplify it. Like, if they find the true part, that means it isn't artistic. But that's not how it is at all. Exactly as you describe, if you take these things from your life, once you put them into a story or a novel, because of the way you've used them—and you probably put them in a different form and a different sequence—they are completely transformed. It's almost as if your

experience is paint and you're taking little bags of all these different experiences and putting them on a canvas to create a completely different picture, but you have to have the paint or nothing will show up.

FRANCO: One thing I've found is if I use material that's based on experience, I can limit myself. I can't get away from what actually happened. What you seem to do is add a strong foreign element that acts as a lens to take your own real experience and put it in a completely different view. The most obvious is the character in *Middlesex*.

EUGENIDES: Right. I take a lot of the facts from my life, but then in *Middlesex* I make them apply to a man whose life is completely different from mine, who has a genetic condition I don't have. At that point, if people still think it's autobiographical, it almost makes me laugh. [laughs] It's so different. I always compare it a little to Method acting—or what I know about Method acting—in that you have to use your own sense memory and your own body and voice to play a role, even though the person you're playing is fundamentally very different from you. You can't pretend you don't exist in order to do that.

FRANCO: *Middlesex* won the Pulitzer Prize. How did that affect you when you started to write *The Marriage Plot*?

EUGENIDES: I work in stealth for many years. I don't show anything to anybody. I just heard that Paul Auster and Siri Hustvedt, at the end of every day, come home and read what they've written that day to each other. That's the method that works for them, but I would never be that way, even if I were married to another novelist. It's very secret, and I don't want anyone to know. I'm embarrassed by and ashamed of it, and I'm also secretly excited by it—or something. Whatever it is, I don't want anyone to see it. [laughs] What about you? ■

HOW TO MAKE ADULT FRIENDS

(and not die of humiliation)

By
JOEL STEIN



There are many humiliating things an adult man must do: make up words for engine parts when talking to a mechanic; explain to a stripper that the ATM won't give him any more cash; somehow convince a woman that this has never, ever happened before but totally isn't because of her. The most humiliating, however, is trying to make a new friend.

Here's why: Let's say you meet a cool guy at a party. He's as obsessed as you are with *Breaking Bad*, spent his 20s in a punk band you liked and lived in Moscow for three years. He cracks you up, is super-nice and seems to totally get everything you say. Starting to see the problem? You're halfway to writing a sonnet to the guy.

If he were a girl, or if you were a girl, or if you were both gay, or even if he were a girl and you were gay but willing to make an exception, then you'd just ask him out. But what excuse do you have for hanging out again? You're an adult. You don't have playdates. Unless you golf, have a regular poker game or can come up with a business to start together, there's no reason to see him again. What are you supposed to say—"Here's my card. If you ever want to go get a drink or dinner and not have sex, text me"? It's so difficult to make friends as an adult that men had to invent fantasy football.

Women make new friends all the time. That's because women are always doing stuff that requires large groups. They get drinks. They have book clubs. They go out to nice restaurants. They shop. They get their nails done. If romantic comedies are accurate, they constantly attend art gallery openings. Men hardly do anything. There are lots of reality shows about groups of female friends

who hang out (and get into vicious arguments with one another). There are no reality shows about groups of guy friends because it would require a split screen showing a bunch of guys at home masturbating (which didn't even draw enough viewers to keep *Chatroulette* popular on the internet).

It became even more difficult to make friends as soon as we all started getting girlfriends. Because now you don't just have to get along with another guy—four people have to get along with one another. To give you an idea of how unlikely that is, in the NBA you have to go back to the 1974 Knicks. In my family, you have to go back to when my sister was a fetus.

So yes, making friends is hard. But the truth is that it has always been hard. We cowered behind our mom as she asked our kindergarten buddy over for a playdate. Having a junior high friend over to your family's house for dinner for the first time was nerve-racking. The only reason we made friends in college is because other guys were right there, all the time, in the same dorm. All we had to say was "Do you want to do the thing I happen to be about to do?" Plus, that thing was drinking.

And no, men do not need friends like women and children do. When women have a problem, they talk to their friends. When men have a problem, we solve the problem. We do alone things, like hunt deer, play online poker and whittle. There are no whittling circles. Men can happily survive for a week in the woods without talking to anyone, as Bear Grylls has proven—though if there's a camera around we will apparently talk to it incessantly.

Still, we need to make the effort to make new friends. Because man friends

are awesome. Man friends lead to delightful trouble and deep, if slightly conservative, life lessons, according to every buddy movie. You need a Bob Hope to get you on the road, a Steve Martin to keep you alive while on the road and a Zach Galifianakis absolutely never. When you get a guy in trouble, fun things happen; when you get a girl in trouble, it's just a sad 1970s Bruce Springsteen song. Basically, without buddies we become video-game-playing, internet-surfing, sports-watching homebodies—which is not an attractive look. Neither is winding up in a Mexican prison with genital warts, but at least you have a story to tell your kids.

We have no excuse for not making new friends since we have the perfect guys right in front of us: co-workers. Sure, we're competing with some of them for promotions, and sure, there's a good chance they'll quit, so committing to a friendship with them is a little like befriending the kid in school whose dad worked for an oil company. But we have so much in common. Like hating our boss. And the banter we build up at meetings when our boss says stupid things. And those funny e-mails we send each other after our boss sends a clueless e-mail. The point is, we should let up on our boss a bit.

When we stop making friends, we stop trying new things, we stop thinking new thoughts—we stop being boys. We stop, in essence, being the kind of person someone would want to be friends with. If you can't ask a co-worker out in this cowardly age of texts and Facebook messages, then go old-school: Have your mom call his. Even if stuff between you guys doesn't work out, there's no doubt your mom will wind up with yet one more friend. ■



MIKE BERTINO

Does the Enemy Wear Underoos?

As people grow older, their list of must-haves in a potential mate grows exponentially shorter. So when I decided to get back into a serious relationship, I had three things I required in a man. Two of them were huge testicles. The other? That those testicles had produced absolutely nothing except shock and awe from those who had seen them. That's right—I wanted a guy with no kids, and it was something I would not compromise on. I was determined to be the only whiny, spoiled brat in my next relationship.

Every new partner you hook up with brings along some baggage. It could be self-doubt, jealousy, clinginess, fear of commitment—but sometimes it's the type of baggage that has freckles, SpongeBob Underoos and a trunk full of toys. No, not Carrot Top—a child.

As the producers of *16 and Pregnant* can attest, there are more single moms out there than ever before. Whether through divorce, choice or a drunken Kappa Delta mixer, a surprising number of single women are dragging tousle-haired, nose-picking germ machines behind them.

Some guys avoid chicks with kids the way Mel Gibson avoids Hanukkah. This is

a mistake, fellas. Dating is tough enough. Why reject an otherwise good prospect just because she squeezed out an ankle-biter a few years back?

But dating a woman who already has a kid or two—or 14, in the case of the Octomom—can be a challenge. There's no bonding, no unconditional love. You're basically dating a MILF with a gonad goalie intent on keeping your puck out of Mommy's net. However, there are some definite pros to dating a woman with kids. So how do you know if you're ready to be someone's not-real daddy?

Since I am nothing if not a cynical Sally, let's start with the cons. Whenever you go out with Ms. Mom, she'll have to get a babysitter. Either that or you stay in, which means the only doggy-style you'll get is watching *Beethoven 7* with her and her little human chastity belt.

If you go the babysitter route, it can still suck. You both spend the whole night looking at your watches—she to make sure she's not going to be late and you to see how much time you have left to try to bang her somewhere between the restaurant and her front door. More often than not, you drop \$200 on dinner, get a peck on the cheek, and by 10 o'clock on a Saturday night your big

date is over. She goes home well fed, and you end up jerking off next to Fred Willard in a porno theater.

God forbid things get serious and you want to take a vacation together—guess who's tagging along. Forget that week of debauchery at Hedonism in Jamaica with unlimited booze, food and sex on the beach. Instead, it's a week of Disney World with unlimited complaining, crying and pants crapping. Instead of sailing across the crystal-clear blue waters of the Caribbean in a catamaran, you're spinning around in a freaking teacup. And believe me, with the kid around, the only thing you're banging on the beach is your head on one of the volleyball posts for agreeing to this celibate sabbatical in the first place.

So should you take the first bus out of Toddlertown? Not so fast, Captain Kid-Hater. There are as many pluses to dating a baby mama as there are minuses.

Dating a chick with a kid is perfect if you're in the relationship purely for the sex, because that's all she'll have time for. Juggling motherhood and a career doesn't leave a woman enough time to make you sit through a *Real Housewives* marathon. Being with a Mom-o-matic practically guarantees sex. There's no way she can play the “saving myself for marriage” card when there's living proof of her sexual activity sitting next to her, loudly humming the *Barney* theme song while eating his own boogers.

Dating an unmarried mommy is also a good way to keep your independence. If you mention to a nonmom that you're thinking of jetting to Vegas for the weekend, she'll pack a bag quicker than Woody Harrelson packs a hash pipe. Suddenly, your weekend of strip clubs and gambling has become a romantic getaway full of Cirque du Soleil and couples massages. A mom, however, will have her kids to take care of, leaving you free to spend the next two days in a *Hangover*-like frenzy.

So don't sweat it. If a kid is part of her package, just roll with it. They're cute, they're amusing and they've already got a dad they can take their resentment out on. Don't look at a kid as a mood killer. Look at him as a little noisy butler who will go get you a beer out of Mommy's fridge for a quarter.

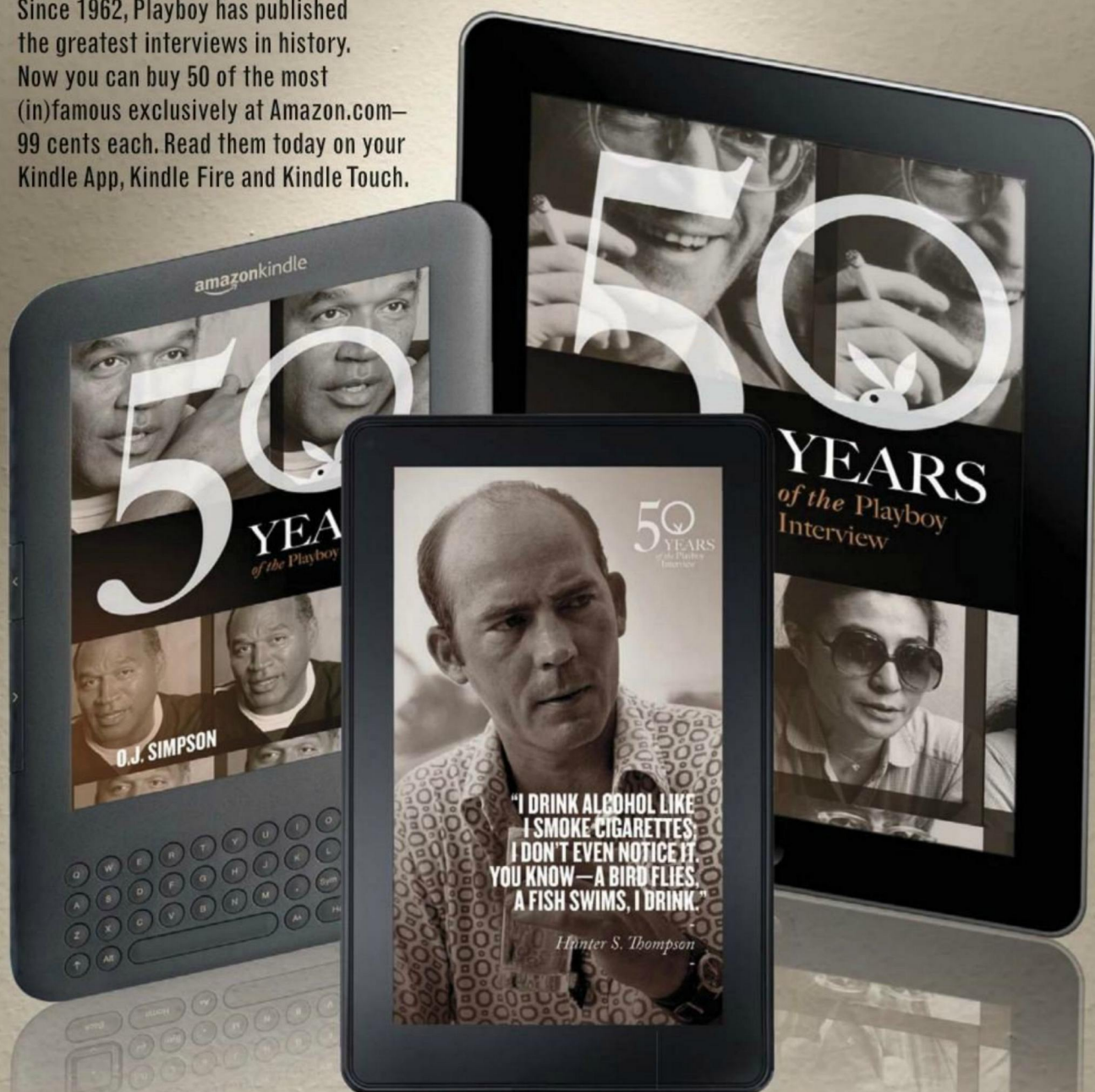
True, I decided that mo' kids equals mo' problems. But you might want to give a woman with a kid a shot. By all accounts, having a child is one of the most special miracles in the world. Besides chocolate. And weight-loss surgery. And Lindsay Lohan finally being sober. And with a kid, remember, you'll always have someone to play Xbox with when it's Mommy's time of the month. ■

By Lisa Lampanelli

50 *years of*

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PLAYBOY ADVISOR

My girlfriend gives from-the-side, minimal variation, little eye contact, forget the balls, dull blow jobs. I've told her what I like, but she makes only a passing effort to change, then says it's too hard to do it that way. She admits she should make more of an effort but "gets bored after two minutes." How do I get the blow jobs I deserve? If it were only a matter of instruction, I would be fine, but she needs an attitude adjustment.—D.M., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*We can share plenty of techniques—our library is full of creative books on the subject. But even if your girlfriend developed an arsenal of mouth maneuvers, it would do little good in the long run if she has no interest in what turns you on. She is not taking advantage of what Debra Macleod in her guide *Lip Service* calls the most "erotically useful" part of the female body. Giving head is boring unless your partner is clearly excited about what you're doing. Our suggestion is that you make sure your girlfriend is very aroused before she starts or becomes very aroused as she is going down on you. You could try 69, but that requires focus. Instead, use a vibrator to stimulate her. She can also apply a vibrator to you, slip on a cock ring or take a break by applying a masturbation sleeve. Once she sees oral sex as a feedback loop, you may soon discover her reading in bed.*

How do I panfry a rib eye or New York strip, and what sort of pan do I need? I'm pretty sure my aluminum-clad, stainless-steel fryers are too thin to do the job.—J.R., Calabasas, California

*Get a cast-iron skillet. It will give you a great sear without losing heat, says Chris Cosentino, chef of *Incanto* in San Francisco and author of *Beginnings: My Way to Start a Meal*. Before you cook the steak, bring it to room temperature. "Don't pull it from the fridge and immediately throw it into a pan, because it will cool the pan too much, resulting in a bad sear," Cosentino says. "Before it hits the pan, season it with salt and coarse pepper. I also put a split head of garlic in the pan and a sprig of rosemary on the meat. Basting the meat in the searing fat and duck fat with the herbs and garlic imparts a great flavor. Be sure not to overcook, and let the steak rest for a minute or two before you serve it." She'll love it.*

My girlfriend and I met online four years ago. We talk about meeting in person someday, but in the meantime



My wife and I live in a small town (I'm signing this letter with a larger city nearby). Our property is isolated, and we tend to certain outdoor chores and activities au naturel. We worry about unexpected guests. Could we be charged with indecent exposure if we can be seen only by someone who is on our property?—L.R., Birmingham, Alabama

That seems unlikely, though it doesn't matter where anyone is standing—your exposed flesh need only cause, as Alabama law puts it, "affront or alarm." You'd seem to have a better defense if a visitor surprised you than if you answered the door naked or pressed yourself against a window, but much depends on the zealotry of local law enforcement. In 2010 prosecutors in Fairfax, Virginia charged a man who passersby claimed could be seen through his kitchen window making his morning coffee in the nude. (He was acquitted.) In most states there must be a formal complaint, and in a few the witness must be of the opposite sex. A handful of states, including yours, require those convicted of indecent exposure to register as sex offenders. That seems far-fetched in this situation, but we don't live in a small town.

we have fantastic phone sex. She uses a dildo she named after me, and I use a pocket pussy I named after her. After every orgasm she lets out a sexy yawn that seems to be proportional to the intensity of her climax. Do other women do this? And do other couples find phone sex as exhilarating as we do?—D.W., Detroit, Michigan

Yawning when aroused is not unusual. It's

*a natural reaction that we imagine is prompted by the same mechanism of relaxation and release that causes people to unexpectedly laugh, weep or sneeze during sex. Wolter Seuntjens, a chasmologist (a scientist who studies yawning) and author of *On Yawning, or The Hidden Sexuality of the Human Yawn*, says your girlfriend's reaction is likely the result of an overabundance of the neurotransmitter oxytocin. He notes that the pleasure of a good yawn and stretch has been compared to a mini climax. (He also notes that yawning accompanied by sudden ejaculation has been observed in cases of rabies and heroin withdrawal, but that's for another day.) One fallacy about a yawn at climax is that it's a sign of successful conception—clearly not the case here—while sneezing is said to indicate the opposite. In his 1890 book *Physiognomy and Expression*, Paolo Mantegazza took it further, suggesting that "yawning expresses, especially in women, the need of physical love." If only! As for phone sex, many couples enjoy it, though perhaps not for four years. What are you afraid of?*

In the July/August issue a reader wrote asking for the name of a porn movie. He could recall only that one performer wore a stars-and-stripes bikini and that the background music was "You're a Grand Old Flag." I laughed at the idea that anyone, even the Advisor, could identify an adult film on such scant information. But when I read the question to my husband, he replied, without looking up, "*Stiff Competition*, 1985." I guess everyone needs a hobby.—R.R., Bloomington, Minnesota

That's uncanny. Was he in it?

Your advice in July/August about when to present your business card ("give someone your card when he or she asks for it") is okay for a social event, but it doesn't work in other settings and cultures. For example, when I was at a Japanese-run hotel in Dubai, the receptionist presented me with her card, unsolicited, with

both hands. It's a big deal to the Japanese. Also, you should never offer your card first thing during a job interview. It displays too much self-importance.—J.L., Tunis, Tunisia

We'll stick with our advice. But can we get your card?

My 20-year-old daughter has started to describe herself as "pansexual." She

says it means she is “open to love and attraction from any adult,” whether male or female, gay or straight. Is this a new idea? I like her open-mindedness, but I wonder if she’s just trying to be different.—J.F., Orlando, Florida

She’s trying everything. Pansexuality (also known as omnisexuality or pomosexuality) is an attempt to look beyond the “gender binary” and sexual orientation. It sounds noble in theory but usually has no practical application beyond starting a discussion in a college classroom. Even the idea of transgender doesn’t fly in this context, because it acknowledges gender. Some aspiring universal swingers reject even the label pansexual as too limiting, which we suppose just leaves you with sexual. Politically, minority groups such as the BDSM community see pansexuality as a way to unite kinky Americans of all descriptions to fight for civil rights. Your daughter will be fine.

I am a 22-year-old college student. I’ve been watching Fred Astaire films, and all the gents have cool cigarette cases. I bought a polished gold case that fits in my inside suit pocket. Is having a stylish cigarette case in 2012 tacky?—K.E., Lincoln, Nebraska

Not at all. Will you fill it with cigarettes? Views have changed on those. If you don’t smoke, it will appear a little affected, like wearing a pocket watch that doesn’t run.

There are so many factors to consider when placing speakers in a home theater system. I use a sound meter and take levels, but the speakers themselves are an unknown factor based on their construction, materials and drivers. Is there a mathematical formula I can use to narrow some of the guesswork by inputting variables such as the distance from the wall to the listening position? How about delay time versus distance?—P.S., Northport, Alabama

We’re sure there is a formula, though as you note, with so many variables it can’t be a simple one. But unless you have bionic ears, you won’t hear any difference if you follow higher math or just screw around until it sounds right. Assuming your receiver doesn’t have automatic calibration, here are some basic guidelines: (1) Place the center speaker first. It should be centered on and also flush with the front of the television. (2) Put your left and right speakers equidistant from your listening position and the same distance as the center speaker from the listening position. They should be positioned at a 20- to 30-degree angle to the television and aimed at or slightly behind the listening position. The position of the tweeters on most floor speakers will be at your ear level when you’re seated; you may have to adjust the height of smaller speakers. If the sound is too widely spaced, move the speakers closer to the TV. If you can’t tell right from left, move them farther apart. (3) Surround-sound speakers should be in line with or slightly behind your listening position, at a 90- to 110-degree

angle to the television. They should be at your standing ear level.

I like to keep in shape by hiking through some fairly dense woods. Before I go, I cover myself in mosquito repellent. I’m clean-shaven, including my testicles and shaft. Before starting my most recent hike, I took a piss near the path. I must have had repellent on my hands, because my penis and balls became very warm for about 90 minutes. Should I be concerned?—R.L., Portland, Maine

Unless this becomes a habit, you’ll be okay. Your symptoms were likely caused by DEET, the active ingredient in most repellents, which can sometimes cause a burning sensation or minor skin irritation. This is usually resolved by washing it off. Be thankful it wasn’t poison ivy. We’ve had that letter too.

My boyfriend of two years will not go down on me. He says he “doesn’t do that.” At first it didn’t bother me—I prefer intercourse—but now I miss it. Because I want to please him, and in desperate hope of reciprocation, I occasionally give in to anal sex, which I hate but which my boyfriend loves to give and receive. I fuck him with strap-ons, and he looks at tranny hookers and tranny porn online. Today I asked him if he would go down on a transsexual, and he said he would. Shocked, I asked if he was gay. He looked puzzled and said he wasn’t. I wanted to scream, “You won’t go down on your girlfriend, but you’d suck a dick—and you’re not gay?” Do you think he may be in denial? He’s 41 years old and has been with dozens of women but no men. What should I do?—L.C., Los Angeles, California

Maybe he’s pansexual. You offer many juicy details, but the issue here is simple: Say what you need to say (without screaming and not during sex). After you do, he owes you a better explanation than he’s offered. You don’t say why you dislike anal, but we’re guessing because it is painful. It shouldn’t be, and he should know about that as well. We don’t know anything about the rest of your relationship, but you certainly deserve a better sex life.

What is the best and easiest way to open an oyster?—L.S., Cicero, Illinois

The easiest method is to have someone else open it for you, such as the chef at an oyster bar. But that’s not as much fun, and shucking isn’t difficult once you get the hang of it. You’ll need an oyster knife (never use a steak knife or, God forbid, a screwdriver) and a sturdy board. In his classic guide Consider the Oyster, Patrick McMurray suggests placing a damp cloth beneath the board to keep it from slipping. After washing your hands, take your first oyster and insert the tip of the knife into the pointed end. Work it deep into the hinge and then give it a quick twist. You should hear a pop or snap. Pry up the shell to look inside and find the adductor muscle. Scrape that area, and the top shell should separate. Take

the bottom shell and turn it 180 degrees so the adductor is closer to your knife. Look for a dark button in the meat and scrape under that to remove it. McMurray notes that French shuckers don’t remove the meat from the bottom shell because that’s traditionally left for the diner, to show the oyster is fresh.

I enjoy watching porn online. Is there a way to know which free sites are virus free? It’s embarrassing when I download a virus at work and have to call the IT department. Also, when I watch clips I press the full-screen button, but the image is grainy. Is there a way to get full screen with the same resolution?—T.K., Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

Thank you for contacting Advisor tech support. We understand you’re having a problem with your porn viewer. No, his penis is actually that big—it’s not a setting. We suggest you not watch porn at work, since that’s typically grounds for dismissal (except at Playboy), and your employer owns the computer and so has the right to monitor your surfing. Free sites always carry a higher risk of mischief, but any popular provider such as RedTube, PornTube or xHamster will be safe. As for your resolution problems, that’s the point—the porn masters want you to pay for high definition.

A friend works for a company that organizes mixers for businesspeople. She invites my friends and me to hang out and drink for free. When I talk to men at these events, I’m always careful to drop the boyfriend bomb early on so I don’t mislead anyone. However, this doesn’t seem to stop most men from asking me for my number or if I’d like to go home with them. Why do so many men mistake casual, joking conversation as an invitation for sex? I’d like to have a conversation with a male and not be hit on. Is that unreasonable?—B.D., Los Angeles, California

Yes. Men look for signs and almost always find them, so there’s not much you can do to dissuade a guy who finds you alluring. Talk of a boyfriend or a ring won’t deter the determined; plenty of women are in unhappy relationships. Even if a guy suspects he may be wrong about your “signals,” what’s the harm in trying, especially when he may never see you again? Plus, and this is key, once in a while we’re right about the signals...and the species propagates.

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, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or e-mail advisor@playboy.com. For updates, follow @playboyadvisor on Twitter.



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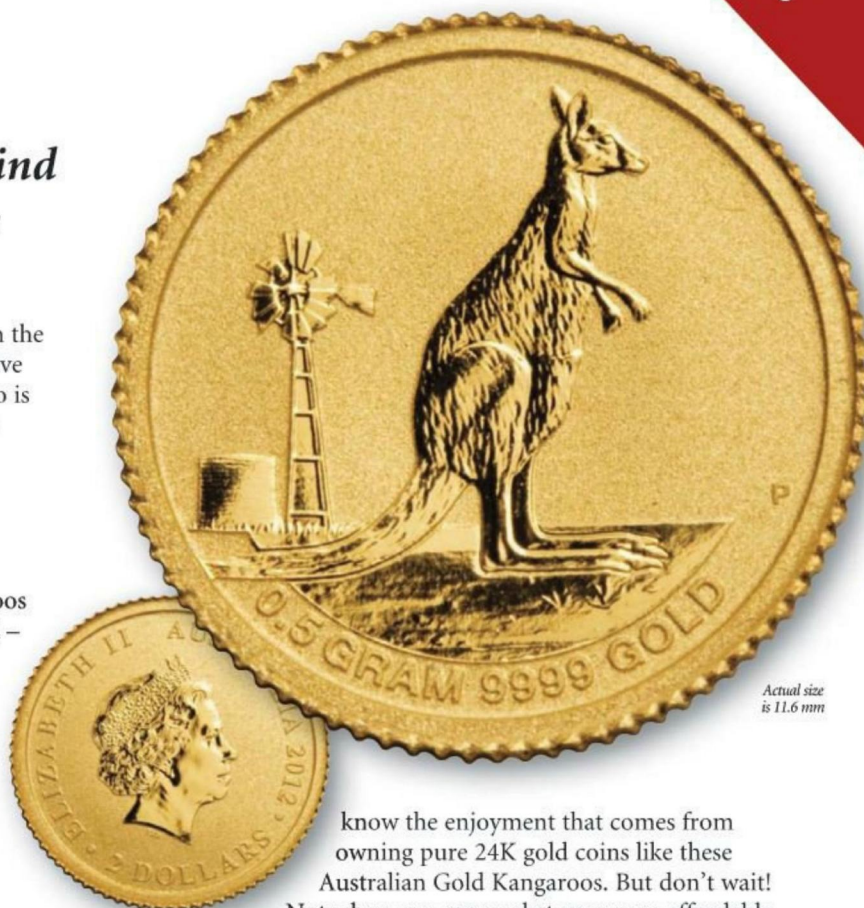
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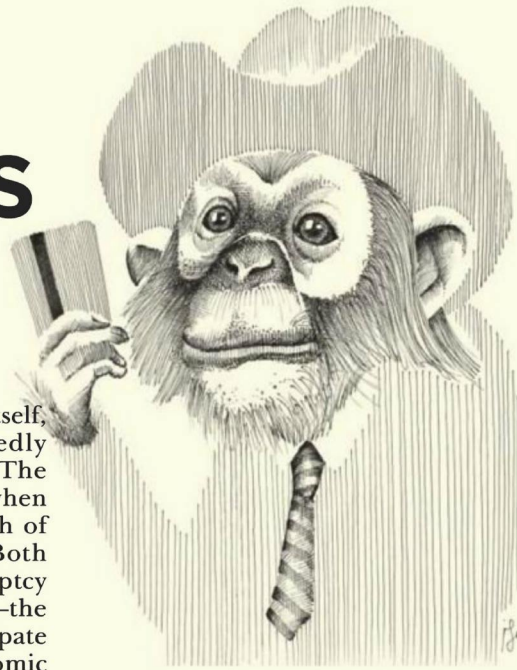
WE'RE ALL ANIMALS

Why John Maynard Keynes still matters

BY JACKSON LEARS

History doesn't repeat itself, Mark Twain reportedly said, but it rhymes. The aphorism resonates when we compare the crash of 1929 with the crash of 2008. Both revealed the intellectual bankruptcy of orthodox economic thought—the failure of free marketers to anticipate or respond adequately to economic collapse, and the absence of any connection between the clean textbook model of economic man and the messy actuality of human experience. But while the 1929 crash and its aftermath provoked a vigorous public debate about how to make a more humane economy, the 2008 crash has inspired a deafening silence, punctuated by frantic reassertions of orthodoxy. Only austerity, we are told, can save us now.

A few hardy souls challenge this view, mostly by invoking the ideas of John Maynard Keynes. It's a smart move. Keynes broke the choke hold of orthodox economics in the 1930s, hammering away at the catastrophic impact of balanced budgets on unemployment during a downturn, arguing that only public investment could put money back in people's pockets and increase the consumer demand that would lead out of the Depression. Government debt is not like household debt; governments have resources—taxation and control of the money supply, for starters—that households lack. And



governments can use those resources to moderate the lurchings of the business cycle. Contemporary devotees of belt-tightening ignore these fundamental truths. Keynes belongs in our current debate, if only to remind us of these truths.

But Keynes was more than a clever economist with timely prescriptions for public policy. The urbane Cambridge professor, at ease with financiers and diplomats, was also a major figure in the maelstrom of modernist thought. Like William James, Sigmund Freud and other modernists, Keynes challenged the governing Victorian norms of rationality and certainty as he groped toward a more fluid notion of human consciousness. His

breakthrough was his emphasis on the importance of “animal spirits”—the source of the “spontaneous urge to action” that prompted investors to back various enterprises despite their profound uncertainty about how their choices would pan out. The notion of animal spirits was an ancient idea that

The 2008 crash has inspired a deafening silence. Only austerity, we are told, can save us now.

READER RESPONSE

THE WAR ON SEX

Hugh Hefner's warning about a future under Republican rule is exactly the alarm we need to hear as we begin the final leg of the presidential race (*Sexual Freedom*, September). He quotes a Virginia legislator who asserted on CNN that “sodomy is not a civil right.” That's not the issue. The issue is that sexual expression among consenting adults is to be celebrated. Even the dissenters in the 2003 Supreme Court decision *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*, which struck down state sodomy laws, acknowledged no one has the right to interfere with private, consensual sexual expression. Once again Hef provides wisdom and empowerment to advance sexual freedom.

Ricci Levy
Jeffrey Montgomery
Washington, D.C.

Levy is executive director and Montgomery a senior strategist for the Woodhull Sexual Freedom Alliance (woodhullalliance.org), named for Victoria Woodhull (1838–1927), an early crusader for sexual freedom.



Hef's editorial is enlightening. I had no idea the laws were that strict in the 1960s. I'm sure many people would like it to be that way again.

Jennifer Hickey
Whitmore Lake, Michigan



READER RESPONSE

Those seeking regulation of human activity that does not concern or hinder others most often cite religion, but the founding fathers were specific when they called for the separation of church and state.

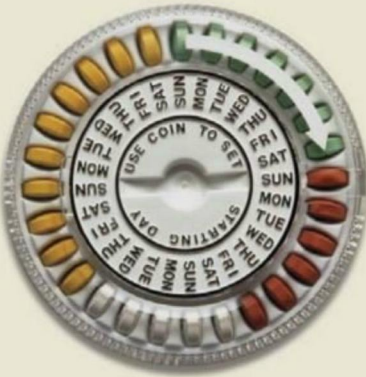
Hugh Coleman

Kelso, Washington

I am certain most readers will have difficulty conceiving of a time when two people, even a married couple, could face jail time for having oral sex. The systematic attack by conservatives on a woman's right to make her own health care decisions shows exactly what this faction is up to: At the same time they denounce regulations to curb corporate misbehavior, they are determined to control our bedrooms. Hef is the one person with sufficient public stature to speak to men and women under 45—who are too young to remember that fight—about where we have come from, how fragile those gains still are and what kind of opposition remains.

Art Samplaski

Ithaca, New York



I do not appreciate a bunch of elderly men (mostly Republicans) eroding *Roe v. Wade* to the point that women feel they need to go to a foreign country to have an abortion or obtain birth control. Thank you, Hef, for reminding us to keep up the fight for sexual freedom.

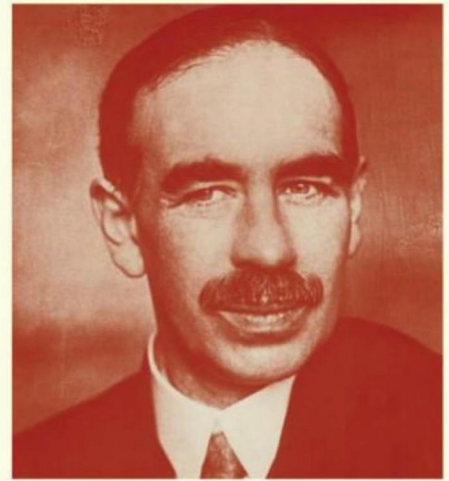
Ali Diaz

San Diego, California

acquired a powerful new resonance during the early 20th century, when modernist thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic became fascinated by the mysterious vital force at the core of all human life. What Keynes called animal spirits, Freud called libido.

Keynes's preoccupation with animal spirits stemmed from the split between his own disciplined rationality and his fraught libidinal life—a conflict that can be glimpsed in Robert Skidelsky's magisterial biography. As a boy Keynes aced every competitive examination that came his way but showed special promise in mathematics. He was obsessed with quantitative measurement, monitoring his hours worked, number of pages read, even the time it took to write a letter to his mum. Yet at Eton and Cambridge he was quickly swept up in the torrents of homosexual desire that flooded upper-class British school life. Believing he was repugnant to men as well as women, he endured passionate short-term affairs that often ended in rejection. After his graduation, he fell in with the Bloomsbury crowd, whose bisexual couplings had already become legendary (at least in their own minds). But Keynes wanted sex fused with intense emotional connection. Frustrated in his pursuit of the painter Duncan Grant, he eventually took up with Lydia Lopokova, an idiosyncratically attractive woman who danced in Serge Diaghilev's avant-garde ballet company. Both Lopokova and Grant embodied the vitality and spontaneity that Keynes associated with animal spirits. Their conversation was fresh, unscripted and (sometimes unintentionally) hilarious. No wonder Lopokova and Keynes finally peeled away from the Bloomsbury set in the 1920s.

At about the same time, Keynes was also formulating his dissent from orthodox economics. His first key move was his recognition that nearly all long-term investment decisions were shrouded in uncertainty. As he wrote in *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), uncertainty was not to be confused with probability: "The prospect of a European war is uncertain, or the price of copper and the rate of interest 20 years hence, or the obsolescence of a new invention.... About these matters, there is no scientific basis to form any calculable probability whatever. We simply do



J.M. KEYNES: WE AREN'T ALWAYS RATIONAL.

not know." Keynes's frank admission was a declaration of independence from the illusions of certainty and predictability in human affairs, even when those illusions were founded on statistically based forecasts. "One can always cook moderately well a limited range of past facts. But what does this prove?" Keynes asked. "What place is allowed for non-numerical factors, such as inventions, politics, labor troubles, wars, earthquakes, financial crises?" What place is left, he might have added, for the vagaries of life itself? This was the question that justified Keynes's move from micro- to macroeconomics—from the individual

Keynes declared independence from the illusions of certainty and predictability in human affairs.

"rational actor" pursuing his own self-interest to the larger context of the entire society in all its psychological and institutional complexity.

By making that move, Keynes opened the door to a consideration of animal spirits. Given the inescapable condition of uncertainty that pervaded human existence, the model of an economic man mathematically calculating his interests could not

withstand scrutiny. People, including investors, made decisions differently. As Keynes wrote in 1936: "Most, probably, of our decisions to do something positive, the full consequences of which will be drawn out over many days to come, can only be taken as a result of animal spirits, of a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction, and not as the outcome of a weighted average of quantitative benefits multiplied by quantitative probabilities. Enterprise only pretends to itself to be mainly actuated by the statements in its own prospectus, however candid and sincere. Only a little more than an expedition

to the South Pole, is it based on an exact calculation of benefits to come." If taken seriously, Keynes's emphasis on animal spirits threatened to undermine the foundations of orthodox economics and open the discipline to the complexity of human experience.

That never happened, even during the mid-century decades, when Keynesian ideas dominated public discourse. Keynes's philosophical edge was blunted, his modernist perspective trimmed down to fit the confines of conventional economics. His student Richard Kahn later lamented that the master's most challenging work had been reduced to "diagrams and bits of algebra." That is what politicians and treasury officials needed to adapt his ideas to their purposes. When the diagrams no longer

*We need
to imagine
a more
humane way
to integrate
economics with
the rest of life.*

seemed to fit the situation, in the 1970s, the gates were opened for the return of orthodox microeconomics, repackaged in the statistical models of econometrics. The model builders failed to see the structural weaknesses that created and sustained the Great Recession. Keynes would not have been surprised.

The larger vision of Keynes—his economics of animal spirits—does not provide specific policy prescriptions. But it does challenge us to think about economic life in more capacious ways, historically and psychologically as well as statistically, and to imagine a more humane way to integrate economics with the rest of life. For this to happen, it may be necessary to explore the role of animal spirits in a setting Keynes rarely considered: the work-

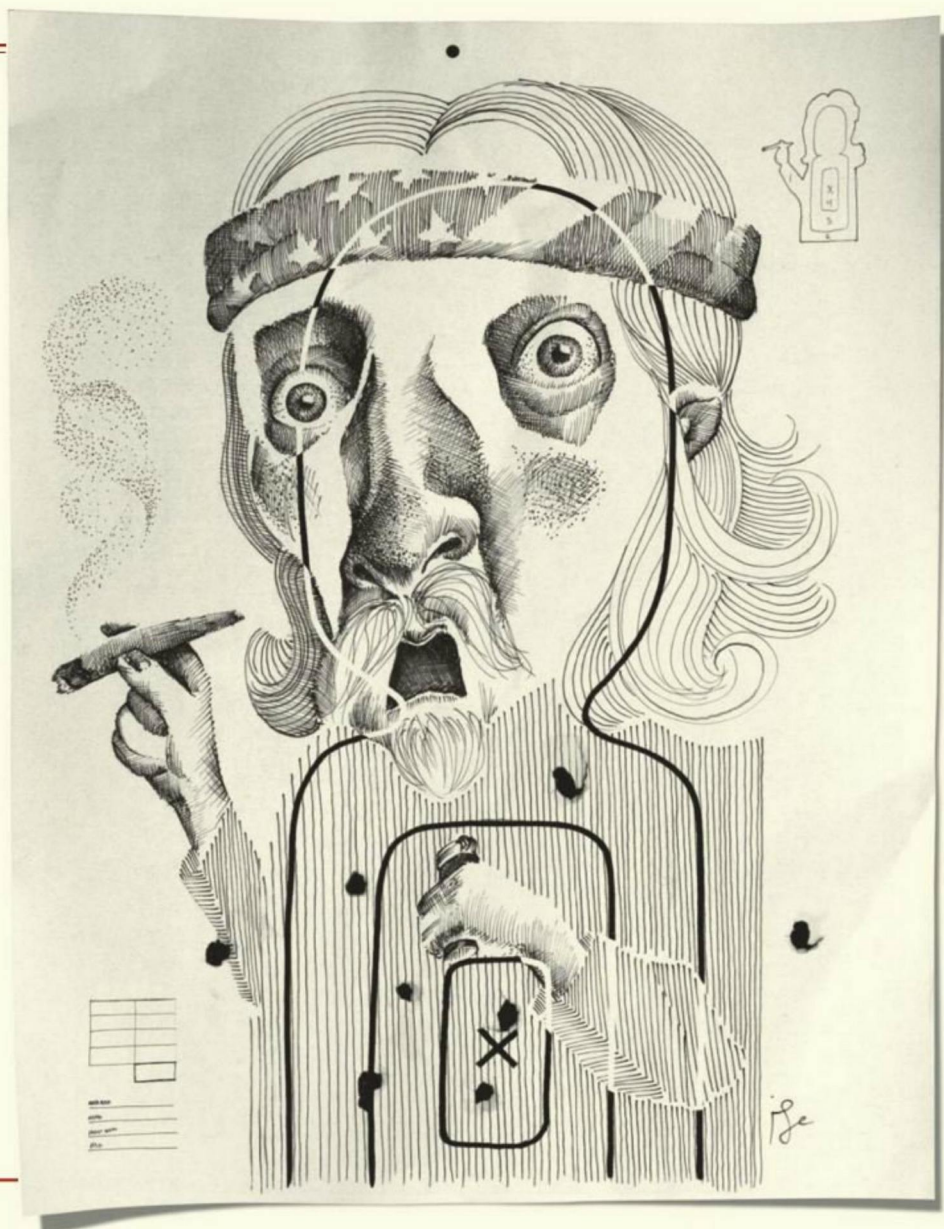
place. This might extend his reach to reveal the visceral longings behind the gross national product—the excitement and aspiration, the rage, humiliation and fear. Not since Studs Terkel's *Working* (1974) have we had a comprehensive look at the emotional rewards and costs of making a living—the pleasure of the well-made wall but also the monotony of the assembly line, the tedium of the retail trade, the embarrassments of the corporate retreat. As Terkel wrote: "This book, being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as to the body." This is the kind of insight that could supplement Keynes's work, the recognition that capitalism is a system of power relations as well as a machine for making money. Keynes and Terkel could be a powerful combination. Few imaginary encounters are more appealing than the Cambridge don and the Chicago barfly, ambling down Division Street, reflecting on the rhymes of recent history. ■

LEGALIZE IT!

It's crazy for the president to target medical marijuana, because medical marijuana is more popular than the president

BY ROB KAMPFA

In the summer of 2011, the Obama administration escalated the federal government's attacks on medical marijuana businesses, most of which are legal under state laws. Why? As a matter of policy, the Drug Enforcement Agency's raids on medical marijuana are not the policy White House staffers prefer. Many of them have had positive experiences with marijuana, and a majority of the White House staff probably thinks marijuana should be completely legal—not just for medical use. (A 2011 Gallup poll indicated that 50 percent of American adults think marijuana should be legal, meaning it's likely that more than 50 percent of Democrats think marijuana



should be legal.) So why has Obama become the worst president in the history of the country when it comes to medical marijuana?

The federal attacks on medical marijuana aren't driven by calculated politics, nor are they driven by bigotry. Rather, the attacks are the result of Obama being a bad manager.

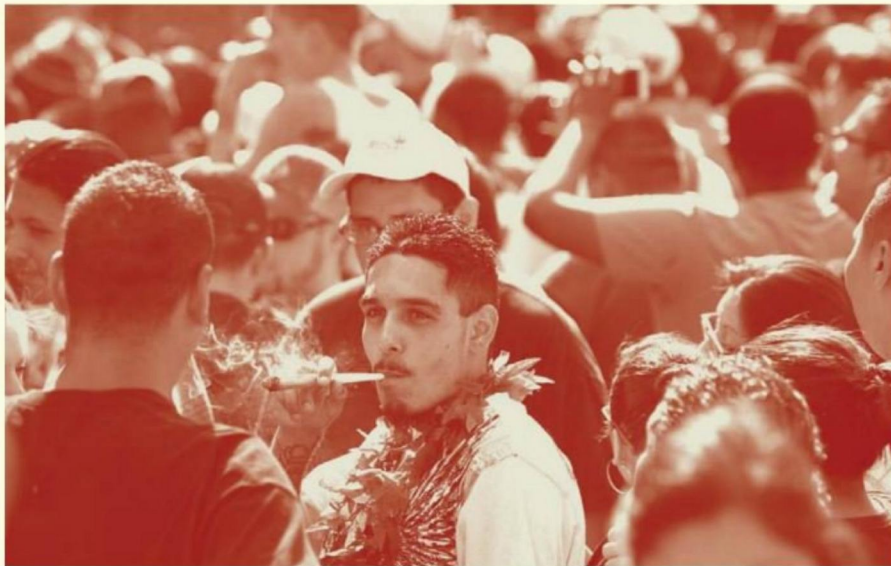
About nine years ago I dated a high-ranking staffer in Rahm Emanuel's congressional office. The staffer told me Emanuel excelled at writing, public speaking, visionary thinking, the art of politics and so on. According to my friend, the only thing Emanuel was bad at was management.

When Obama was elected president, he appointed Emanuel to be the White House chief of staff, which means being the chief operating officer. The COO position doesn't require being a visionary; rather, it requires being able

because they generally want to bust as many people as possible for drugs while not getting shot in the process. Because it's easier to bust a medical marijuana business (which advertises in newspapers) than it is to investigate a violent cocaine enterprise, the DEA guys started targeting people who dispensed medical marijuana.

The other part of the DOJ axis is federal prosecutors. They're supposed to prosecute cases the DEA hands them, and it would be weird for the U.S. attorneys to start dismissing federal cases that involve (federally) illegal marijuana plants and illegal marijuana packages. So federal prosecutors are simply pursuing the daily grind of their cases because they don't have bosses in Washington telling them to redirect their energies toward cases involving hard drugs.

Obama is a bad manager. He's a visionary orator. And it's difficult to be



A MARIJUANA SMOKE-OUT IN DENVER IN APRIL: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS RESUMED ITS INANE BATTLE AGAINST CANNABIS.

to ensure that the president's desires and mandates are delegated appropriately across the federal behemoth. But the president chose a Chicago friend rather than an exemplary manager to manage the federal government. That was the wrong move.

Nevertheless, in 2009 and 2010, the Department of Justice followed the president's lead—just as any staff with a new boss would—and let medical marijuana flourish across the country. Unfortunately, over time the staff noticed that Obama, his chief of staff and other White House bosses weren't holding the DOJ accountable. DOJ staffers started doing what most other unsupervised employees would do: They followed their own agendas.

DEA agents apply for their jobs

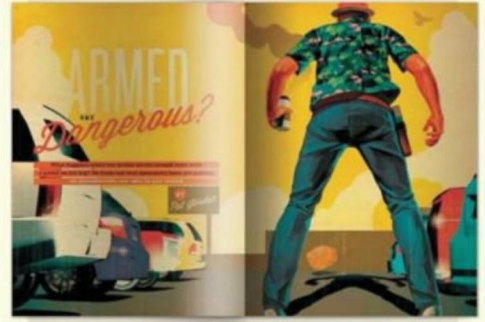
a visionary orator and a good manager at the same time; even our greatest leaders must have one or two flaws, right? Imagine the difficulty of simultaneously manifesting the qualities of Mahatma Gandhi and Lee Iacocca. As a result of Obama's managerial shortcomings, millions of people afflicted with cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis and chronic pain are suffering.

What should we do? First, whoever takes office on January 20 should issue a directive ordering the DOJ to make medical marijuana the lowest law enforcement priority for federal cops. Second, interested citizens should visit mpp.org to e-mail prewritten letters to their members of Congress, asking them to support legislation that would give states the right to regulate medical marijuana as they see fit.

Rob Kampia is executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project.



READER RESPONSE



ARMED AND READY

It doesn't matter where you place the comma in the Second Amendment (*Dear Playboy*, September); the operative phrase is "shall not be infringed." The purpose of a militia is to act as a counter to the tyranny that a standing army could impose. If a government entity has access to particular weapons, the militia (i.e., any private citizen) has a right to own weapons capable of countering them. So if an army has M1 Abrams tanks, a citizen should be able to own any anti-tank weapon, including a tank. Mao said, "Political power comes from the barrel of a gun." But in America, political power is supposed to be in the hands of the people. Any official who proposes, votes for or enforces an anti-gun law is violating his or her oath to protect the Constitution and deserves to be prosecuted.

James Turner
Prescott Valley, Arizona

CRAPITALISM

Brian Cook's report on crony capitalism, or crapitalism, as we libertarians call it, is an amazing piece of writing



Our Corporate Masters

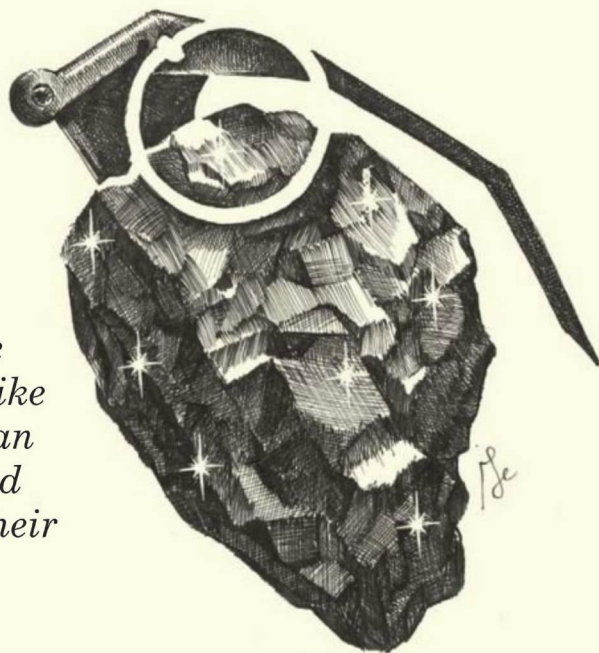
KING COAL

Corporations are people, but—unlike humans—they can change shape and legally conceal their histories

BY BRIAN COOK

Man hands on misery to man,” wrote the poet Philip Larkin, noting how one generation passes its dysfunctions on to the next. If—to quote a more recent poet—corporations are people too, does Larkin’s line also apply to corporations? A look at the Bristol, Virginia-based mining company Alpha Natural Resources suggests it might. Last year Alpha paid \$7.1 billion to take over Massey Energy, making Alpha the world’s third-largest supplier of metallurgical coal. But the 40 million tons of coal Massey produced every year came with another price.

For years, Massey Energy—led by CEO Don Blankenship—had been one of our worst corporate citizens, calling the shots in its home state of West Virginia. Though Blankenship started running Massey in 1992, he didn’t attain notoriety until 2004. In that election cycle, with a \$50 million ruling against Massey headed to the West Virginia Supreme Court, Blankenship bought \$3 million in ads taking aim at a justice running for re-election. The negative campaign—which included ads claiming the incumbent justice had released a pedophile—worked, and the judge who won saw things in Massey’s favor. Even for the current U.S. Supreme Court—which, based on its *Citizens United* decision, has little problem with the role of money in elections—this was too much. The federal court ordered the winning judge to recuse himself and have the case retried in the state supreme court.



(Massey ultimately won on a technicality regarding proper jurisdiction.)

In the meantime, Massey became one of the largest mountaintop removers in West Virginia. Mountaintop removal is a form of mining in which the tops of mountains are blown off to expose coal seams. Environmentalists say the practice has destroyed more than 1 million acres of forest and 2,000 miles of streams. Health studies have found increased rates of cancer and birth defects in communities near removal sites. That sounds dangerous, but it’s nowhere near as dangerous as working for Massey Energy, particularly at its Upper Big Branch mine. In 2009 the mine’s safety citations doubled, to more than 500; in March 2010 alone it received 53. On April 5, 2010 methane gas in the mine ignited, setting off an explosion fueled by coal dust. The blast killed 29 miners, making it the worst U.S. mining disaster in 40

years. (Miners later testified that falsifying the mine’s coal-dust-monitoring data was routine.)

With this sorry history, many celebrated Massey’s takeover by Alpha, whose safety record was nowhere near as poor. But in May a conveyor belt in one of the old Massey mines began to smoke, and miners were not evacuated until a federal inspector intervened. (The incident was reminiscent of a 2006 conveyor belt fire at a Massey mine that killed two miners.) The following week, federal inspectors raided 43 former Massey mines, finding 226 violations. Blankenship is gone, and Massey is no more, but their legacies live on. ■

For years, Massey Energy had been one of the U.S.’s worst corporate citizens.

READER RESPONSE

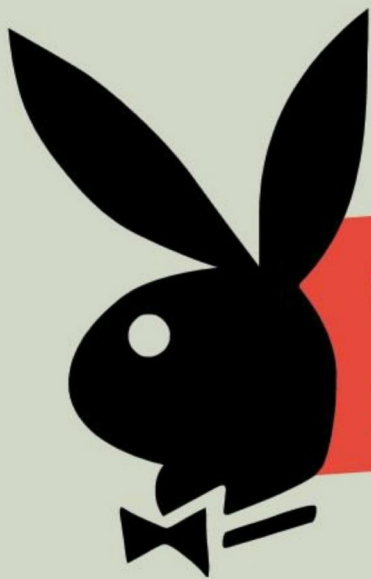
(“Our Corporate Masters,” September). One reason our regulatory system has failed is that in order to regulate, one needs experience. The people who have experience work for the companies being regulated. So these people leave their jobs, work for a year or two at the agencies, create regulations that favor their industry, then return to their private-sector jobs. Small businesses see no benefit from crapitalism: We are strangled by regulations, some so new we don’t even know about them until we’re cited for a violation. We can’t pay lobbyists, and we can’t afford accountants and lawyers to find tax loopholes. I hope more people read Cook’s article and realize the free market and capitalism have not created bubbles nor profited from the destruction of property values and the U.S. dollar. Crony capitalism—the companies elbow deep in the pockets of those who force us to give up part of our paychecks



every week—is to blame. In a free market unburdened by income tax, we could pick and choose which companies to give our money to. Right now we have no choice, and the crapitalists are laughing all the way to some large and prestigious bank.

Liz Feola
Bethel, Connecticut

*E-mail letters@playboy.com.
Or write 9346 Civic Center Drive,
Beverly Hills, California 90210.*



PLAYBOY'S

GREATEST COVERS



PLAYBOY'S

Greatest Covers

DAMON BROWN *Foreword by* PAMELA ANDERSON



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: STEPHEN COLBERT

A candid conversation with Comedy Central's other satiric genius about politics, grief, growing up and why it's terrible when Bill O'Reilly acts normally

One of the most controversial political attack ads of the year didn't originate with an actual candidate or political party. It came from Stephen Colbert. Or more accurately, "Stephen Colbert," his satirical alter ego. The ad was funded by Americans for a Better Tomorrow, Tomorrow, a super PAC formed by Colbert as part of his "exploratory committee to lay the groundwork for [his] possible candidacy for president of the United States of South Carolina." The super PAC ad suggested, in no uncertain terms, that presidential hopeful Mitt Romney might be a serial killer. "He's Mitt the Ripper," the voice-over declared. When asked about the ads by George Stephanopoulos on ABC's *This Week*, Colbert (or "Colbert") claimed ignorance. "I had nothing to do with that ad," he said. Technically he was following to the letter the rules of super PACs, which are allowed, thanks to a Supreme Court ruling, to raise unlimited funds for attack ads without being directly connected to a campaign or candidate.

"I don't know if Mitt Romney is a serial killer," he told Stephanopoulos. "That's a question he's going to have to answer... I do not want any untrue ads on the air that could in any way be traced back to me."

It was brilliant political satire—earning Colbert a prestigious Peabody Award, his second—that crossed into the realm of per-

formance art. Colbert mocked the system from within, using himself as a comedic straw man. Although Colbert's main gig is behind a desk as host of Comedy Central's faux pundit news show *The Colbert Report*, it wasn't the first time he'd blurred the line between satirist and subject. Colbert has mocked President George W. Bush to his face at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, testified before the House Subcommittee on Immigration (where he called for Americans "to stop eating fruits and vegetables") and co-hosted with *The Daily Show's* Jon Stewart a political rally on the National Mall that attracted an estimated 215,000 participants.

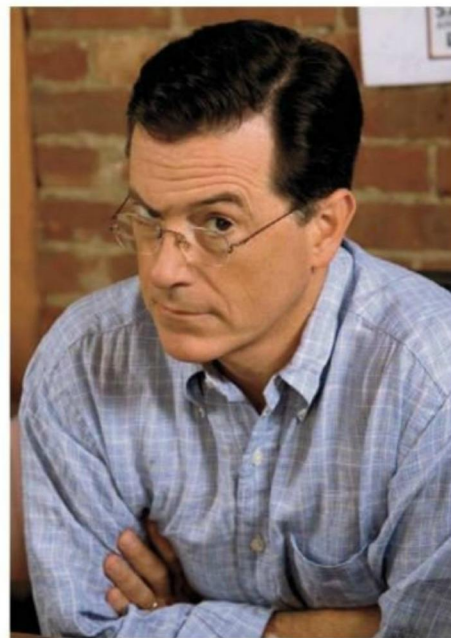
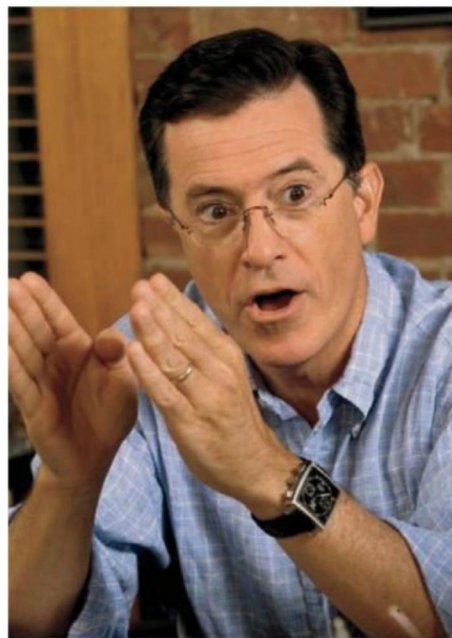
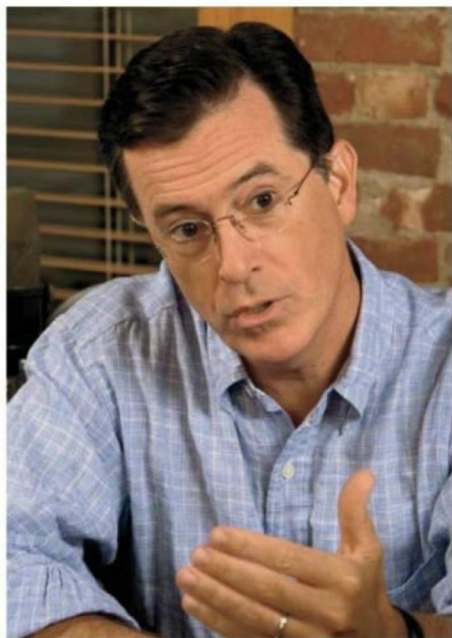
Born in Washington, D.C. and raised in Charleston, South Carolina, Colbert was the youngest of 11 kids. He had a happy childhood, at least for the first decade of his life. But in 1974, when he was 10 years old, his father, Dr. James Colbert, and his two brothers closest to him in age—Peter, 15, and Paul, 18—were killed in an airliner crash. Colbert found solace in science fiction and acting. He ended up in Chicago, studying theater at Northwestern University and joining the *Second City* comedy theater. He was hired as a correspondent and writer by *The Daily Show* in 1997, where he stayed for nine years before the network offered him *The Colbert Report*. Within a year, Colbert

was averaging 1.5 million viewers a night. In April he was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 Most Influential People in the World.

The 48-year-old comedian has two best-selling books, *I Am America (and So Can You!)* and the children's book *I Am a Pole (and So Can You!)*, and a new book, *America Again: Re-Becoming the Greatness We Never Weren't*. He enjoys a quiet home life in Montclair, New Jersey with his wife, Evelyn—an actress he met in 1990—and their three children, Madeline, Peter and John.

We sent writer **Eric Spitznagel**, who last interviewed Charlie Sheen for *PLAYBOY*, to talk with Colbert. He reports: "I met Colbert at his studio office in New York's Hell's Kitchen. I'd actually met him before, back in 1992, when I was a newly minted box-office employee at *Second City* in Chicago and he was in his final months performing with the main-stage cast. As we talked, Colbert sat behind his desk, his most recent Peabody in front of him, and outside the open window behind him an American flag fluttered in the breeze, perfectly positioned over his right shoulder in a way even his fictional doppelgänger couldn't hope to choreograph."

PLAYBOY: When people meet you for the first time, which version do they want, Stephen Colbert or "Stephen Colbert"?



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

"I'm surprised there aren't more unbalanced people in the world, because being alive is not easy. We're just not that nice to one another. We're all we have, and Jesus, are we shitty to one another. We really are."

"Take Mr. Bill O'Reilly. He was a perfectly lovely guest, but he wouldn't be his personality. He wasn't an unpleasant person. I have no complaints other than the fact that I booked Bill O'Reilly and I got William O'Reilly."

"Some people perceive me as an assassin or at least someone who can slip under your guard with a knife. But if you watch what I do, that's almost never the case. It rarely turns into anything combative."

COLBERT: I think they always want to meet the guy who's going to show up and tell jokes. But if I'm asked to do something that isn't specifically a performance, then I have to be very specific that he's never going to show up.

PLAYBOY: "He" being the other Stephen?
COLBERT: That's right. If I'm doing a talk show or an interview like this, or pretty much anything where I can't control the context, I'm loath to do the character.

PLAYBOY: Why?

COLBERT: Because outside the context of the show, you have to be okay with the clang of him against reality.

PLAYBOY: But isn't that what makes him funny?

COLBERT: Yeah, but that doesn't always work in a different context. We create our own reality on the show. I'm in a cocoon of the character's creation. Even within that reality, he's in a cocoon. Unless I'm doing something like the Correspondents' Dinner, testifying before Congress, doing the rally or something where I'm purposively injecting myself into a story, there's no benefit to pushing him up against reality. While I'm an improviser and enjoy discovery, the show follows a script. I have a pretty good idea what's going to happen. It's a very crafted, controlled environment.

PLAYBOY: You can't control what happens with the guests, can you? They're not following a script.

COLBERT: No, but they've all been warned. I tell everybody the same thing: "I do the show in character, and he's an idiot."

PLAYBOY: Is that still necessary? Do people come on *The Colbert Report* and not know what to expect?

COLBERT: It's usually someone from another country or from a rigorous academic discipline who doesn't have a lot of time for TV. Mostly I tell them because it's a ritual for me. I have to remind myself what I'm about to do, because I rarely hit it as hard as I used to.

PLAYBOY: Why not?

COLBERT: It's hard to remember. Often I'm just very interested in what my guests have to say. You have to be vigilant to stay ignorant.

PLAYBOY: Your guests have to be willing to play along too.

COLBERT: They do, yes. That's what I tell them before the show. I tell them, "He's willfully ignorant of what you know and care about. Honestly disabuse him of his ignorance and we'll have a good time." The important thing in that sentence is [*speaks slowly*] "honestly disabuse him of his ignorance." Actually tell him why he's wrong. Hopefully that makes it easier for the guest. All they have to do, as my guest producer Emily Lazar says, is talk to him as though he's a harmless drunk at the next bar stool.

PLAYBOY: That can still be intimidating. You're essentially asking them to walk into an argument.

COLBERT: Yeah, but it's an argument with

an idiot. Some people perceive me as an assassin or at least someone who can slip under your guard with a knife. But if you watch what I do, that's almost never the case. I'm just trying to keep the balloon in the air. It rarely turns into anything combative. It's mostly just silly, or it's my character expressing his ignorance on a difficult or not-at-all difficult subject. It's an opportunity to knock down common ignorances. And I would pray that guests do that.

PLAYBOY: Democratic Virginia congressman Jim Moran compared doing your show to "consensual rape." Does that seem about right?

COLBERT: I wouldn't put that on my business card, nor would I make it my campaign slogan if I were Jim Moran. I suppose the consensual part was him being unbelievably playful. He was up for anything, even after I called him a poor man's Ted Kennedy.

PLAYBOY: If people think you're an assassin or that being on the show is like rape, why do they do it? What's the benefit for them?

COLBERT: I don't know. Maybe they have

I think politicians are the only ones who are wary about us. That's why we get almost no conservatives anymore. Even conservative pundits are hard to come by.

a book to sell. I hope that perception is starting to change. I think politicians are the only ones who are wary about us. That's why we get almost no conservatives anymore. Even conservative pundits are hard to come by, which is too bad.

PLAYBOY: Who's your ideal guest?

COLBERT: We want someone who represents something, who feels strongly about what they're talking about and will allow for a little dramatic friction. The most disappointing guest is somebody who won't be their personality.

PLAYBOY: What does that mean? How can you not be your personality?

COLBERT: Take Mr. Bill O'Reilly. He was a perfectly lovely guest, but he wouldn't be his personality. He wouldn't be the guy he is on his show. And I don't know why. I went on his show, and I was my personality. That was our deal; I'd go on his show and he'd come on mine. But he came on my show and he wasn't his personality. He wasn't an unpleasant person. He's a perfectly fine guest and I have no complaints other than the fact that I booked Bill O'Reilly and I got William O'Reilly.

PLAYBOY: Did he give you any advice? Any words of wisdom from one pundit to another?

COLBERT: He said, "Watch your guest list. If you book the same kind of people over and over—Al Franken, Keith Olbermann—people notice that pattern." I told him, "Oh, Bill, I toy with those guys. I'm slapping them around." He said, "I know, but not everybody is watching your show as closely as I am." I was like [*claps hands and holds them to his chest*], "I've totally made it!" That was about five, six months into the show.

PLAYBOY: One of your friends from high school said you once joked about starting a cult. Is that true?

COLBERT: Yeah, that was an L. Ron Hubbard reference. I was with a bunch of guys—we were all science fiction fans—and we were sitting around one day, drinking beer or doing something we weren't supposed to be doing, talking about power. The question posed was, If you wanted power over people, what would you do? What career would you pursue? I remember one guy, who's actually a colonel now, said, "If I wanted real power, I wouldn't be a politician. I'd be in the Joint Chiefs of Staff." It got around to me, and I said, "Well, I think I would probably major in psychology and start a cult." [*laughs*] There's something enjoyable about cults to me.

PLAYBOY: Enjoyable?

COLBERT: I'm interested in what makes someone a cult figure and what engenders cult adherence, what engenders that behavior.

PLAYBOY: Are you surprised people are drawn to cults?

COLBERT: Not surprised. I'm fascinated. I'm fascinated that people want to know what to do. And people want to know what to think. And people want to know how to feel. Not just what to feel but *how* to feel.

PLAYBOY: Do you think that's unnatural?

COLBERT: No, it's completely natural. I'm surprised there aren't more unbalanced people in the world, because being alive is not easy. We're just not that nice to one another. We're all we have, and Jesus, are we shitty to one another. We really are. The only thing that keeps us going back to one another is that we're all filled with such enormous self-doubt. We have doubts about our ability to be alone, to self-actualize. We're on such a rocky road all the time. Every moment is new. Every inch of the mountain is fresh snow. If someone said, "I have been out ahead and I know what you're supposed to do," if I believed that were true, I would absolutely obey whatever father told me. I would stay on the compound.

PLAYBOY: You would just as happily be a cult member as a cult leader?

COLBERT: I'd love to be a cult member, just another loyal follower. It sounds very comforting.

PLAYBOY: The Colbert Nation could arguably be described as a cult.

COLBERT: In the loosest possible sense. It's an ironic cult.

PLAYBOY: But your audience listens to you. It may be a joke, but it's a joke with a lot of followers.

COLBERT: Which is not what we set out to do. When we started the show, we wanted it to have a mythos that would never be real. We'd play on the difference between reality and my character's perception of reality.

PLAYBOY: He would think he had influence but he really didn't?

COLBERT: Exactly. He thinks he says things and people listen and take action. He has a nation, this army he can mobilize. We were already too successful for that joke, to play on the vast difference in status between thinking you're a prophet and being on a show that nobody watches.

PLAYBOY: Because people were actually watching, and they got the joke.

COLBERT: Not only did they get it, they were willing to play along. I'm constantly awed by their willingness to play along with almost anything. They actually cheer things they don't believe in because my character says it. You know what I mean? I have a generally liberal audience, but they will applaud when I nail a liberal lion

because they want my character to win. It's a strange relationship that seems natural now, but every so often I have to remind myself that this is not normal. This is not common.

PLAYBOY: Will they do pretty much anything you say, or are there rules and parameters?

COLBERT: I put a lot of thought into the ways we engage with them. [laughs] I always say "we," like "We're pregnant." But there are a lot of people involved. It's not just me, by any means. With the audience, we think about things like whether we are dictating their actions or inviting them to take action. Dictation of action is not nearly as fun for

an audience. We've done it sometimes, and it's been a mistake. It's much better to invite them to be part of an action rather than saying, "I command you to do this." The other thing is, you have to follow through. If you initiate a game and they take part, you can't stop until it reaches a mutually satisfying resolution.

PLAYBOY: The Colbert character is obsessed with fear. He even had a rally in Washington, "Keep Fear Alive." Why is fear so intoxicating?

COLBERT: I suppose fear is like a drug. A little bit isn't that bad, but you can get addicted to the consumption and

read the inscription together. "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." Fear is an attempt to impose tyranny over someone's mind. It's an act of oppression.

PLAYBOY: We know what Stephen Colbert the character is afraid of, or trying to make us afraid of.

COLBERT: Everything.

PLAYBOY: Bears, jazz robots, happiness.

COLBERT: [Laughs] The list is endless.

PLAYBOY: But what about you? What are you, the real Stephen Colbert, afraid of?

COLBERT: [Pauses] Accidentally driving my boat into a pillar with loved ones onboard.

PLAYBOY: You are going to need to elaborate on that.

COLBERT: I really like boats. I was driving a boat this summer with my family and some friends. About a quarter mile away there was a channel marker, and I was heading straight for it. Now there is no way on God's green earth that I would not have seen that channel marker in the 45 seconds it would have taken me to get to it. But at the second it appeared I wasn't looking up. I was looking at my instrument panel. Then I looked up and my wife said, "You see the channel marker, right?" And I said, "Of course." But I actually hadn't seen it yet. I have no doubt that everything would have

been fine, but in my mind I see myself for the next 45 seconds, I don't know, somehow...closing my eyes and slamming into the channel marker with a boat full of friends. [pauses] I don't know what that means.

PLAYBOY: That's an incredibly specific fear.

COLBERT: It really is. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: You could have just said "drowning."

COLBERT: I don't like spiders. How about that?

PLAYBOY: That works.

COLBERT: I actually don't like bears.

PLAYBOY: Seriously? Like your character?

COLBERT: I don't dislike bears, but I am kind of afraid of them. There was a

distribution of it. What's evil is the purposeful distribution of fear. As Paul said when he was faced with the gom jabbar, "Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little death that brings total obliteration."

PLAYBOY: Did you just make a *Dune* reference?

COLBERT: I did! [laughs] If you're injecting fear into other people, then you're trying to kill their minds. You're trying to get them to stop thinking. That's antithetical to the founding of this country. It's on the Jefferson Memorial. I'm stealing this from Jefferson, but I'm also stealing it from the movie *Born Yesterday*. Bill Holden takes Judy Holliday to the Jefferson Memorial, and they

time when, if I had dreams about bears, something bad was going on in my life.

PLAYBOY: How did bears become a recurring motif on the show? Was it just to have something to talk about that wasn't topical?

COLBERT: For the very first show, we were trying to find something that had a repeatable structure. We had this bit called "ThreatDown," when he talks about the number one threat to America that week. We were considering another story, something from Florida about a Burmese python that had grown to 13 feet long and swallowed an alligator and the alligator had eaten its way out of the snake. It was a really crazy story with horrible pictures. Then a bear story came up that wasn't as flashy, but we went with it. Partly because bears are very resonant to me, because I really do have a bit of a bear problem. And it just seemed like a richer fear to us. We always said that anything my character is concerned about qualifies as news. If he says bears are the number one threat to America, then that is the case.

PLAYBOY: He's justifying his own anxieties?

COLBERT: Exactly. "I want to make you afraid of the things I'm afraid of."

PLAYBOY: Do you feel tied to the news cycle? When you're doing political comedy, a joke may be funny in the morning and irrelevant by that afternoon.

COLBERT: There's a good and a bad in that. We are the shadow cast by real people. And that shadow changes shape as the news cycle changes shape, so you always have fresh dirt to dig in. That's exciting. Like with this presidential race. It's as simple a narrative as any made-for-TV movie: two men, one victorious.

PLAYBOY: So how do you deal with that?

COLBERT: We know everything that happens structurally between here and there. You just prepare yourself to collect the news on the dates that are preordained. There are surprises, but there's a tent pole of a narrative between today and the inauguration. But we also try to release ourselves from that. We don't need to follow what everyone says is the story. Not because we're mavericks but because sometimes the story holds no interest for me. I'm perfectly happy to talk about a story that's not necessarily timely or newsworthy but is just interesting to me. Like super PACs.

PLAYBOY: Super PACs aren't newsworthy?

COLBERT: They're newsworthy, but they weren't in the news. Not many people at the time were talking about super PACs, at least not in the mainstream media. Most people had no idea what they were, so for the first six months we had to explain them to the audience every time I brought them up. That process of educating the audience is really educating ourselves.

PLAYBOY: But you took it one step further and started your own super PAC.

COLBERT: We did, yeah.

PLAYBOY: Isn't that unnecessarily complicated? Why not just make jokes about super PACs in the abstract? Wouldn't that be easier, and cheaper?

COLBERT: It would be, absolutely. But I have an opportunity as this character to do things. I have an opportunity to do things that lead to discovery.

PLAYBOY: For you or the audience?

COLBERT: For me and the audience. If you just talk about it, everyone sits on their hands and the reality of it just watches as you talk about it. But by putting yourself in it, reality has to respond to your actions. I don't pretend that the camera doesn't change things. But it's a version of reality that allows us to show what normally doesn't get seen.

PLAYBOY: How much money did you ultimately raise for your super PAC?

COLBERT: About \$1.4 million. We've got somewhere between \$850,000 and \$900,000 left. We've spent about half a million dollars of it so far. Because running for president—or not running for

Grief will always accept the invitation to appear. It's got plenty of time for you. I've always liked that phrase "He was visited by grief," because that's really what it is.

president, whatever it was we did—is expensive. But I can spend it on anything I want. I could use my super PAC money to buy a private jet, and I have to justify it to no one. I wouldn't have known that unless I had my own super PAC. That's the great thing about throwing yourself into the story. You find out things you wouldn't have known otherwise.

PLAYBOY: Have you always had this curiosity? As a kid, did you get the same excitement from digging into a complicated subject and trying to figure out how it ticks?

COLBERT: To some extent, sure. Any curiosity I have probably comes from my dad. He was a big thinker, a true intellectual. His idea of a good time was to read French philosophy, often French Christian philosophy.

PLAYBOY: Did he have strong political opinions?

COLBERT: I don't really know. The only bumper sticker my parents ever had just said "Kennedy." That's all it said. And my father was I think president of Physicians for Kennedy. We have a pic-

ture of my father and President Kennedy at the White House. My father had just come out of a rainstorm. He's soaking wet and wearing a raincoat. Kennedy is shaking his hand and my father is just laughing. That's the only political involvement I know about. Otherwise, I think my parents were pretty conservative.

PLAYBOY: Were your parents funny?

COLBERT: My mom is very warm and funny and quick to laugh and quick to hug and kiss. My father died when I was pretty young, so I don't remember any specific jokes, but he certainly encouraged us to be funny. But my brothers and sisters are the funniest people in the world to me. I have comedy influences, other comics I really like, but none of them is as influential as those 10 people above me. I've had people say, "Oh, you're the baby. You have a built-in audience." But I was *their* audience.

PLAYBOY: What kind of comedy did the Colbert kids enjoy? Slapstick, wordplay?

COLBERT: Everything. Every one of them is different. Some are great at telling stories. Some are into jokes. For my brother Billy it was all about jokes. "A guy walks into a bar." And W.C. Fields. He had W.C. Fields posters all over his room. If there was a W.C. Fields festival on television, he would force me to watch it. "You have to watch this pool cue trick that he does." Or Gahan Wilson. Billy was a huge Gahan Wilson fan. It was very dark comedy, and I was a little kid, but he'd show me all these Gahan Wilson cartoons. And he taught me how to juggle. [laughs] My brother Billy was a big comedic influence.

PLAYBOY: When did you think you might want to be more than just an audience member?

COLBERT: It was when we were driving back from my father's funeral. He was buried in Indianapolis, and we were all driving home in a funeral limo. I don't know if that's what they're called. It's a limo with the jump seats that face front and back, like the presidential limo where the aide is talking to the president. You know what I'm talking about? In those espionage movies, right before the aide shoots the president and you find out he's really a Russian spy or whatever. It's that *Mission Impossible* style of limo.

PLAYBOY: We know what you mean.

COLBERT: One of my sisters, I think it was Mary, made a joke to Margo. Or it could have been Lulu to both of them. I don't remember. One of them made Margo laugh so hard, she snorted and fell on the floor. There was enough room between the seats to actually fall on the floor of this limo.

PLAYBOY: Do you remember the joke?

COLBERT: [Pauses] I don't, but I remember the laughter. I remember thinking [softly] I (continued on page 128)



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SAY GOOD-BYE TO YOUR SEX LIFE
IF THINGS GO SOUTH IN NOVEMBER

BY NANCY L. COHEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEVI BROWN

YOUR SEX LIFE IS DESTROYING AMERICA. That's according to Iowa Republican Steve King, who took to the floor of the House last summer to explain that sex for pleasure—instead of for creating babies—would make Americans extinct. A year later, his colleague Mike Kelly called a press conference to sound the alarm that affordable birth control was a plot to destroy the nation. “I know in your mind you can think of times when America was attacked. One is December 7. That's Pearl Harbor day. The other is September 11.... I want you to remember August 1, 2012”—the day a mandate went into effect requiring health insurers to provide free contraception coverage. “That is a date that will live in infamy,” the representative from Pennsylvania declaimed on the steps of Congress, his face reddening as he rallied fellow patriots to join his fight. “The question is, if not us, who? If not now, when? It is our turn.” King and Kelly weren't alone. From the Gulf Coast to the Great Lakes and the Great Plains, heartland Republicans pushed nearly a thousand laws to restrict access to contraception and abortion. The Tennessee senate took up the dangers of “gateway sexual activity,” while the Texas GOP officially declared that pornography was rending the “fabric of society.” In one orgy of delirium, Republicans revealed that sexual freedom itself was on their chopping block.

Welcome to the war on your sex life.

If you're reading this magazine, it's a safe bet you take it for granted that you can have sex with just about anyone you desire, and in just about any manner you desire. You likely believe you should be allowed to read what you want and have children when you choose. But it wasn't so long ago when the opposite was true, when the sex life you enjoy today was risky, dangerous and, in many situations, completely illegal. When Willard Mitt Romney entered high school, in 1961, birth control was illegal in some states, abortion was illegal except in rare cases, sodomy—often including oral sex—was a crime in every state and young single women had to lie to get the pill.

Is America going back to those days? That depends on what happens in November.

IT'S THE SEX, STUPID

The average American woman will have sex at least 1,880 times during her fertile years. Ninety-nine percent of women who have ever had sex have used birth control. Considering those figures, making contraception universally accessible makes sense. So in January 2012, the Obama administration ruled that under health care reform, all FDA-approved forms of birth control and sterilization—including condoms, the pill and the morning-after pill—must be provided by health insurers free of extra charge as part of the basic health care package.

The thought of that much sex drove Republican politicians into a self-righteous froth. Rick Santorum, who was already on record calling contraception “a license to do things in a sexual realm that is counter to how things are supposed to be,” whipped the religious right into a frenzy and surged in the GOP presidential polls. With Santorum in hot pursuit, Romney shamelessly plunged into the anti-birth-control hysteria. The faltering front-runner, whose great-grandfather had self-exiled to Mexico to escape arrest for polygamy, charged that the birth control mandate amounted to the “most serious assault” on “religious liberty” in generations. In a few deft pirouettes to the far right, Romney stole Santorum’s momentum and rode the Republican sex panic to victory.

On Capitol Hill, the GOP-controlled House of Representatives staged hearings about the birth control regulation that featured an all-male panel of celibates and religious authorities. Republicans in the Senate voted in favor of giving employers the right to eliminate birth control from their employees’

insurance plan based on a vague “moral objection.” Copycat anticontraception bills proliferated in Republican-ruled statehouses across the nation. One New Hampshire lawmaker recommended that married couples practice abstinence until they are ready for children. Arizona’s bill included a show-me-your-birth-control-papers-please provision, which would have allowed your girlfriend’s boss to fire her for having sex outside of marriage.

If a President Romney and his Republican comrades get their way, contraception will be less accessible, more expensive and, for some women, completely out of reach. Romney has vowed that he will abolish the contraception mandate. (That is, if he can’t repeal health care reform.) Five million women get their birth control through Title X, the federal family-planning program that Romney and his running mate, Paul Ryan, have promised to eliminate. Romney says he’ll get rid of funding for Planned Parenthood, and he plans to reinstate a George W. Bush executive order that gave anyone working in a pharmacy the right to claim that birth control violates their conscience, allowing the worker to refuse to fill a prescription or even ring up a condom sale in the supermarket checkout line. Under a President Romney, your sex life gets a lot more complicated.

If for nothing else, we have Obamacare to thank for pulling back the curtain to reveal the sex police standing at the levers of the GOP machine. By the end of the Republicans’ birth control bender, it had become clear that casual sex itself was

their target. It might sound outlandish, but the path they are on could lead to eliminating access to forms of birth control like condoms. If they succeed, our ability to control when and if we have children—a constitutionally protected right—goes with it. But to ban birth control, Romney first has to fulfill his other promise: to outlaw abortion.

THE WAR ON WOMEN—AND YOU

A woman’s constitutional right to an abortion rests on a tenuous Supreme Court majority in favor of upholding *Roe v. Wade*. One retirement among the pro-choice justices while Romney is president and the right to a legal abortion is gone. The Court’s staunchest advocate of personal freedom and reproductive rights, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, is also its oldest member. As a 79-year-old cancer survivor, she may not be able to serve through two terms of a Romney presidency.

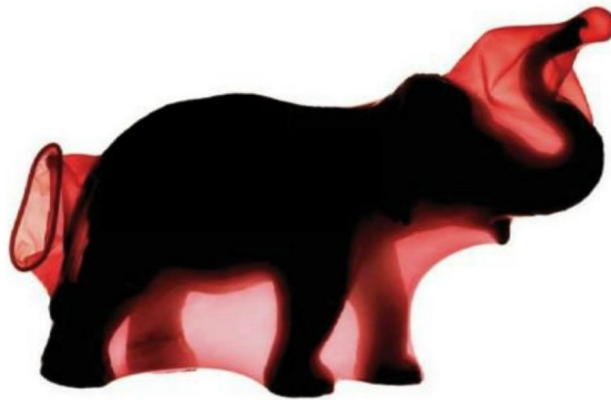
Priority number one on Romney’s Supreme Court agenda is to overturn *Roe*. He has said the decision was “one of the darkest moments in Supreme Court history.” He has speculated, “If we had justices like Roberts, Alito, Thomas and Scalia, and more justices like that,” *Roe* would be overturned, and he holds up those staunch conservatives as models for the kind of justice he would appoint. The 2012 Republican Party platform calls for a U.S. constitutional amendment to ban abortion even in cases of incest, rape and threat to the life of the mother. Romney himself has signed on to such extreme positions as outlawing abortion for rape victims and denying them emergency contraception. Ryan, a heartbeat from the Oval Office, believes that

doctors who perform abortions to save a woman’s life should be prosecuted. Ryan’s message to a woman, say a rape victim, who has an abortion? “If it’s illegal, it’s illegal.”

Should Romney have the opportunity to appoint a Supreme Court justice, *Roe* will without question be overturned. With that, Americans could in the near future face laws that restrict and even outright ban birth control. Romney disavows any interest in outlawing contraception, yet his own actions could set in motion a domino effect that ends in that result.

Here some legal background is necessary. In *Roe*, the Court found that the right to an abortion fell within the right to privacy, first articulated in 1965 in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the landmark case in which the Court invalidated state bans on birth control for married couples. When *Griswold*’s right to privacy and birth control was extended to single people (in 1972), the Supreme Court essentially said that your sexual freedom is a constitutional right, up there with your right to free speech, a free press and religious liberty. So naturally there is little that gets religious nuts more incensed than the right to privacy. They’re praying for *Griswold* to be struck down with *Roe*. Asked about *Griswold*, Romney—a Harvard-educated lawyer—said, “I don’t believe they decided that correctly.”

If *Griswold* goes, as it well might when a Romney Supreme Court overturns *Roe*, nothing stands in the way, constitutionally, of laws against birth control. The question then becomes, would lawmakers dare? At a national level, (continued on page 139)

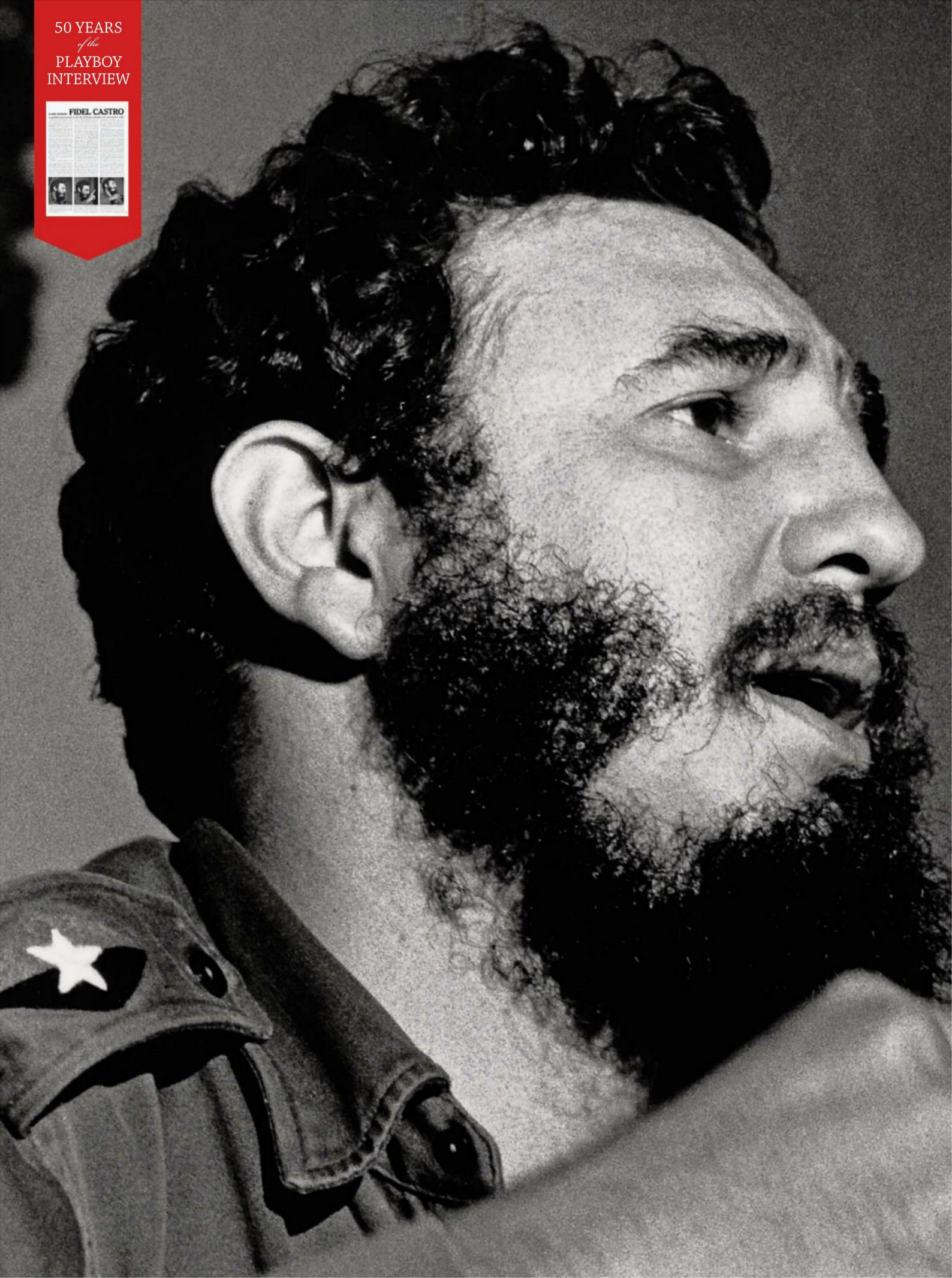


By the end of the Republicans’ birth control bender, it had become clear that casual sex itself was their target.



"Sure it's expensive. But you're not paying for the fabric...you're paying for the view!"

50 YEARS
of the
PLAYBOY
INTERVIEW





Fidel Castro

The dictator who created modern Cuba and who has been a thorn in the side of every U.S. president since 1959 tells why he became our enemy and how we could have been allies

Fidel Castro, the revolutionary who essentially created modern Cuba, will be remembered as either hero or villain, depending on who writes the history of the tiny nation. Some see Castro as the liberator of Cuba from a repressive government that was a puppet of foreign imperialists (that is, the United States). Others judge him as a brutal dictator who imprisoned and killed those who challenged his authoritarian rule. His impact was felt beyond the island nation he ruled from 1959 until 2006, when he turned power over to his brother Raúl. (Since then, Castro, now 86, has made few public appearances and is reputed to be ill.) In the interim years, he survived assassination attempts ordered by the CIA and the Bay of Pigs invasion. He was also at the epicenter of one of the world's most precarious moments, the Cuban Missile Crisis, when he allowed the Soviet Union to place nuclear missiles—ones pointed at the U.S.—on the island. It led to a face-off between the USSR's Nikita Khrushchev and President John F. Kennedy. The crisis was defused, but Castro's alliance with the Soviet Union further alienated him from the United States at the height of the Cold War.

While prime minister, Castro, who held a number of titles during his reign, was the subject of two *Playboy Interviews*, in January 1967 and August 1985, both remarkable and historic documents. Castro opened up in these interviews in ways that few national leaders ever speak to any media. The first interview was conducted by journalist **Lee Lockwood**, who spoke with Castro through the night and until dawn in a series of sessions at his Isle of Pines home. A Cuba specialist, Lockwood concluded that Castro's answers to his provocative questions were "generally honest—however ideologically inimical his views."

PLAYBOY: When you came to power in 1959, did you think that Cuba and the U.S. were going to get along better than they actually have?

CASTRO: Yes, that was one of my illusions. At that time, we believed the revolutionary program could be carried out with a great degree of comprehension on the part of the people of the United States. We believed that because it was just, it would be accepted. We thought about the *people* of the United States, that in some way their opinion would influence the decisions of the government.

PLAYBOY: Did the subsequent hostility of the American government have much to do with creating a receptive atmosphere for communism in Cuba?

CASTRO: I think so, in the same way that the friendly acts of the Soviet Union also helped. It taught us something we had not clearly understood at the beginning: that our true allies, the only ones that could help us make our own revolution, were none other than those countries that had recently had their own.

PLAYBOY: Yet some observers have characterized your development as a Communist as having been largely a series of reactions on your part to a series of hostile acts by the U.S.; that is, that the U.S., in effect, forced you and Cuba into the Communist camp.

CASTRO: The United States, with its imperialist foreign policy, constitutes part of the contemporary circumstances that make revolutionaries out of people everywhere.

PLAYBOY: In the five years since you announced the true nature of the (continued on page 146)





LA

AN EROTIC, FELLINI-ESQUE FANTASY SET
ON THE STREETS OF ITALY

STRAVA

For centuries, Americans have ventured to Italy to be enchanted. Ancient architecture, marvels of cuisine and couture, futuristic bloodred racing cars—the boot is a land of indulgence and fantasy. So one day, while wandering the Piazza delle Erbe in Verona, we wondered, What if we could take Italy to another level in our fantasy? What if, for a moment, we could visualize one of the dozens of beautiful female

creatures motoring along on scooters and erase her clothing? And then capture that fantasy in vibrant celluloid? The result would be an erotic, dolce vita-style montage indeed. Being *PLAYBOY*, of course we could make this fantasy a reality. *Eccola qua!* Here we bring you a delightful model named Anna with a pair of Vespa scooters, which are akin to national symbols of Italy. The images would tickle the fancy of Fellini himself.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVIDE ESPOSITO







ITALY IS
A LAND OF
INDULGENCE
AND FANTASY.





**WHY
IS
EVERYONE
TALKING
AT
ME?**

ARE THE TALKING HEADS WHO DOMINATE CABLE NEWS WORSE THAN EVER? NOT NECESSARILY. A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOW GORE VIDAL, WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, 60 MINUTES AND COUNTLESS OTHERS RUINED POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN AMERICA

BY JOHN MERONEY

STEWART: *Why do we have to fight? Why do you argue?*

CARLSON: *We enjoy it.*

STEWART: *It's hurting America. Stop hurting America.*

BEGALA: *Well, we're a debate show.*

STEWART: *That's like saying pro wrestling is a show about athletics. You're doing theater when you should be doing debate. Your show is so painful to watch.*

That was comedian Jon Stewart lambasting Tucker Carlson and Paul Begala, co-hosts of CNN's long-running debate show *Crossfire*, in the heat of another presidential campaign season, eight years ago.

It was a cringe-worthy moment—and not just for the studio audience and the viewers who watched on television. The producers who booked Stewart were expecting jokes about the Bush and Kerry campaigns. Instead they got Carlson and Begala trying to dig their way out of a deep hole of uncomfortable titters from the audience. It was like watching someone trying to backpedal after asking “When's your baby due?” of a woman they quickly realize isn't pregnant. No amount of changing the subject was going to unwreck this train.

The show I had treasured since watching it with my father while growing up in the 1980s was having its epitaph written. It was a painful descent for a program *The Washington Post* once hailed as one of the best on TV. Even sadder, I was among those who recognized it had passed its expiration date years before—when it lost the original hosts, Tom Braden and Patrick Buchanan, a pair of journalists with remarkable chemistry, and later, when a live, cheering studio audience was added, turning it into a Howard Beale-style spectacle.

A few weeks later, the then president of CNN, Jonathan Klein, announced he was canceling *Crossfire*. He said he agreed with Stewart. Going forward, Klein said, the network would be clearing its decks of the “head-butting debate shows.” Included in the termination notice was *Capital Gang*, CNN's signature weekend talk show that featured liberal and conservative journalists analyzing and debating the week's news.

It has been almost a decade since CNN kissed its debate shows good-bye—and many of its viewers along with them. (Klein got his own pink slip in 2010.) CNN now has its lowest ratings since 1991. However, the very opinion-based conflict shows that CNN *(continued on page 122)*



天世WORLD'S M45天



NORTH KOREA'S BORDER IS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO PENETRATE IN THE WORLD. EVEN THE CIA HAS TROUBLE CROSSING IT. WE FIGURED OUT HOW: ENTER THE NORTH KOREAN AMATEUR GOLF TOURNAMENT. IT'S TEE TIME INSIDE THE AXIS OF EVIL

BY KEVIN COOK



“You da mandarin!”
The Brits were cheering the second secretary. A trim, bespectacled diplomat in electric-blue golf togs, the second secretary—Mongolia’s deputy ambassador to North Korea—laced his drive around a dogleg toward a herd of scrawny goats. He pumped his fist while the Brits, Alex and Simon, hailed him with sprays of Korean lager and shouts of “You da mandarin” and “You da Manchurian,” until somebody said that mandarins and Manchurians are Chinese, not Mongolian.

The beery Brits took that in. “Very well then,” Alex said. “You da Mongolian!”

The second secretary bowed. “Crazy boys, I love your ass,” he said. Or words to that effect—I was distracted by the beauty-pageant winner who was buffing my balls. She was my caddie, Sun-Yi. We were next up in the 2012 Democratic People’s Republic of Korea Amateur Golf Open, the biggest golfing event in the unfree world, and I needed my A game. To catch the leaders I’d have to make a run at late dictator Kim Jong II’s course record of 11 holes in one.

Fifteen golfers had come to North

ILLUSTRATION BY JUSTIN PAGE

DANGER // 18 // HOLES

Korea: from Hong Kong and Dongguan in China, from Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia, from Australia, New Zealand, England, Finland and the United States. Some flew to Beijing and rode an overnight train that creaked through 100 miles of desolate North Korean countryside where the electricity might work for an hour a day. I caught a 15-hour flight from JFK in New York to Seoul, South Korea, followed by a two-hour flight to Shenyang, China and then a short flight on state-owned Air Koryo to the North Korean capital, Pyongyang. It would have been simpler to fly the 120 miles from Seoul to Pyongyang, but commercial airlines detour around North Korean airspace to avoid getting shot down.

As the world's last Stalinist dictatorship, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a relic of the Cold War. After World War II freed Korea from Japanese occupation, Russia took over the northern half of the country, while the U.S. ran the southern half. Today prosperous, golf-crazy South Korea buzzes with commerce, Russia and China embrace their own forms of moneygrubbing, and even Cuba chases tourist dollars. But the DPRK sticks to grim, stone-faced totalitarianism. Only a handful of Westerners are allowed in each year. The regime views them—us—as likely spies, and while getting into the country was easy, there were no guarantees about getting out. An American soldier who defected to North Korea in 1962 tried to leave in 1966. Forty-six years later he's still in Pyongyang.

As suspected spies we surrendered our cell phones to a soldier at the airport. We were assigned a tour guide who confiscated our passports and a minder whose job was to keep an eye on us. There would be no Wi-Fi during our visit to Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un's locked-down land, no internet and not much TV except for state-approved channels that played military music. One golfer who glimpsed a shot of Barack and Michelle Obama holding hands on TV called it North Korean porn.

It wasn't the best week to arrive. Cash-strapped North Korea had recently launched a satellite that experts compared to a dishwasher wrapped in duct tape. It fell apart in flight—a global embarrassment. Aerial photos revealed that the regime had resumed building a nuclear reactor—a global provocation.

The day I arrived, a U.S. general admitted to parachuting *real* spies into North Korea. *The Pyongyang Times* railed against imperialist America, calling the U.S. “a criminal



state” and “the ringleader of man-killing.” A Frommer's travel guide I left in a Shenyang trash can placed North Korea atop its list of dangerous nations. Under “Places to Avoid,” it read, “the entire country.”

But tour planner Dylan Harris, a shaggy-haired Englishman who runs a firm called Lupine Travel, swore I'd be safe behind the Bamboo Curtain. After almost a decade of dealing with North Korea's secretive government, he knew which palms to grease. The regime was as hungry for hard currency as its people were for rice. Fifteen hundred capital dollars per golfer and we were in.

So damn the satellites. Let's launch some Pro-Vs!



On day one of our invasion of the Democratic People's Republic, a dozen pasty golfers gathered on the communist side of the DMZ between North Korea and South Korea, the most dangerous border on earth. More than 500 soldiers have died

KIM JONG IL MADE 11 HOLES IN ONE IN HIS FIRST ROUND OF GOLF. HE FINISHED 38 UNDER PAR—THE BEST ROUND IN GOLF HISTORY.

in various skirmishes at the DMZ, a two-mile-wide stretch of barbed and electrified fences, observation towers and minefields. In 1976 a North Korean lieutenant attacked American soldiers trimming a popular in the DMZ, plunging a hatchet into a U.S. captain's neck. (In North Korea's account, border guards “confronted U.S. troops, daringly catching a flying ax thrown by the enemy.”) Two Americans died.

Our minds led a friendlier tour of the International Friendship Exhibition at Mount Myohyang, where 90,000 gifts attest to the world's affection for North Korean founding father Kim Il Sung, his late son (the golfing commandant) Kim Jong Il and his son, 28-year-old Kim Jong Un, who became the planet's youngest head of state when he took over last year. The gift museum held a bulletproof limousine—a present

from Joseph Stalin to Kim Il Sung—as well as a railway car from Mao Tse-tung, an East German tank, a bear's head from Romanian tyrant (continued on page 131)



ABOVE: THE WRITER WITH HIS CADDIE, SUN-YI. BELOW: SMOG COVERS PYONGYANG. WE GOT INTO NORTH KOREA. WOULD WE GET BACK OUT?



BELOW: A SNAPSHOT WITH “GOLF BROTHER” CHULUUN MUNKHBAT, A MONGOLIAN LAWYER WITH A KILLER SHORT GAME.





"I had a hard day at the office, dear. Can I rest a few minutes before we go to bed?"



20

BY TAFFY BRODESSER-AKNER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DARREN TIESTE

Crystal & Bitch Ritter

The B--- in Apartment 23 revels in her charming form of bitchiness

Q1

PLAYBOY: You play Chloe, the title *B* in *Don't Trust the B--- in Apartment 23*. What's it like being America's most famous bitch?

RITTER: People come up to me and call me "the B," which I find so endearing. They changed the title from *Bitch* to *B---*, and I'm glad. At first I wasn't, because I'm the bitch and it was rad. But now that people come over to me and call me "the B," I'm relieved. It's much more adorable to be called "the B" than "You bitch."

Q2

PLAYBOY: Who's the bitchiest roommate you've ever had?

RITTER: When I was modeling I lived with eight to 10 girls

in the modeling agency's two-bedroom apartment, sleeping in bunk beds. It was crazy, but not as crazy as people want it to be. Sure, we'd go out and drink cosmos and dance on tables. But no sex with rappers or cocaine or eating disorders. I worked a lot, and there was one other girl who also worked a lot. She was the queen bee before I came along, and I think she didn't enjoy that she wasn't the only one anymore. She fucking hated me. I would play guitar on the patio—not late; we're talking 8:30 to nine P.M.—and she would tell the agency I was keeping her up. I got in trouble for that. So I put roaches in her bed. You don't fuck with a girl's livelihood.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Where does a nice girl like you find a bunch of cockroaches?

RITTER: Well, it was New York City. They're there. I found them with my girlfriend Charity, who was just bad news but in the best possible way. We caught the roaches and put them in the other model's suitcase too, in hopes she would take them home and infest her house. I'm pretty ashamed of myself. *[laughs]*

Q4

PLAYBOY: You grew up on an actual beef farm in Shickshinny, Pennsylvania, a town of 838 people. Is it true your family wouldn't let you have a horse and you rode a cow instead?

RITTER: My stepfather called horses "hay burners." They do nothing. You can't milk them and you can't eat them, so we didn't have them. But I had a calf I raised named Jake. He was so small that when I got him, I could pick him up. We took naps together and snuggled. And then he got big—very big. We put him in the pasture. When I would go hang out with him, I'd pull him over to the side of the fence, hold on to the scruff of his neck and get on him. And he would start walking. People would drive by and take pictures, like, Who is this girl riding a cow?

Q5

PLAYBOY: What happened to Jake?

RITTER: I didn't eat him, if that's what you're asking. My neighbors might have, but I didn't.

Q6

PLAYBOY: You were discovered by a modeling scout in a shopping mall when you were 15. What was modeling like for a farm girl from Shickshinny?

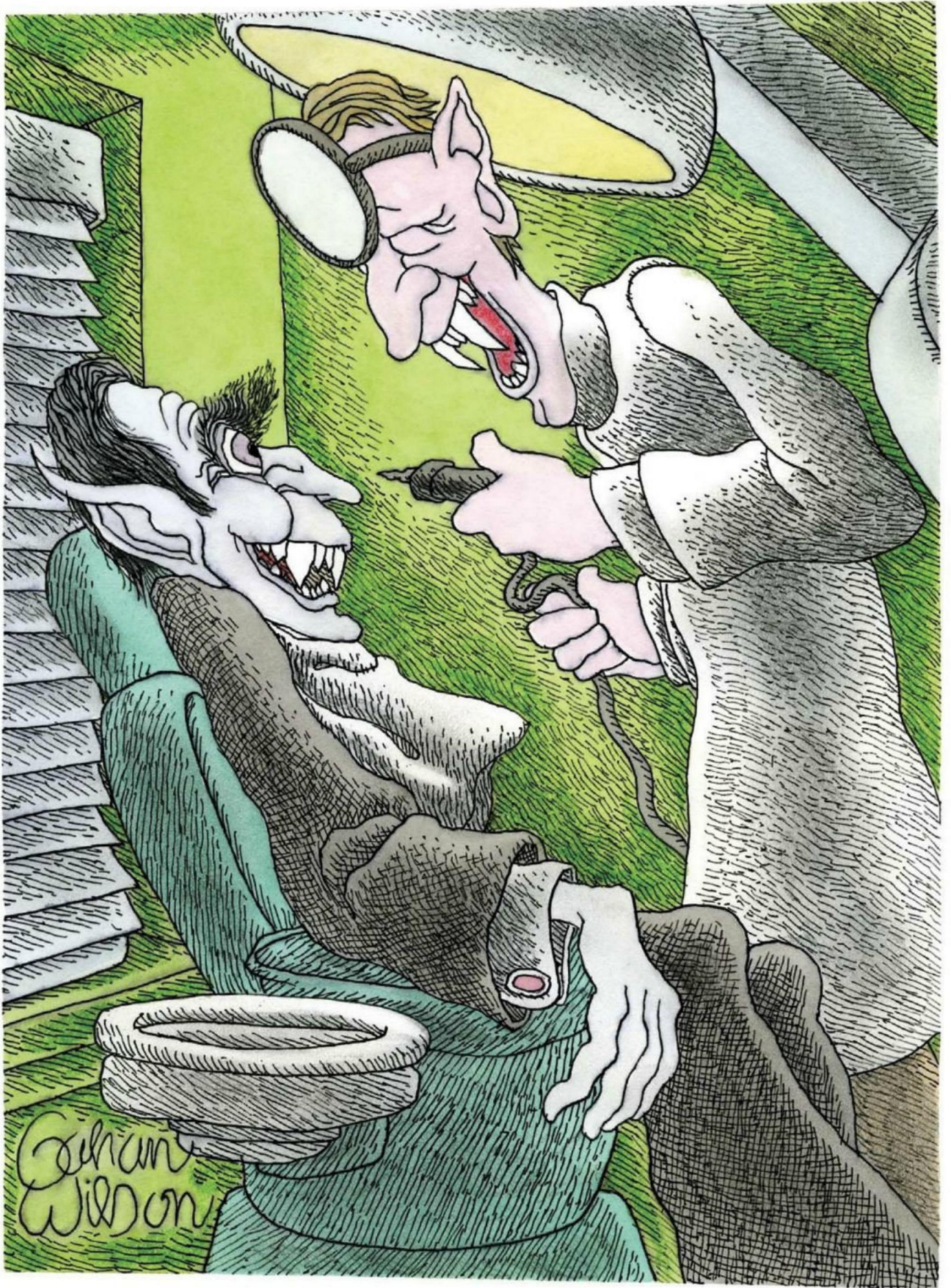
RITTER: At my first test shoot, the photographer sprayed me with Pam. They were black-and-white pictures in the dirtiest bathroom you've ever seen. It was super heroin chic. I've got to say, though, the pictures were dope. Looking back, I'm like, What was I doing? I was 15! That same day, at another test shoot with a Japanese photographer, they put me in a sheer bodysuit. So I have pictures of myself at 15 in a sheer shirt sitting underneath a table. I mean, the pictures are beautiful and artistic, but it's weird to put your 15-year-old in a job where basically you could see my boobs.

Q7

PLAYBOY: Do you regret that now?

RITTER: At the time I didn't think about it, because kids don't. They say your brain doesn't develop fully until you're 25. When kids do crazy stuff, *(continued on page 153)*





"Don't worry, Count—you came to the right dentist!"



The Great Summerbund Steeplechase

IT'S ALL JUST ENOUGH TO SCARE THE HORSES.
IT DID SCARE THE HORSES

We were riding the full championship course, all four kilometers, and it was late in the day when a rhythm had been achieved and the noble steed Far

Cry was rolling like a poem. I was thinking perhaps we'd have a chance this year at the steeplechase championship, when we came up through the Kendrick's swale and crossed Biggleston Woods, through which you have to duck twice, and Far Cry took the low stone wall there. Our team had had a magnificent outing, and I had ridden last following the measured and powerful flow of Graham Hoosh on Curdler and Felicia Rungbell on Pegasus and the dear Wilda Bloom on Sawtooth. There are times riding when it feels as if your mount has floated up to a stopping in the sheer air and the earth is galloping apace underneath

you. It felt like we had flown most of the way. In the final kilometer I had pushed Far Cry to the front and as we jumped the wall, it was I who saw the body before Far Cry had come to ground, and when he saw it he stalled on his front feet as if to reverse and he sent me up his neck to the

bridle, but I held on. Pegasus stopped short of the wall and the other two horses pulled up and stood there like students of the scene and I saw their eyes go wide and their nostrils flare. It was as if they knew. It scared Pegasus and Curdler and Sawtooth and Far Cry so that we had to dismount there in

the last shadows of Flogmeadow and walk them home, horses sweating in the mist.

It doesn't take long for people in a village like this one to become alarmed, seriously alarmed and frightened, when the authorities, such as they are, commence throwing the word *exsanguinated* around. Just to hear *(continued on page 134)*

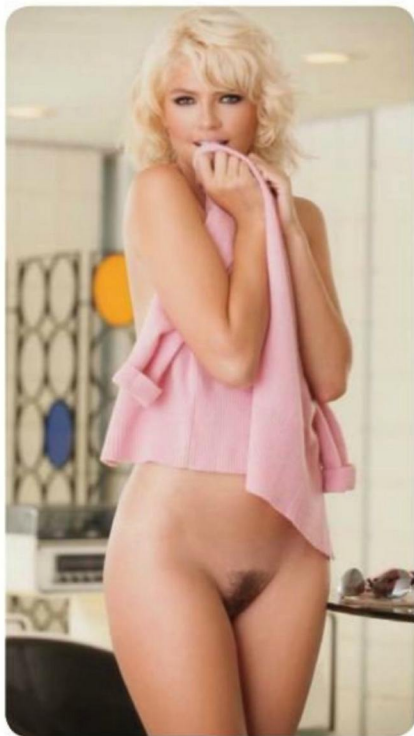
Fiction by
Don Carlson

Illustration by **Mare Burckhardt**

Where the Music Takes Her

Miss November dances to her own beat

Love, for Miss November Britany Nola, has a certain sound. It might be the rasp of an old turntable needle or the moan of a bluesy guitar. Britany is a music fanatic. "I can't live without music," says the 21-year-old vinyl-loving, music-blogging knockout. Born to a black dad and white mom (yes, she is "a person of color," as she says), she grew up in homes where "you couldn't walk in without Motown, jazz or Muddy Waters blasting," she says. "My dad would always sing me to sleep with Temptations songs. Older music, like that and Bob Dylan, I adore. It was made at a time when we were fighting for something, and you can hear it in the delivery." Today Miss November is an international model, her look a smashing mash-up of Michelle Williams and Debbie Harry. She has completed acting in her first film, *American Ecstasy*, and is living in L.A. It's best to admire Britany's photos while listening to music. A Temptations song will do—"Isn't She Pretty," perhaps. More like "Ain't Too Proud to Beg."







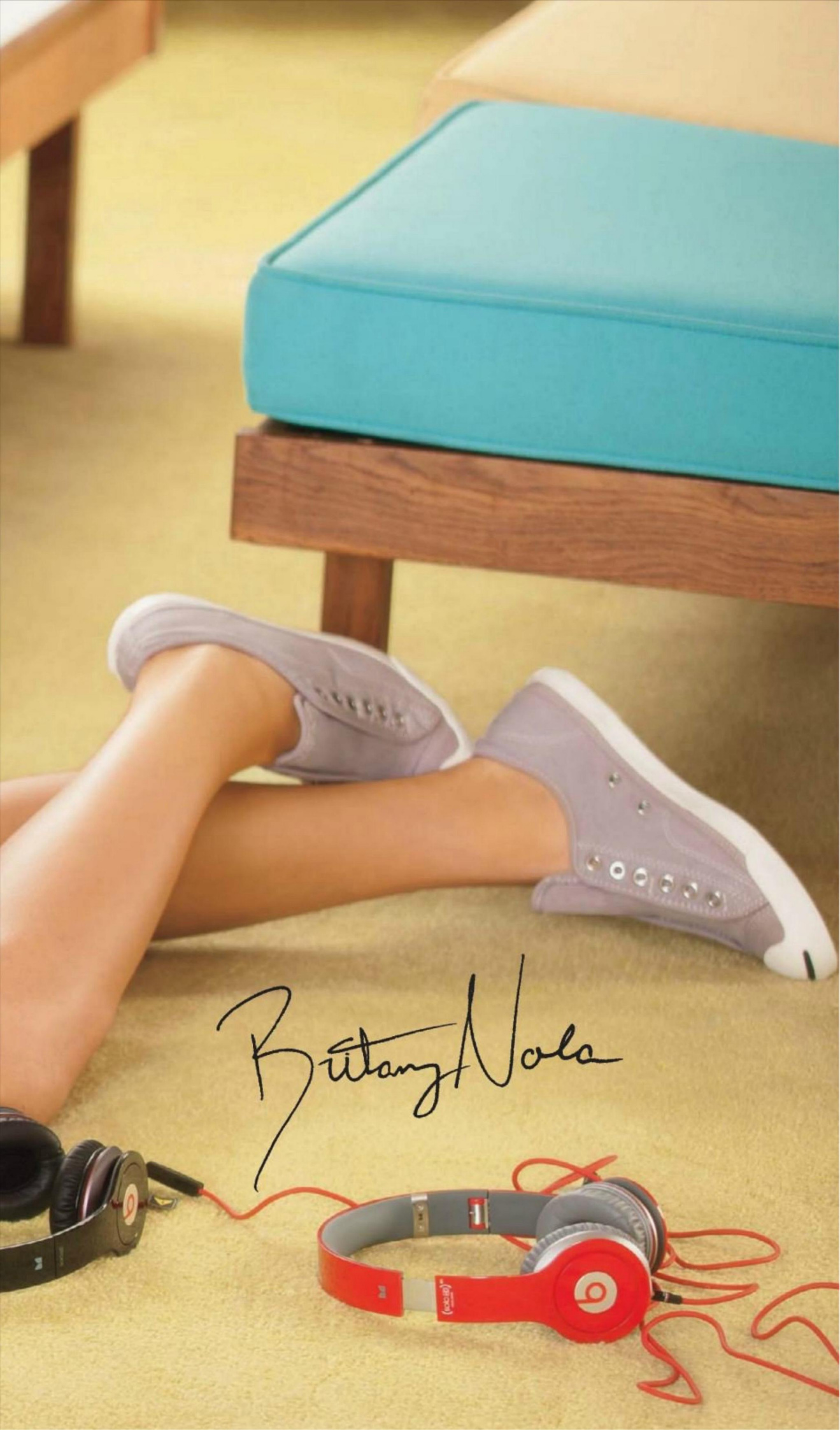


MISS NOVEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH







Britany Nola

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Britany Nola
BUST: 34B WAIST: 26" HIPS: 36"
HEIGHT: 5'9" WEIGHT: 125

BIRTH DATE: 4/12/91 BIRTHPLACE: Ontario, Canada

AMBITIONS: To Challenge, Change and inspire our Society through my writing, acting and modeling.

TURN-ONS: A man with passion and intelligence who is Challenging and difficult and makes me question everything.

TURNOFFS: An intimidated man full of insecurities who is easily embarrassed. A follower. What else?

Oh yes! I loathe arrogant egocentrics with nary a hint of humor.

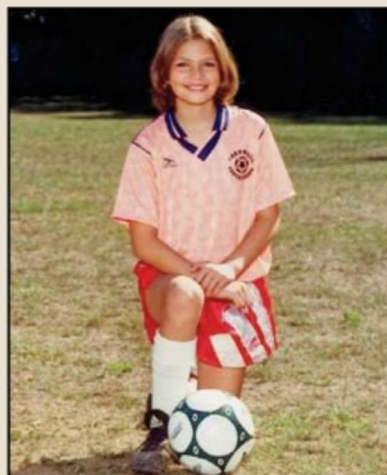
MEN OF MY DREAMS: Peter Fonda, Jeremy Irons, Gene Wilder and Paolo Nutini (who should give me a call!).

THE BOOK I LOVE MOST: Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov

WARNING: If we meet, expect strange yet fun, random bouts of energy. I'm inordinately fond of drinking red wine and having deep philosophical conversations with myself. We are not machines!



They call me...
the Big Teeth.



Goalie:
Protect this house!



Halloween 2011,
Little Lamb Chop.



See more of Miss November at
playboy.com.



PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Give it to me!" a girlfriend shouted at her lover. "I'm so fucking wet, give it to me now!"

"You can scream all you want," he said, "but with manners like that I'm never going to give you the umbrella."

A Japanese businessman visiting New York City stopped at a bar and told the bartender that he would like "a Stoli with a twist."

The bartender replied, "Once upon a time...."

Did you know that if you put your ear against a stranger's ear, you can hear them say, "What the fuck are you doing?"

According to research, sex during pregnancy is always safe—unless your wife comes home.



A state trooper pulled over a biker and after inspecting his license and registration informed him that he was going to have to spend the night in jail.

"What's the charge?" the biker demanded.

"None," replied the officer. "It's free."

What is the difference between an anal thermometer and an oral thermometer?

The taste.

A father bought a lie-detecting robot that slaps you if you lie. He decided to test it out on his son at supper.

"Where were you last night?" he asked.

"I was at the library," the son replied. The robot slapped the son.

"Okay, I was at a friend's house," the son admitted.

"Doing what?" the father asked.

"Watching a movie," the son replied. "*Toy Story*." The robot slapped the son.

"Okay, it was porn!" cried the son.

"That's disgusting," the father yelled. "When I was your age, I didn't even know what porn was." The robot slapped the father.

The mother laughed and said, "He certainly is your son!" The robot slapped the mother.

A man walked in on his stepdaughter pleasuring herself with a cucumber.

"Oh God, that's disgusting!" he yelled. "I was going to eat that, and now it's going to taste like cucumber."

Bellhop, handle my bag!" a pompous man said upon arriving at a hotel.

So the bellhop felt up his wife.

How was last night?" a man asked his friend.

"Well, my wife met me at the front door wearing a sexy negligee," the friend answered.

"That's great," the man said.

"Actually it wasn't," the friend said. "She was just coming home."

A man found himself in an airport interrogation room. "What kind of pervert are you?" the TSA agent asked him.

"I was just following instructions," the man said. "The screener told me, 'If you have anything in your pants, you have to take it out.'"



Alloy Neiman

A woman nagged her boyfriend into getting a circumcision. As he nervously awaited the procedure in the hospital, a nurse approached him and said, "Don't worry. It won't be long now."

A mother decided to have "the talk" with her son. After she finished, the boy sat silently.

"Do you have any questions?" the mother asked.

"Yes. How about kittens?" the boy asked.

"In exactly the same way as with babies," answered the mother.

"Wow!" the boy exclaimed. "Daddy will fuck anything."

Send your jokes to Playboy Party Jokes, 9346 Civic Center Drive, Beverly Hills, California 90210, or by e-mail to jokes@playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.



"My name may be Charity, but it'll still cost you two beaver pelts."

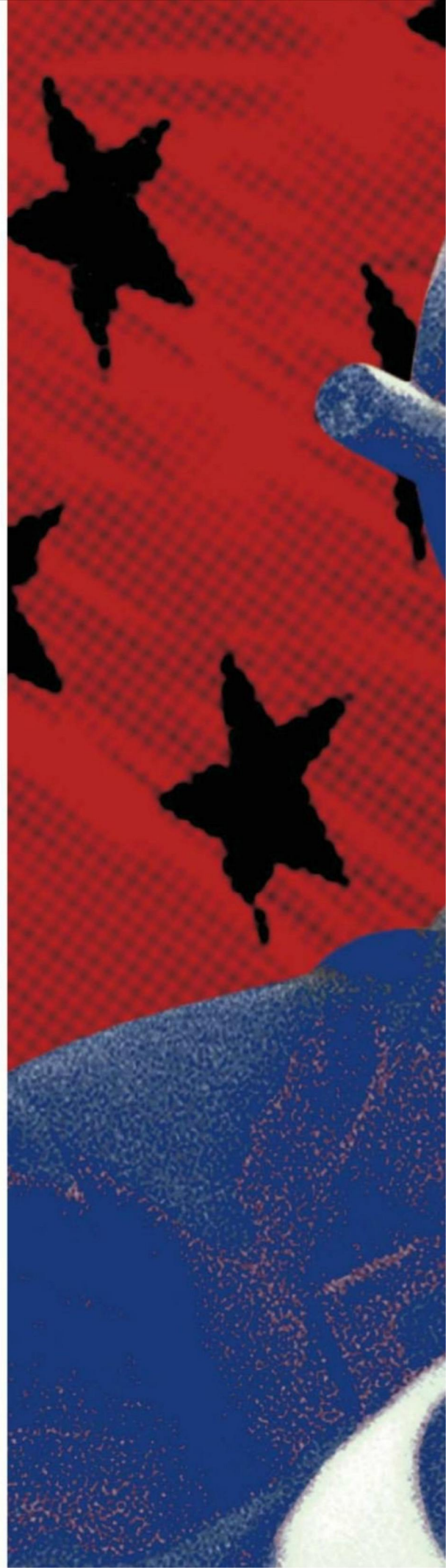
*Lee Atwater
practically invented
the negative campaign
tactics political ops
use today. That's just
one reason he's so
fascinating*

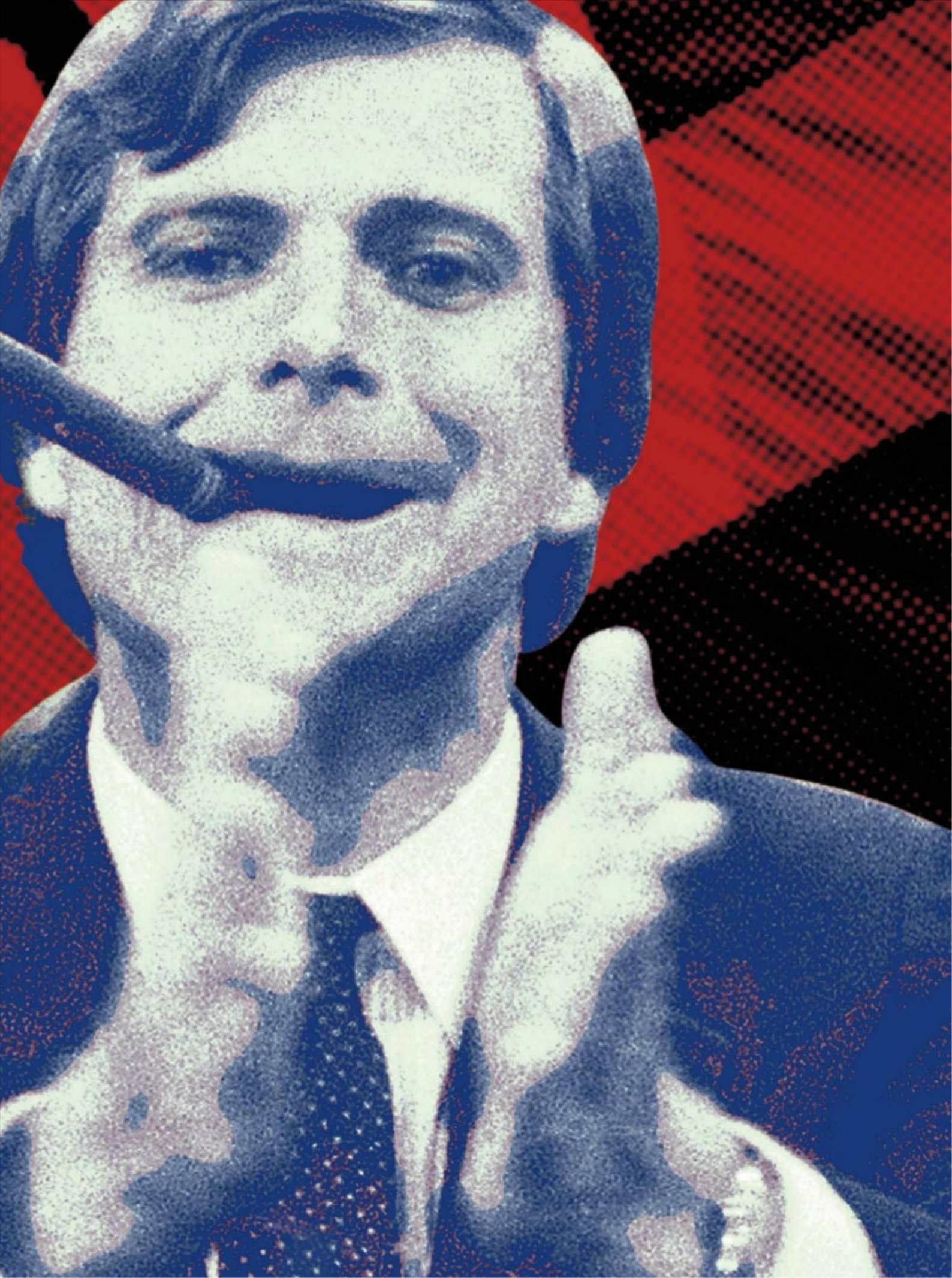
BY
J.C. GABEL

AFTER ATWATER

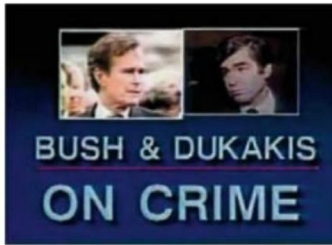
Before Atwater was a type of dirty trick, he was a man. That man, Harvey LeRoy “Lee” Atwater, was born in 1951 and raised in Aiken, South Carolina, son of a middle-class insurance adjuster. He became infamous for his politics—or, more accurately, how he played politics. He played them first for Ronald Reagan, helping him win election to the White House. He played them best for George H.W. Bush. As Bush’s campaign manager during the 1988 presidential race, Atwater devised a strategy that allowed the incumbent vice president to overcome a double-digit deficit to defeat his opponent, Massachusetts governor Michael Dukakis, whom Atwater unrelentingly portrayed as soft on crime, soft on national defense and soft on pretty much anything else that required strength.

And so Atwater the political scourge was born. To run a campaign as he did is to sling more mud than a pig farmer and to consider nothing out-of-bounds. Accusing a campaign of Atwateresque methods has become, in fact, a smear tactic all its own, effectively branding the candidate and everyone who works for him as either diabolical or





Atwater's greatest hits: a sanctioned Bush campaign ad (right) that eviscerated Michael Dukakis on defense, and screen shots (below) from the allegedly unsanctioned Willie Horton ad that slammed Dukakis on crime.



racist. IN FINAL STRETCH, MITT ROMNEY CHANNELS LEE ATWATER, read a recent headline from the *Washington Post* website. Atwater's name was mentioned only once more in the blog post because the meaning was clear: Romney had gone as negative and as nasty as any candidate could.

Whether Atwater the man was as negative and nasty as Atwater the dirty trickster depends largely on whom you ask—and on your party affiliation. Republicans tend to defend him; Democrats tend to demonize him. This much everyone can agree on: He was a larger-than-life personality (his love of playing the blues on guitar rivaled his love of politics), and he died far too young (a vicious form of brain cancer ended his life in 1991 when he was 40 years old).

There is no one else like him today. Atwater's playbook lives on, but the operatives and strategists who use it purposefully remain in the shadows, hidden behind the Supreme Court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, which makes it legal for dubious "grassroots" organizations to spend as much money as they want on a preferred candidate. In the new world of campaigns and elections, the dark arts of politics are practiced in strip malls and office complexes in nondescript suburbs by organizations and operatives with no official ties to the old party monopolies. Exhibit A: Carl Forti, a Buffalo native who distributed \$400 million in super PAC money to Republican causes during the 2012 election cycle. "The most influential political strategist of the 2012 campaign works out of an unmarked suite in an anonymous office park in suburban Virginia, a few floors above a Japanese-themed steakhouse," a July *New York Times* profile of Forti began. "He does not work for one of the presidential campaigns. He is not a pundit." Forti, of course, declined to speak to the *Times*—further proof that the blustery ways of political bogeymen like Atwater have gone the way of the brick-size cell phone.

Below, we have gathered a collection of friends, foes and interested observers to make sense of both Atwater and the post-Atwater world in which the Obama-Romney election will take place. To start, we look at the conservative causes that shaped Atwater and the contemporary GOP.

Rick Perlstein, author of *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* and *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*: "Atwater's tactics originated in the 1950s and

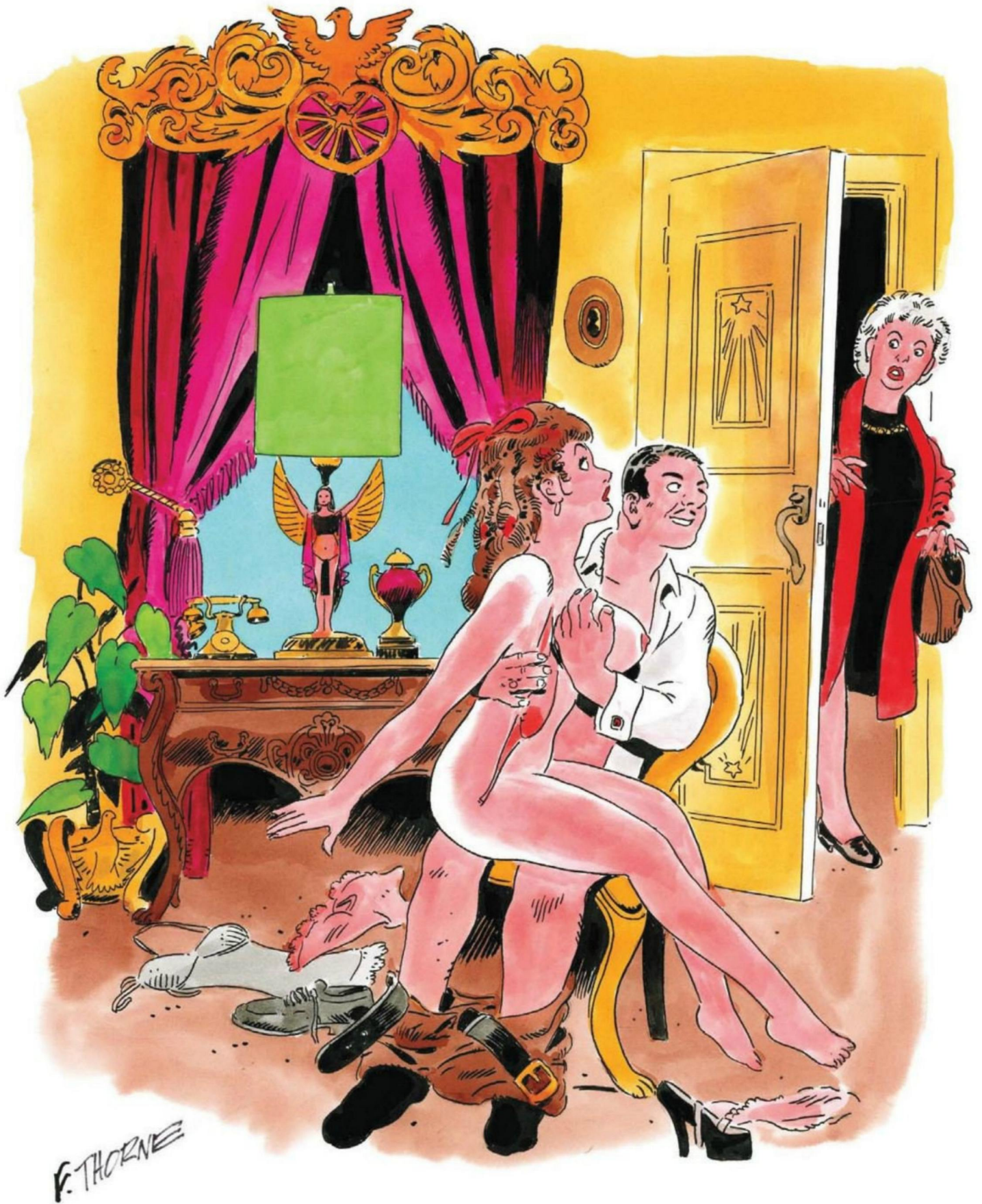
are written into the DNA of the modern conservative movement. The people who came of age politically at that time believed the Republican Party had been captured by Eastern liberal interests and were upset that the New Deal had become part of the American political structure. They also believed that the Democrats, along with former Republican president Dwight D. Eisenhower, had sold out to the Communists.

"A guy named F. Clifton White led the charge. He wrote in his memoirs about how he learned his political technique by observing Stalinists in the 1940s. Basically, he made their strategies his strategies: He stayed at meetings longer than anyone else in order to control the votes, and he employed diamond formations in crowds so his people were spread out enough to give the appearance of a greater amount of support for his positions.

"Republicans who followed White's techniques were fixing conventions while creating an illusion of democracy. In particular, members of the conservative group Young Americans for Freedom schemed to take over the National Student Association, a nonpartisan omnibus group of student organizations around the country. The YAF had decided the National Student Association was run by liberals—kind of like how you hear people today say the media is run by liberals. During a big National Student Association conference in Madison, Wisconsin, the YAF members all wore suspenders so they could determine who wasn't on their side. From there, they created what they called a 'middle-of-the-road caucus,' which allowed them to pass all these right-wing resolutions by claiming to be centrists.

"A few years later, the Nixon campaign was looking for people to do its dirty tricks and approached organizational movement conservatives before anyone else because they thought they were doing something that was moral. In their minds, eggs needed to be broken to make a freedom omelet. They believed the enemies—liberals and Communists—were trying to bring down civilization. Later on, they said as much. Jeb Magruder, Nixon's deputy campaign director, admitted to the Watergate Committee, 'Although I was aware they were illegal, we had become somewhat inured to using activities that would help us accomplish what we thought was a legitimate cause.'

"Republicans and Democrats have a different definition of the word *principle*. Republicans who do this kind of thing call themselves principled conservatives, meaning (continued on page 141)



F. THORNE

"You always say I don't understand you, Helen. So I hired Ruby here as an interpreter."

➔ FIFTY YEARS OF BOND FILMS FOREVER CHANGED THE DEFINITION OF THE MODERN MAN, AND *PLAYBOY* HAS BEEN WITH 007 EVERY STEP OF THE WAY—PUBLISHING IAN FLEMING, PHOTOGRAPHING THE BOND GIRLS AND CELEBRATING THE LAVISH LIFESTYLE. WITH *SKYFALL* IN THEATERS, WE PRESENT OUR 50-POINT GUIDE TO THE WORLD OF BOND.

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL GILLETTE



Being Bond

PLAYBOY'S GUIDE TO LIVING THE LIFE OF 007

Gillette



NO. 01

GO GRAY

► The opportunity to wear a tuxedo (or dinner suit, in true Bondian British parlance) sadly comes far too seldom. You're better off investing in a perfect gray suit, as Sean Connery first wore in *Dr. No* and Daniel Craig wears more athletically in *Skyfall*. Gray is the most versatile color, commanding respect in a meeting, looking good on a sunny or rainy day and smoothly transitioning to evening. Get a trim British cut with a nipped waist, two buttons and slim lapels to look your respectful, timeless and dashing best.



★ SEAN CONNERY IN *GOLDFINGER* (1964), WEARING THE ICONIC GLEN PLAID CONDUIT SUIT.



HOW TO WEAR IT

- 02. Keep it crisp.** A starched white dress shirt makes for a strong, graphic impression.
- 03. Be square.** Dress it up like a professional—not a peacock—with a cotton pocket square tucked into the breast pocket.

- 04. Tie the knot.** Put on a dark, solid-colored tie to look like you mean business. Take it to a more formal level with a silk tie—or go with a knit tie for texture.
- 05. Go beltless.** Bond's suit pants have adjustable tabs on the sides to keep the waistline slim and the look long and lean.

06. THE SUIT THAT STARTED IT ALL

*The Conduit Cut suit made by Savile Row tailor Anthony Sinclair established the Bond look for five decades. Sean Connery wears multiple variations in *Dr. No* and subsequent films. Daniel Craig's modern, muscled, parkour-practicing Bond wears more-fitted versions of the gray suit, now designed by Tom Ford.*

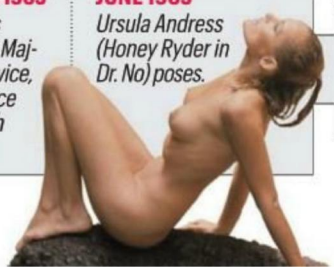
Nos. 07–26 Bond in Playboy

We published original Ian Fleming stories years before they hit movie theaters. Fleming opened up to us in the *Playboy Interview* (as did Sean Connery and Daniel Craig). And of course we undressed a bevy of beautiful Bond Girls....



APR. 1963–APR. 1965
PLAYBOY publishes Fleming's *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, *You Only Live Twice* and *The Man With the Golden Gun*.

JUNE 1965
Ursula Andress (*Honey Ryder* in *Dr. No*) poses.



NO.
27

INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MIXOLOGY

► James Bond essentially self-identified as a foodie and mixologist half a century before either trendy term was coined. He is particularly wide-ranging in his enthusiasm for alcohol, drinking Red Stripes in Jamaica, bossing around casino barmen to get the best cocktail possible and knowing his vintage preferences for Dom Pérignon. Here's how to mix it up like 007.

Bond's Best Cocktails

28. Americano. This Italian aperitif is the first cocktail the famous secret agent drinks in *Casino Royale*, Fleming's debut Bond novel.

1 ounce Campari
1 ounce sweet vermouth
Club soda
Lemon twist or orange slice for garnish

• Fill a rocks glass with ice; add Campari and sweet vermouth. Top with club soda and stir. Garnish with citrus slice or peel.

29. Mint julep. Bond keeps his cool with this cocktail at the Kentucky ranch of the eponymous evil henchman in *Goldfinger*.

8 mint leaves
1 tsp. brown sugar
2 ounces bourbon
1 mint sprig

• Muddle mint leaves with brown sugar in the bottom of a cocktail shaker. Add bourbon and stir. Pack a highball glass with crushed ice until overflowing. Strain bourbon into glass. Stir well. Garnish with mint sprig.



♦ DANIEL CRAIG
IN CASINO
ROYALE (2006).

30. Vesper. Bond creates this drink and then names it after his ill-fated love interest Vesper Lynd in *Casino Royale*.

3 ounces gin
1 ounce vodka
½ ounce Lillet Blanc
1 strip lemon peel

• Pour gin, vodka and Lillet into a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake. Strain into a martini glass. Twist lemon peel over the drink, then drop it in.

"I take a ridiculous pleasure in what I eat and drink." — James Bond, *Casino Royale*

31. KNOW YOUR CAVIAR

Although Bond loves beluga, don't try ordering it today. It has been banned in the U.S. because of overfishing. Tsar Imperial ossetra caviar from Petrossian is farmed but just as rich, briny and sweet. (\$170 for one ounce, petrossian.com)



NOV. 1965
Martine Beswick
(Zora in *From Russia With Love* and Paula Caplan in *Thunderball*).

NOV. 1965
Sean Connery
interview.

MAR. 1966
Octopussy
published.



APR. 1971
Lana Wood
(Plenty O'Toole in *Diamonds Are Forever*).



JULY 1973
Gloria Hendry
(Rosie Carver in *Live and Let Die*).

JUNE 1977
Barbara Bach
(Anya Amasova in *The Spy Who Loved Me*).

Kick Aston



► Despite the goofy automotive detours over the years—witness the submarine Lotus Esprit and the remote-controlled BMW 750iL—the Aston Martin stands out for how it perfectly reflects the Bond personality: stylish yet ferocious when need be. The Aston Martin DB5—by far Bond’s coolest wheels—returns in *Skyfall*.



33. 1964 DB5: \$550,000

The original from *Goldfinger* went for \$4.6 million at auction. For a comparatively paltry \$550,000 you can buy a show-quality version. Smoke screen, oil slick and ejector seat not included.

34. 2008 DBS: \$240,000

Daniel Craig spectacularly totals his in *Quantum of Solace*.

35. 2002 V12 Vanquish: \$80,000

The budget Bondmobile. For a low price—relative to other Aston Martins, that is—you can get a used version of the model Pierce Brosnan drives in *Die Another Day*.



MAY 1979
Catherine Serre
(Countess Labinsky in *Moonraker*).

JULY 1979
Corinne Cléry
(Corinne Dufour in *Moonraker*).



No. 36

GET SMART CASUAL

► Whether wearing white jeans on a motorcycle in Port au Prince or tailored swim trunks on the beach in Jamaica, Bond always dresses appropriately—and more often than not he dresses casually (but never in a Bermuda-shorts-touristy way). His clothes are always as classic as they are masculine. Here are three key pieces.



37. Tailored trunks. Only a man with Daniel Craig’s physique can get away with the skintight Grigioperla trunks he wears in *Casino Royale*. In *Skyfall* he wears Orlebar Brown Setter shorts, a trimmer take on American board shorts with more of an every-man appeal. (\$230, orlebarbrown.com)

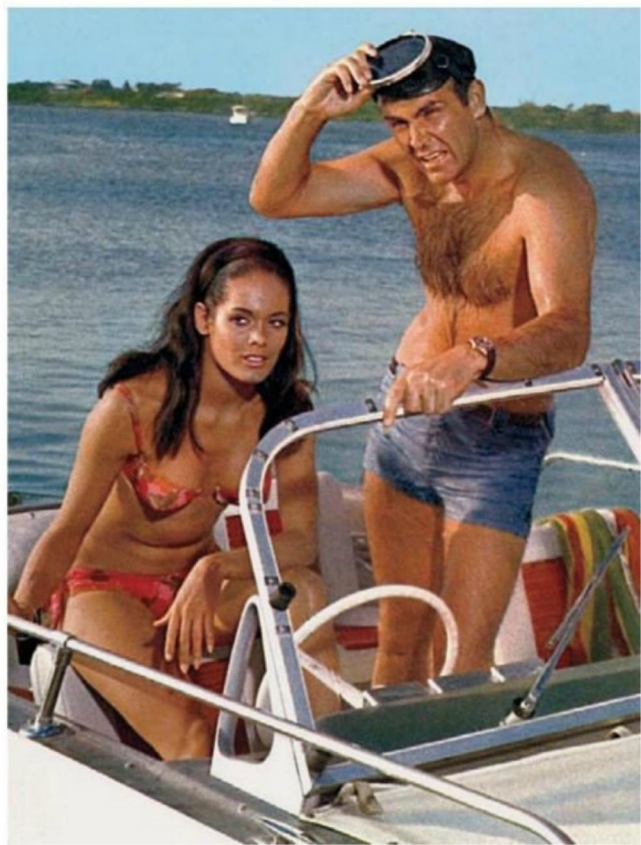


37

38. A fitted polo. The tropical-weight Sunspel Riviera polo features high-cut sleeves. (\$105, sunspel.com)

39. Timeless shades. Italian Persol 2720S sunglasses have dark polarized lenses. (\$175, persol.com)

♦ SEAN CONNERY IN *THUNDERBALL* (1965).





40

NO.
43

(AND 44)
WATCH YOURSELF

*Ian Fleming and Sean Connery's Bond both wore **Rolexes**. In *Skyfall* Daniel Craig carries on the dive-watch tradition with the new **Omega Seamaster Skyfall** edition. It has steely good looks, low-key double-O branding on the face and is waterproof to a tactical 600 meters. (\$6,500, omegawatches.com)*



Jet-Set Like James

THREE WAYS TO TRAVEL LIKE BOND

40. *GoldenEye, Jamaica.* Ian Fleming's former estate on the north shore of Jamaica remains the spiritual home of Bond. Today it's a luxury resort worthy of the man himself. While you can book a stay in one of the numerous cottages, the best room by far is the beachside Fleming villa, where the author wrote many of the 007 novels. Be sure to visit nearby



41



42

James Bond Beach, where scenes from *Dr. No* were filmed.

41. *Villa del Balbianello, Italy.* One of the most serene moments in the Bond franchise takes place on the lawn of this 18th century villa on Lake Como: Bond confesses his devotion to Vesper Lynd while recuperating from a savage beating at the hands

of supervillain Le Chiffre. The villa is open to the public in the summer.

42. *Casino de Monte Carlo, Monaco.* This belle epoque casino in Monaco is the embodiment of the gaming glamour of Bond's world. You can play his favorite card game, chemin de fer, but be sure to dress the part: The casino has a strict dress code, and you must wear a jacket after eight P.M.



JAN. 1981
Barbara Bach poses a second time.

JUNE 1981
Lynn-Holly Johnson (Bibi Dahl in *For Your Eyes Only*).



MAR. 1982
Barbara Carrera (Fatima Blush in *Never Say Never Again*).

FEB. 1983
Kim Basinger (Domino Petachi in *Never Say Never Again*).

JULY 1985
Grace Jones (May Day in *A View to a Kill*).



POP A TOP

► Because man cannot live on martinis alone, sometimes popping a top is all that's required to slake your thirst. Three bottles you should buy.



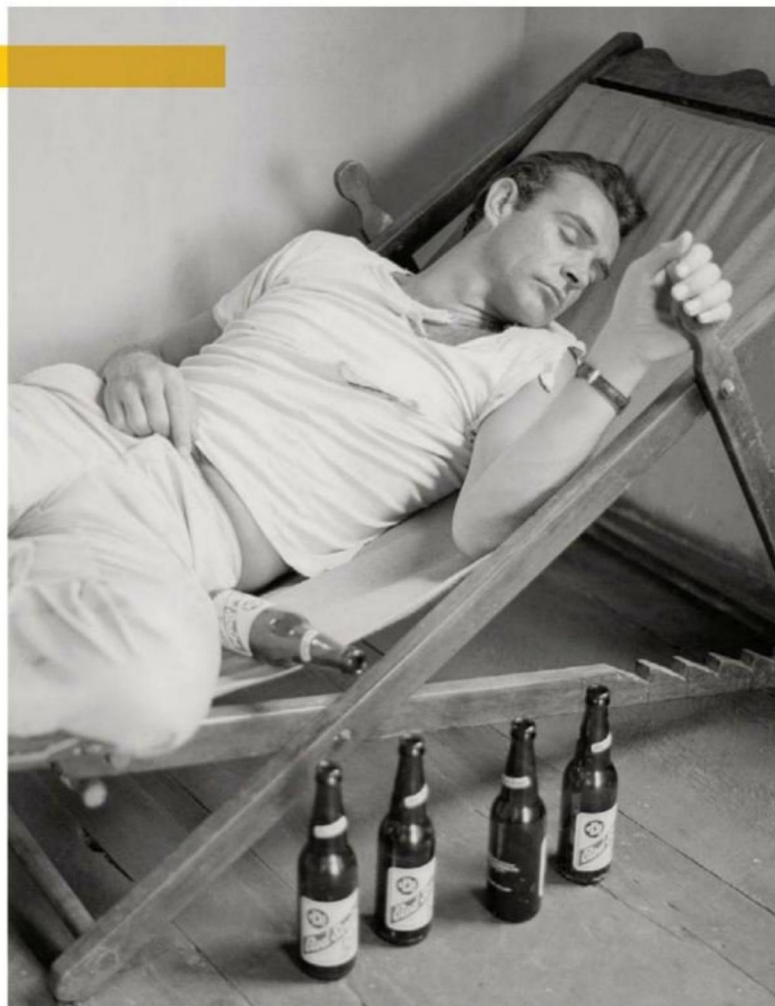
45. Bollinger. While Bond loves expensive vintage Dom Pérignon, he also enjoys nonvintage Bollinger, which is priced at a more palatable \$55.



46. Red Stripe. Bond drinks this classic Jamaican beer at a bordello in the novel *The Man With the Golden Gun*. His sidekick Quarrel quaffs it beachside in *Dr. No*.



47. Perrier. In the story "From a View to a Kill," Fleming writes that Bond believed "expensive soda water was the cheapest way to improve a poor drink."



► SEAN CONNERY STEPS OUT OF CHARACTER AND TAKES FIVE—RED STRIPES, THAT IS. AND HE STILL MANAGES TO LOOK COOL.



Bond Market

► Round out your arsenal with these spy-worthy gadgets and gear you can actually use in the real world.



48. WITH THIS SMARTPHONE, WHO NEEDS Q?

The functionality of Minox subminiature cameras, GPS tracking systems and wiretapping technology has made its way into the Sony Xperia T, Bond's official phone in *Skyfall*. It's suitably sleek and black with a 13-megapixel camera and superwide 4.6-inch screen.



49. SHOOT TO THRILL.

While the 7.65mm Walther PPK is the gun most closely associated with Bond, the lesser-known LP53 is within reach for most of us. This long-barreled pistol—brandished by Sean Connery on the poster for *From Russia With Love*—is actually an air-powered pellet gun. You can sometimes find used models on gun-collector sites for less than \$500.



50. RIDE A BIKE.

If you can't afford an Aston Martin, get the new Honda CRF250R motocross bike, one of which Bond commandeers in *Skyfall*. We're not saying you should take a shortcut across car roofs during your morning commute, but it's nice to know that if you need to you could. (\$7,420, powersports.honda.com)

SEP. 1987

Maryam d'Abo (Kara Milovy in *The Living Daylights*).

FEB. 1998

Daphne Deckers (PR agent in *Tomorrow Never Dies*).



JAN. 1999

PLAYBOY publishes *Midsummer Night's Doom*, a short story in which Bond and Hef meet in an adventure.

DEC. 2004

Denise Richards (*Dr. Christmas Jones in The World Is Not Enough*).

NOV. 2008

Daniel Craig interview.





1



2



4



3



5

STEEL THIS WATCH

GOLD HARD STEEL IS THE MATERIAL OF CHOICE FOR PERFORMANCE WATCHES—FROM DIVERS TO DRIVERS AND BEYOND

1. The Gold Standard

Rose-gold details elevate this watch named for the Carrera Panamericana Mexican endurance race. *Tag Heuer Carrera Calibre 1887, \$5,800*

2. Timeless Style

A dapper, low-profile design makes this self-winder perfect for an interview at Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce. *Hamilton Intra-Matic, \$895*

3. Fly Right

Inspired by the golden age of travel, this aviator features luminescent numbers. *Bell & Ross BR 126 Sport, \$4,500*

4. Sun Dial

This watch merges a classic analog face with modern solar-powered technology. *Casio Edifice, \$150*



6



7



8



9



10

8. Solar Man
Solar powered and boasting a compass-style bezel, this watch is perfect for hikers. *Seiko Solar Alarm Chronograph*, \$395

9. The Minimalist
We love the simple matte blue face on this sleek and serious dive watch. *Oris Aquis Date*, \$1,850

10. Deep Impact
This impressive dive watch is waterproof to a James Cameron-worthy 2,000 meters. *Breitling Superocean Chronograph M2000*, \$5,350

5. Futurama
The steely good looks of this watch are a beautiful illusion; it's actually made of plasma-injected ceramic. *Rado D-Star*, \$2,595

6. Make a Splash
The blue face and cutouts on the bracelet make this reissue of a 1960s dive watch groovy, baby. *Tissot Heritage PR 516*, \$750

7. Dive Time
Aquaman up with this handsome dive watch that features oversized numbers and all the split-time functions you need. *Jorg Gray 9700-24*, \$750



Hef's Girlfriends

A Romantic Retrospective

You should know they all became his because he was nothing like they had imagined. The way he is—especially with females, those who seize his heart and all others who simply enter his orbit—has forever defied predictable expectation. Yes, for sure, he bravely helped free the world from sexual repression and societal hypocrisy. And yes, he boldly prefers to function in only pajamas (or less) rather than wear conventional clothes, but—and why should this be so hard to fathom?—where women are concerned (and no question, women are always his concern), he is the opposite of brash or bold. Or swaggering. Or even slightly slick. You wonder, then, what instead approximates the magnetic mixed-company comportment of our one and only original Mr. Playboy, of our legendary rebel icon whose sheer breadth of bedroom conquests has fueled mass fantasy across generations in the extreme plural? After all, as he himself has put forth, “I said a long time ago a lot of people buy the magazine for the articles, but it’s the Centerfolds they remember. And I think that’s

By **Bill Zehme**



Janet Pilgrim (1955) "Janet was a secretary at the Playboy offices in Chicago," says Hef. "She was our first girl-next-door Playmate. That's me standing in the doorway in the background."

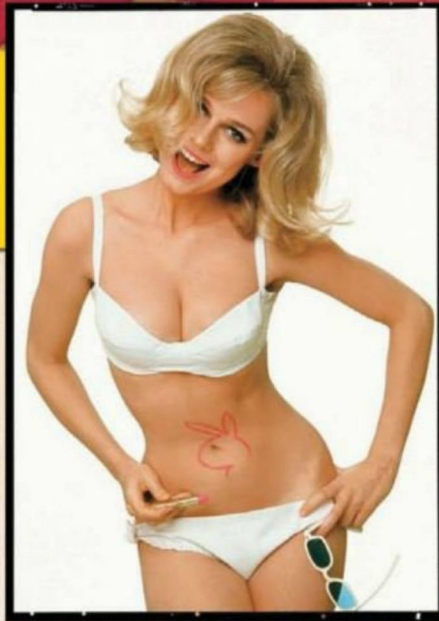
Joyce Nizzari (1958–1960)

"Joyce was a teenage model when we first met in Miami. She was one of our first Playboy Club Bunnies. We've stayed in touch, and she now works as a secretary for me at the Mansion more than half a century later."



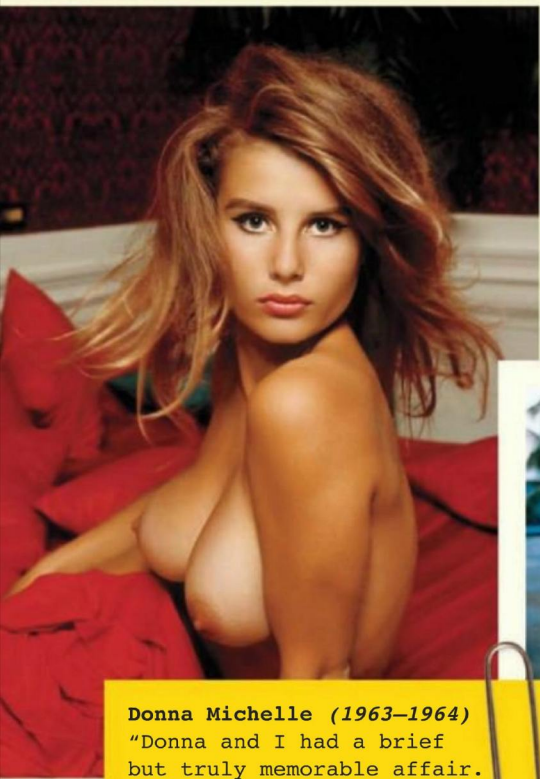
Cynthia Maddox (1961–1964)

"She was my cartoon editor in Chicago and our most popular cover girl in the 1960s, appearing on the cover five times."



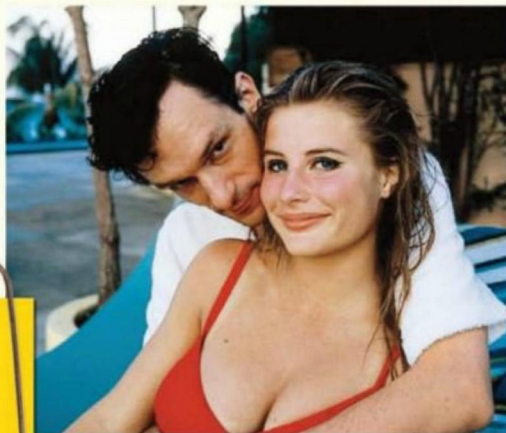
true in terms of my life—they remember all the pretty ladies." Meaning specifically his very own pretty ladies, as in, the collective coterie of preeminent regal consorts ever shimmering at his side throughout the decades (within camera range or, more blissfully, shrouded from it). Of course, no one will ever remember them the way he can and does, all things considered. Because, beyond the unique fame that accompanied their respective tenures as his most preferred company, each of them in turn fortified his spirit as nothing else ever would. Not that any of them, at least upon arrival in his world, could have foreseen how profoundly he would respond to their essence, how they would gain access to the secret holdings of that newly reinforced spirit—his selective stash of private dreams eternally golden and also thereby unashamedly and glamorously olden.

Still, it's not as though we haven't been plied with clues aplenty to the twinkling allure of the innermost Hefnerian spirit. Take, for example (please?), his trademark time-tested,



Donna Michelle (1963–1964)

"Donna and I had a brief but truly memorable affair. She was the most popular PMOY of the 1960s."





**Christa Speck
(1961–1962)**
"Christa was a special favorite of mine—and a favorite of our readers as well."

Double Trouble in Paradise

Just once upon a time, there co-existed two number one Hef ladies—perfect opposite dream girls, each of whom had simultaneously staked claim to his heart. "No question that it's possible to be in love with two women at the same time—I've been there," Hef concluded, invoking that high-flying, subdivided bedroom farce-a-thon he christened his Captain's Paradise, after the 1953 film wherein a sea captain played by Alec Guinness keeps a different lover in two ports. Hef's version: In spring 1971—three years into Hef's routine of uprooting himself from the Chicago Mansion for essential Los Angeles nestling with Barbi Benton, his first truly iconic Special Lady, who weeks earlier had discovered what became Playboy Mansion West—the luscious,

platinum-haired Karen Christy entered Hef's Chicago living room and also his heart. What ensued, until early 1974, racked up the air miles on Hef's black *Big Bunny* DC-9 as he made biweekly commutes to indulge each woman (and himself) while hiding all traces of one from the other. *Time* magazine blew his cover with a report that pictured him in both mansions, snuggled with the leading lady of each household, pronouncing him "long a two-of-everything consumer." Both women split, though Barbi returned for a couple more years. "In the movie," Hef lamented, "the arrangement ended in disaster, with both loves leaving him. How could I expect any better conclusion?"



Barbi Benton (1968–1976)
"Barbi was the most important romance of my life up to that time."



Hope Olson and Patti McGuire (1975–1979)
"We had some wild and wonderful times together."



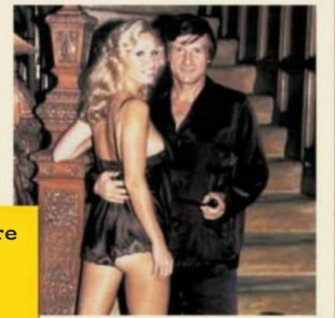
Lillian Müller (1975–1976)
"A Scandinavian stunner. We're still close."

Karen Christy
(1971–1974)

"Captain's Paradise!
A truly passionate
affair that came in
the middle of my rela-
tionship with Barbi."



Sondra Theodore
(1976–1981)
"A true girl
next door."



starry-eyed credo that will never go away: "My life," he will repeatedly tell you, "has been a quest for a world where the words to the songs are true." Sentimentalist supreme, he'll recite that idyllic refrain at any given opportunity—dreamily, liltily, dependably. He alludes, of course, to those heady if naive moon-June-swoon-croon tunes of his storied unyielding youth. But with due respect, you must eventually come to realize that the reason he keeps saying it is because he keeps meaning it, keeps questing for that illusory lyrical world, keeps seeking to stoke his perpetual schoolboy heart with fixes of seismic lovesick fluttering, fresh and pure. (For a college-era scrapbook he once adorned the margins around a photo of himself and his nubile date at a formal dance with a deftly hand-printed graffiti gush of sentimental song titles: "That's How Much I Love You, Baby," "I Got a Gal I Love," "When Am I Gonna Kiss You Good Morning?") With each successive infatuation, way back then and ever after, he would be serially reborn,



Shannon Tweed
(1981–1983)

"Shannon was a major
love, as well as a major
Playmate of the Year."



Carrie Leigh (1983–1987)

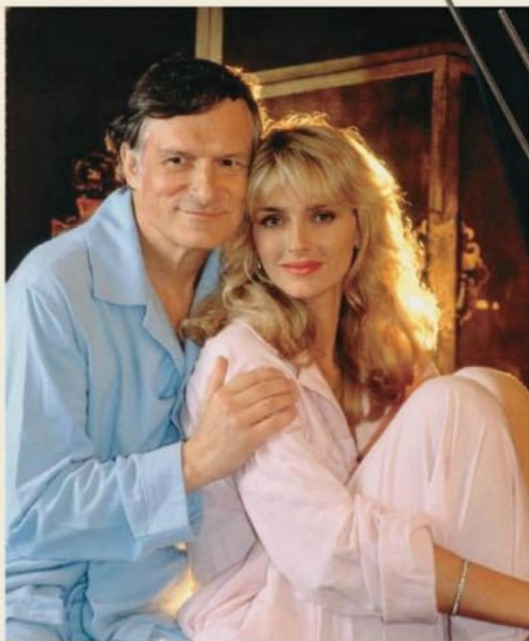
"She was trouble, but I was smitten."

reanimated, reinvigorated. "Hef was constantly falling in love, one girl at a time," recalled an old classmate pal many years later, "and would be smitten for maybe a month or so. If he wasn't in love, he felt incomplete and unhappy."

And so encapsulated the legacy at core: The boy who became father to the man launched his lifelong insatiable (if seemingly unrealistic) romantic questing very early on—with white-hot determination so inflamed that it would inevitably spark the creation of a certain Rabbit-Headed empire—never to cease or even taper off just a little. Except he eventually learned to lengthen his fleeting monthlong crushes of yore so as to stay happily smitten for years at a time (and usually, somehow, for always), thanks to the majestic wives of those most special ladies who would compose his sublime cavalcade of primary relationships. And who,

Kimberly Conrad (1988–1997)

"I married the girl, but it didn't last. We remain very close, and we have two great sons."





Sandy and Mandy Bentley (above) and Brande Roderick (right, 1998–1999)
 “They were a perfect antidote after the breakup of my marriage.”



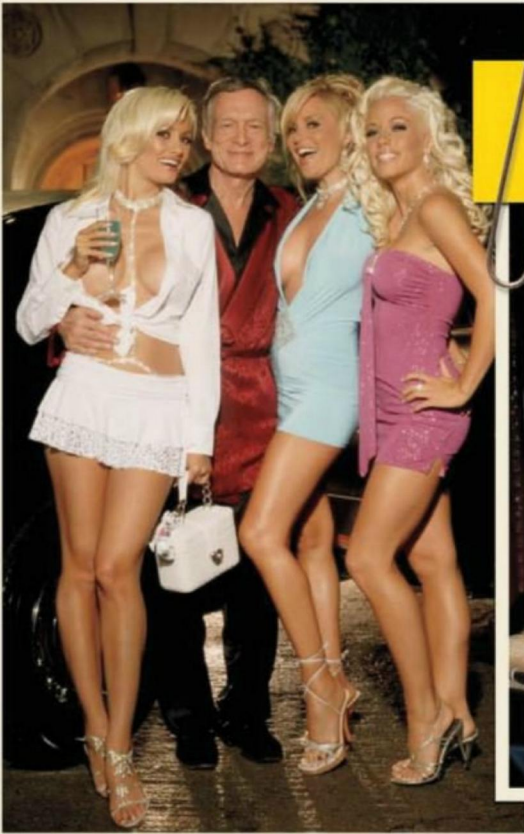
not coincidentally, are now being dangled here before your eyes to best illustrate what inspired the greatest smites of Hugh M. Hefner’s life. (Connoisseurship has its rewards, don’t it?) Indeed, long after he’d become the most famous sybarite mogul on the planet, he made clear that the only actual currency that mattered to him was love. “I’d rather meet a girl and fall in love, and have her fall in love with me, than earn another \$100 million,” he declared, minus any hyperbole, during a rare fallow-hearted period. (Such fallow periods for him never lacked in bedmates galore; rather, he’d just temporarily find himself lacking that singular requisite true-love mate over whom he could adoringly obsess day and night.) His radar, nevertheless, served him magnificently, and always his style upon target approach would impress each new candidate as courtly, attentive, debonair, authentic, whimsical, uncharacteristically patient and maybe even a tad shy—i.e., the sum parts of lethal charm. One lover’s testimony: “Whatever he was doing,



Tina Jordan (left, 2000–2001)
 “Tina was one of my favorites among the girls I was seeing at the turn of the century. There were seven full-time girlfriends at one time.”



Holly Madison (2001–2007), Bridget Marquardt (2002–2007) and Kendra Wilkinson (2004–2007) "The romance was as sweet as it seemed on *The Girls Next Door*, and I remain close to all three of them."



Shera Bechard (2011–2012)

"An elegant French Canadian."



**Anna Sophia Berglund
(2008–2012)**

"A sweet lady who helped
me over some bumpy spots."

he was charming me," averred Barbi Benton, perhaps his most indelibly classic lady love (1968–1976), who was an 18-year-old UCLA coed when they met. "He was wonderful and cute, even though I thought he was too old." (Theirs, by the way, was a mere 24-year age difference—which would melt away as have all such ever-broadening time chasms in his repertoire—but we'll get to that soon enough.)

Not insignificantly, one of his secretaries noted decades ago: "He imagined at every party that he would see a girl across a crowded room, their eyes would meet, violins would start to play, and he would feel that pit-a-pat." And typically, that's exactly how it has worked, right down to the onset of pit-a-pats. With Barbi, for instance, he spied her across the set of his *Playboy After Dark* TV series, and within hours she danced (continued on page 144)



Crystal Harris (above, 2008–2011/2012–)

"The runaway bride is back. We're happy,
but Chelsea Ryan and Trisha Frick are
here as well—just in case."



TALKING HEADS

(continued from page 77)

repudiated now fill the schedules on other channels. From Sunday morning to late night, TV is full of political talking heads. And the more those heads butt, the more viewers tune in.

Of the top 20 shows in all of cable news, 12 are entirely opinion based. The remaining eight showcase talking heads debating politics as the highlight of the broadcasts. Candidates and the people who run campaigns adapt based on what's on the air, making the shows themselves one giant transmission belt for national politics.

"The bottom line is it affects the way they run their campaigns," says Aram Bakshian, chief speechwriter in the Reagan White House and still a go-to for Republican politicians. As the recent GOP presidential-primary season showed, retail politics has moved from the streets of New Hampshire and the town halls of Iowa to TV studios, especially ones for cable news.

"It's the public square," says Tucker Carlson, who has worked at all three major cable news channels for extended periods and now edits the Daily Caller, a conservative website. "The internet is so atomized. How many places do liberals and conservatives frequent at the same time? Not that many. But people watch cable news shows they disagree with. They help create story lines that filter down to everybody."

For decades, the front page of the newspaper determined that night's TV news coverage. "You could always predict two of the top three stories on Walter Cronkite's evening news broadcast by scanning *The New York Times*," says longtime Washington TV producer Neal Freeman. "Now the talk shows drive the narrative."

Sometimes the talking heads can single-handedly affect candidate strategy, as when Hilary Rosen, a Democratic commentator employed by CNN, said on one of its news shows last April that Ann Romney "has actually never worked a day in her life." Both the Romney and Obama campaigns scrambled to exploit her remark.

While opinion journalism on TV is nothing new, its domination and reach are. Talking heads used to be bookends around real journalism and reporting, a colorful "button" to end a serious program such as *60 Minutes*. Now the bookends have replaced the books. And they are gaining more viewers than ever before.

I first got a sense of how this world worked back in 1994, when I was a researcher for Washington pundits Rowland Evans and Robert Novak. Between them they had three shows on CNN—the political interview program *Evans & Novak*, as well as *Capital Gang* and *Crossfire*, on which Novak would often appear as guest co-host. At the time, CNN had an almost total monopoly on TV

opinion journalism. One of the only other options was the syndicated *McLaughlin Group*. But in 1996, MSNBC launched, and shortly after, Fox News joined the ranks. It placed opinion-based journalism with a conservative tilt at the forefront of its coverage, a move that transformed the TV news business.

However, the shows that define MSNBC and Fox News—and increasingly the entire world of successful broadcast journalism—have their origin in programs that aired when there were only three networks on the dial.

Jane, you ignorant slut. Anyone who had a pulse in the 1970s will remember that catchphrase from *Saturday Night Live*. The Dan Aykroyd–Jane Curtin sketch on "Weekend Update" is arguably better remembered than the *60 Minutes* segment it was sending up, "Point/Counterpoint," which featured journalists Nicholas von Hoffman, Shana Alexander and James J. Kilpatrick. While the *60 Minutes* segment was one of the first regular showcases of commentators going head-to-head, the *SNL* parody echoed the kind of fiery ad hominem mockery that had blazed on the TV screen a decade earlier.

A man named David Susskind lit the match. He was the Harvard-educated host of the New York talk show *Open End* who first invited novelist Gore Vidal and *National Review* editor William F. Buckley Jr. to discuss politics for two hours on his show in September 1962. Their confrontation was so compelling that Susskind took them on the road with him for his coverage of the 1964 Republican National Convention in San Francisco. Susskind was like a "zookeeper trying to prevent two hissing adders from killing each other," wrote one reviewer. There was nothing else like Buckley and Vidal on serious television.

The success of their Susskind appearances led to the 1966 debut of *Firing Line*, a weekly political-debate show hosted by Buckley. *Firing Line* would eventually have a longer TV run than *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*. Buckley possessed the essential ingredient needed to be a political talking head: "The man could flat-out talk," says Freeman, the show's first producer.

Buckley squaring off against such ideological adversaries as Allen Ginsberg, Norman Mailer and, yes, Hugh M. Hefner on *Firing Line* was scintillating, but the combination of Buckley and Vidal on the Susskind show was explosive. In 1968 executives at ABC News wanted some of the fireworks for their national political convention coverage. They thought Buckley and Vidal would make the perfect antagonists and hired them as guest commentators.

"Shut up a minute," said Vidal. "No, I won't," replied Buckley. In a week already filled with skirmishes between Vietnam

war protesters and policemen at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, this exchange still astonished the estimated 10 million viewers who were watching.

It ranks as one of TV's most infamous debates—Vidal calling Buckley a "crypto-Nazi" and Buckley replying, "Now listen, you queer...I'll sock you in your goddamn face." This was something viewers didn't get from ABC News anchors and correspondents. As legendary as Buckley vs. Vidal is today (more than 750,000 views on YouTube), what's lost from the history is how groundbreaking it was. The topics they covered prior to their 70 seconds of fury—law and order, fascism, freedom of the press and assembly—were unusual for network news coverage. It sent a rush of adrenaline through millions of TV screens across the country. "We put on a good show," said Vidal later that night.

His words were more than descriptive; they were prophetic.

Let's never forget we're the real story, not them. A line from James L. Brooks's 1987 film *Broadcast News*, it was meant to be a reporter's sarcastic critique of a colleague who injects himself into a news story. It was also a jab at the changing tide in news, as style replaced substance and personalities were overtaking the stories they were telling.

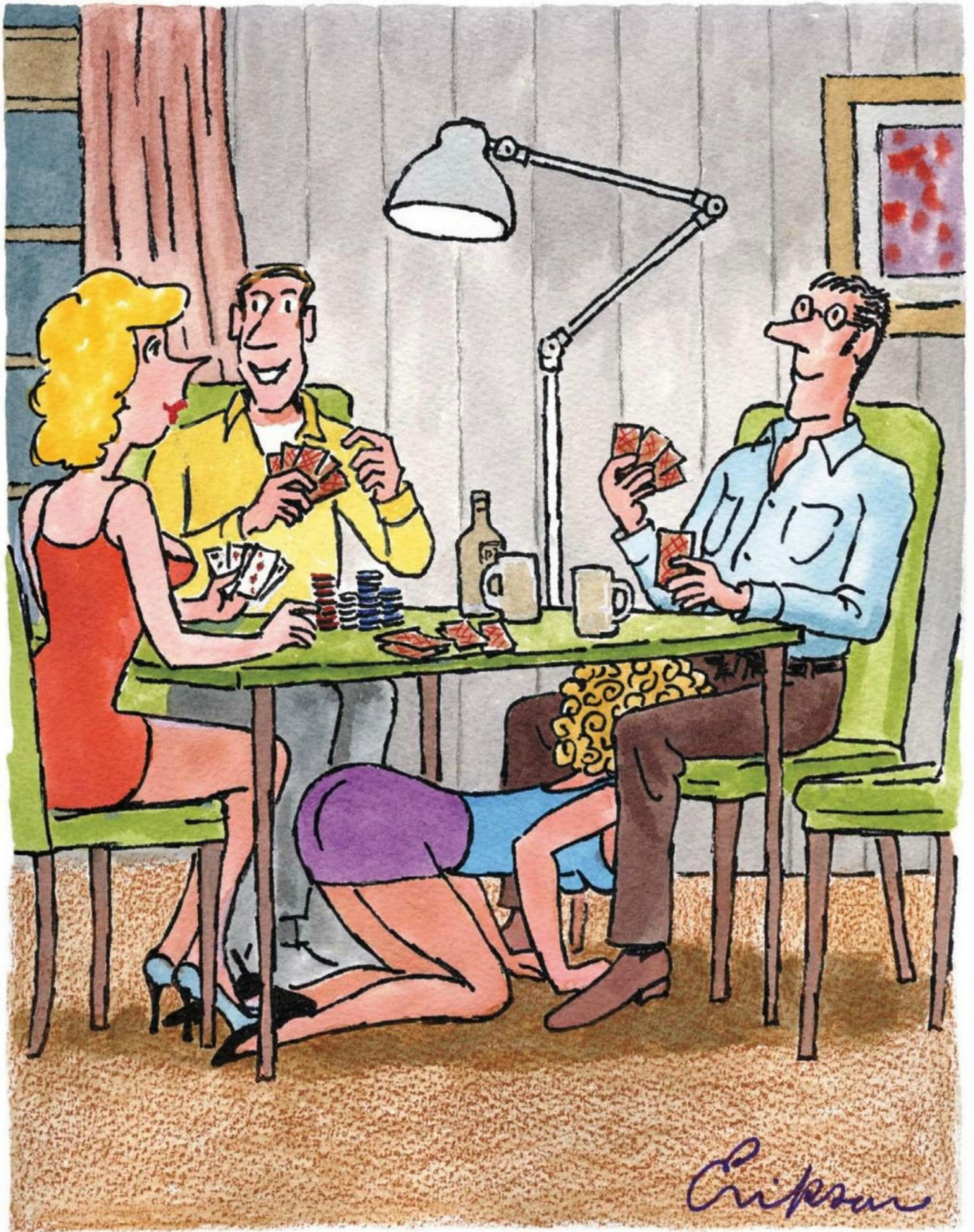
That's certainly the case for Glenn Beck, whose apocalyptic rants instigated his departure from Fox News; the bombastic Keith Olbermann, who can't hold on to a job *anywhere*; and even Anderson Cooper, who has shed tears while covering tragedy. But while those men exemplify how "personality" can overshadow the news, *Hardball*'s Chris Matthews tries to use the force of personality to get closer to the truth.

Matthews doesn't suffer fools. Especially partisan mouthpieces.

"No BS," he tells me. "My contempt for talking points is manifest. You may see them elsewhere—on the network even. But they're not getting on our show."

He is wise to talking points because he used to write them. During the 1970s and 1980s, Matthews spent 15 years in Democratic circles, including stints as a speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter and top aide to Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill. "It's flackery, and I don't want it," Matthews says. "It's inconclusive and incomplete and self-serving and I like to explode it."

The Chris Matthews viewers watch on TV is exactly like the Chris Matthews of real life. *Hardball* isn't an act. Matthews is a Democrat who admitted "I felt this thrill going up my leg" when he listened to Barack Obama speak in 2008. But Matthews is also the same man who, in the span of about two minutes on *Hardball*, asked Obama supporter Kirk Watson, a Democratic state senator in Texas, eight



"Good old Wally has lost all night, but is he bitching and moaning? Not a bit of it."

separate times if he could name anything Obama had accomplished in the U.S. Senate. “No, I’m not going to be able to do that tonight,” said Watson.

Interviews like the one with Watson “can be difficult for the audience,” says Matthews. “They might say, ‘Why does he keep homing in on this?’ And my answer is, ‘Don’t come on the program unless you’re willing to answer the question and be exposed if you’re not answering it.’ I think some of the network interview shows can’t go that far because they’re trying to reach a broader audience of nonpolitical people who don’t want to hear frisson. They don’t want to hear conflict, and I’m willing to expose the conflict.”

Still, Matthews is no stranger to becoming the story himself. In perhaps the most infamous incident on *Hardball*, Senator Zell Miller, Democrat of Georgia, hollered at Matthews, “Get outta my face,” while being questioned at the Republican National Convention in 2004. “If you’re going to ask me a question, step back and let me answer,” Miller said. “I wish we lived in the day where you could challenge a person to a duel!”

After working with Evans and Novak, I helped produce a weekly Washington talk show that aired on PBS. When booking guests, I realized it was vital to get someone capable of providing just the right sound bite to clarify an issue or provoke a debate. (Conflict was especially good.) Later, I became acquainted with some of the titans of the craft.

I first met Tom Braden, the original co-host of *Crossfire*, at the Jockey Club in Washington. (He died in 2009.) As I got to know Braden, he would tell me about working with Buchanan, his friendship with Bobby Kennedy and the time he was in the same room with Roy Cohn, Joseph McCarthy’s chief counsel.

“What did you say to him?” I asked.

“I tapped him on the shoulder and said, ‘Is that you? Is that really you? I want to get a good look. You ought to be ashamed.’”

I caught up with Michael Kinsley, who had been editor of *Harper’s* and *The New Republic* before signing on as Braden’s successor on *Crossfire*. “I did it for the glamour, the money and all the obvious disgraceful reasons,” Kinsley said of his TV career. (After *Crossfire*, he founded Slate on the web and edited the opinion pages of the *Los Angeles Times*.)

Kinsley told me about the time Senator Al D’Amato, the Republican from New York, was a guest. “He was calling me a communist and all that, and then the break comes and he looks over at me and says, ‘How am I doing?’”

Author Barbara Howar is so entertaining when she talks about politics that when she lived in Georgetown in the 1970s, Johnny Carson frequently invited her on *The Tonight Show* to get her take on Washington. When I asked Howar, now living in Los Angeles, about those days, she said, “I would just try to get my foot out of my mouth before I shot myself in it.”

I remember one summer afternoon last year with Ann Coulter at the Beach Club

in Santa Monica. Coulter was daydreaming about a West Coast TV network for conservatives. We gossiped about some of her fellow talking heads, such as publishing giant Mort Zuckerman, who supposedly has his own TV truck that follows him around so he can go on the air anytime a producer calls.

Coulter appears on TV so often that she has her own earpiece. She carries it in her purse in case Fox calls on short notice. After standing next to Coulter while she was in makeup and then waiting for what seemed to be an interminable amount of time for her to be interviewed on *Hannity* via satellite from the Fox News bureau in Los Angeles, I can attest to one certainty: She hates doing taped interviews almost as much as she loathes critics of Joseph McCarthy. She wants the roller coaster that live TV provides.

Even after being around these expert practitioners, I wondered about the X factor that guarantees success as a talking head. I knew I needed to speak to the master, Patrick Buchanan.

“No one has logged more hours than he has,” producer Tammy Haddad, once the show runner for *Larry King Live* and *Hardball*, told me.

I first became acquainted with Buchanan in 1992, when he was running for president. As editor of the campus magazine at Wake Forest University, I invited him to speak while he was campaigning through the South. (In the late 1990s I also helped Buchanan research two of his books, *The Great Betrayal* and *A Republic, Not an Empire*.)

When I inform him that I am writing about political talking heads and want to ask him some questions, he invites me to the set of *The McLaughlin Group*, the weekly political talk show moderated by John McLaughlin. (When it was parodied on *Saturday Night Live*, Dana Carvey became McLaughlin and made him more famous.) I meet Buchanan at the studio in the Tenleytown section of D.C.

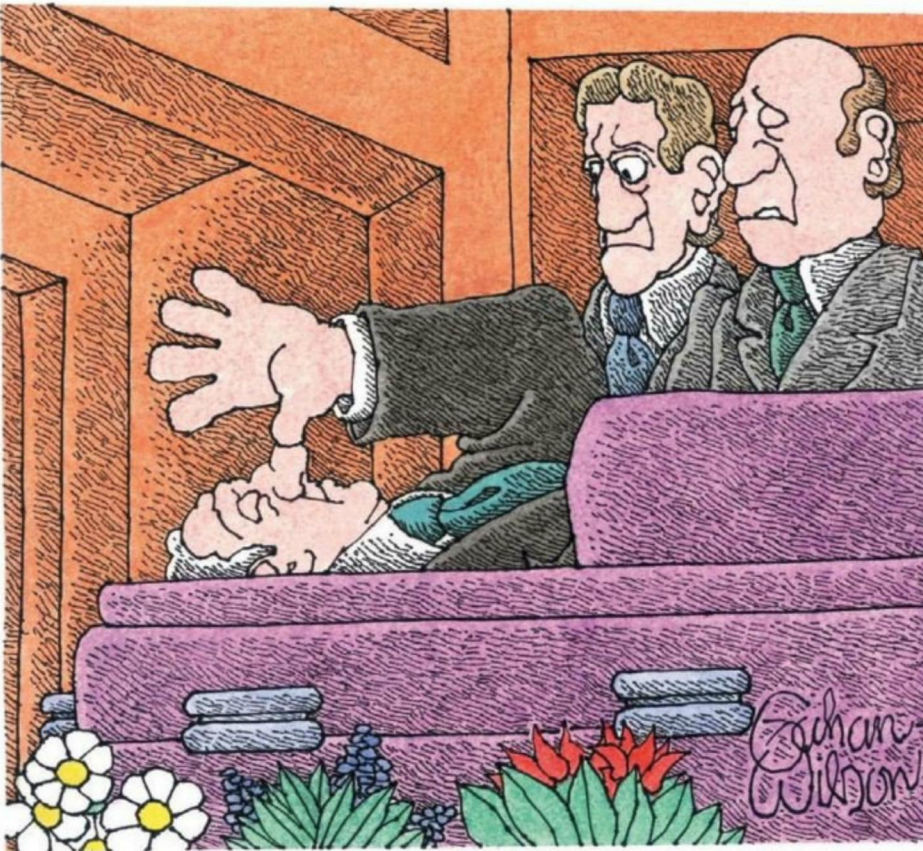
He is in the makeup chair when I arrive. He’s 73, but one still gets a sense of the Irish Catholic brawler who grew up in Northwest Washington, D.C. Buchanan introduces me to the panelists—*Newsweek* contributor Eleanor Clift, *U.S. News & World Report* editor-in-chief Mort Zuckerman and *National Review* editor Rich Lowry.

I’m sitting just off camera, behind Buchanan and Lowry. With all the panelists in place, McLaughlin finally appears. He’s walking with the help of two young aides steadying him. He scrabbles up to the podium, and they lower him into his host’s chair by holding both of his arms. This is not the same vigorous host I watch booming away every week on TV.

As the technicians run through their final preparations, McLaughlin asks Buchanan who I am.

“He’s writing a story about political talk shows,” says Buchanan.

“I thought you were one of Pat’s friends from the hinterlands,” says Clift. She’s



“I understand it was his last request.”

referring to the Buchanan for President supporters who, in the minds of certain media types, surely live in cabins and venture out only once a year to stock up on guns and butter.

"Pat has friends?" asks McLaughlin.

In the moments before the theme music starts, the chatter sounds like what one would hear at a typical D.C. cocktail party. Topics include the movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado, which occurred early that morning. McLaughlin asks Buchanan if he's going to see *The Dark Knight Rises*. "I like that Batman," says McLaughlin. "Anderson Cooper came out of the closet. Why is it still called a closet? It's like debutantes—coming out. They've evaporated. Why is it even called coming out?"

"Cooper has nice manners," says Buchanan.

"CNN is down the tubes," says Lowry.

"Fox is number one," says Buchanan, "and MSNBC a distant second, but CNN has the lowest ratings in 20 years."

"What saves CNN is its global advantage," Zuckerman says, referring to the network's dozens of global bureaus and the fact that it can be watched in more than 200 countries.

At one point the panel begins to reflect on the greatest hits of one of their brethren, Lawrence O'Donnell, a *McLaughlin* alumnus who now hosts his own program, *The Last Word*, on MSNBC. Few can match O'Donnell's sense of righteous indignation. When he gets angry about something on the air, it's a show worth watching. (Unlike, say, Keith Olbermann, whose tirades were boring and tiresome, O'Donnell is likable and actually fun to watch, compelling even if one disagrees with him.)

Buchanan mentions the MSNBC segment he moderated in 2004 when O'Donnell appeared with John O'Neill, a spokesman for Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, an anti-John Kerry group. Within about three minutes, O'Donnell, a Kerry supporter, had called O'Neill a liar more than 20 times while Buchanan tried to referee.

"That was a job he did," says McLaughlin, howling with laughter.

They also mention the time O'Donnell "went after the Mormons." What triggered O'Donnell was McLaughlin discussing Mitt Romney's 2007 speech about faith in which Romney had presented himself as a mainstream Christian. It sent O'Donnell into a rage, on the air. Romney "fools people like Pat Buchanan, who should know better," O'Donnell said. He went on to describe Romney's faith as "racist" and "demented" because prior to 1978 Mormons held that "black people are black because in heaven they turned away from God." Nearly five years later, McLaughlin and the other panelists are still talking about that segment.

The next time I see Buchanan is at his house in McLean, Virginia. We begin discussing *Crossfire*'s debut, in the summer of 1982. It aired at 11:30 p.m., opposite *Nightline* on ABC. Buchanan says he and Braden would

go on the air after they'd been out to dinner, during which they often fired down a few drinks. "Braden would really come in loaded, after about three martinis. You could hear him—'Goddamn it!'" (I recall a *Washington Post* reporter once saying Braden's voice sounded like he chewed sandpaper for breakfast.)

From the right, there was Buchanan—an Irish Catholic Washingtonian who had been suspended from Georgetown and jailed for pummeling a cop who'd written him a traffic ticket, as well as a graduate of Columbia's journalism school, a newspaper editorialist, a Nixon speechwriter—in other words, not your typical conservative.

From the left, there was Braden, a paratrooper in World War II and an operative for the OSS and CIA, where one of his jobs was funneling cash to strapped anti-communists in Europe's labor movement so they would have the resources to keep Soviet operatives from taking over. Not your typical liberal.

Theirs was a dynamite combination for a political talk show.

Buchanan says that talking about politics on TV comes naturally. One of the first times he got a taste for addressing controversial issues in a public format came during the mid-1960s when he was an editorial writer for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. Buchanan attended teach-ins on the Vietnam war held at Washington University. Nervous as he began to speak to the crowd, he was eventually in his element. Buchanan says he "noticed they'd all line up to ask me questions. You know, I was just good at it." In 1973, when he was a speechwriter for President Nixon, he testified at the congressional hearings on the Watergate scandal, a session that was carried on live TV. "I did five hours," he says, "and as soon as I was done they dropped the hearings off TV. Things were turning the other way. The committee looked like a fool."

By the time he went on the radio with Braden, Buchanan had perfected a style that telegraphed to adversaries, "Let's go right to them" and "Don't give me that crap," he says as he clenches his fists and pulls them close to his chest.

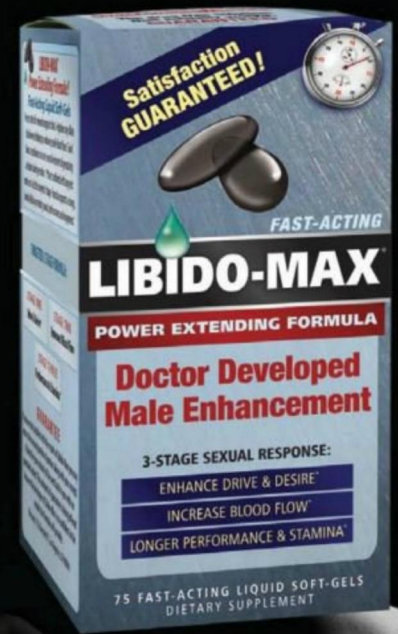
Night after night he brought that to *Crossfire*. The goal was to use true believers to get to the essence of the issues. "You really push them," he says. "You get their real feelings and sentiments. Some of the shows almost broke out in fistfights. It was *real* television."

Sometimes too real. Buchanan recounts the time when a fervent *Crossfire* producer convinced Braden to ask a prominent Republican conservative fund-raiser, Terry Dolan, if he was gay. On the air.

There were rumors around town about Dolan, whispers about his sexuality. He supposedly frequented gay bars in Washington, which back then was scandalous for a conservative who raised \$2 million for Reagan's presidential campaign. "There were all these stories floating around," says Buchanan.

"The producer got suspended for prompting Braden to do it," says Buchanan.

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"It was awful. I thought, You don't ask a guy that. Dolan was very bitter." He died from AIDS in 1986, at the age of 36.

I was astonished by this story. A search on LexisNexis didn't turn up any news coverage or a transcript. I requested one from CNN, but a spokesperson, Megan Grant, said she was unable to locate it. I did, however, find the producer.

"I was thinking about it not long ago," the producer told me. "I really don't want to get into that whole episode."

Recalling those days when talking about politics on TV could be raw, Buchanan tells me that there were some nights "that were so tense, Braden and I walked out not talking to each other. We were both passionate about what we believed. Maybe I'm not that passionate anymore. When people say stuff, you let much more of it go by."

Today the news channels and the networks are stacked with one-hour talking-head shows like a totem pole of opinion journalism. But getting a one-hour political show on TV—especially one that showcases journalists and strategists expressing their own views—once took a bit of crafty subterfuge on the part of Boone Arledge, the television visionary who created ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, *Monday Night Football* and *Nightline*. He recognized that the discussion and debate of politics on TV could be compelling.

In the 1970s a show called *Agronsky & Company* caught Arledge's attention. It was a weekly panel of journalists debating and analyzing Washington, moderated by network anchor Martin Agronsky and featuring George F. Will, a young conservative columnist. It aired on PBS and a few stations owned by the Washington Post Company and was must-see TV inside the Beltway.

Arledge wanted something similar for ABC, but he knew it would be a challenge to convince the network. So when he went to affiliates he pitched a one-hour program that he said would begin by featuring interviews with senators, congressmen, cabinet secretaries and other elected officials—the same basic newsmaker interview format that had been working for *Meet the Press* (NBC) and *Face the Nation* (CBS) for decades but in a half-hour format. (ABC had its own half-hour version, *Issues and Answers*, whose unfortunate title sounded like a brochure one would get at a free clinic.)

That was merely a strategy, however, to achieve what Arledge considered to be the most important part of the program, something he knew would set ABC apart from the competition: the roundtable discussion. It was the exact opposite of a parent tricking a child into eating something nutritious by touting its sugary taste—Arledge was selling the network on something entertaining by emphasizing its substance. He persuaded the epigrammatic former NBC anchor David Brinkley to be the host and brought along the young man who wore bow ties, the conservative he'd liked on *Agronsky*. The result was *This Week With David Brinkley*, which debuted on ABC in November

1981. It was a shift for Sunday mornings, and viewers responded.

"We just popped to the top of the ratings and stayed there," says George Will, now 71. "What Boone started, everyone has followed." (Indeed, the three other Sunday morning network shows, and *State of the Union* on CNN, now follow the format established by *This Week*.) Will calls *This Week* "destination television." He explains, "People get up in the morning and turn to that channel because they want to see us. It's a self-selected audience."

While the hosts have changed—after Brinkley hosted for 15 years, Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts took over, followed by George Stephanopoulos, who was succeeded by Christiane Amanpour; now it's again Stephanopoulos's show—the one constant is George Will. Neal Freeman told me that Will's TV longevity should be attributed to the fact that he's "utterly reliable as the slightly beleaguered Tory with the gimlet eye." Freeman adds, "One of his secrets is that he's a prodigious worker. I've never asked him, but I assume that everything he says on air has been honed and memorized. While his manner never wavers—I could swear I remember

"Ax grinding gets tiresome," says George Will of ABC's This Week. "These people on cable think everything is more important than I think almost anything is."

some of those bow ties from the 1970s—his views evolve constantly." (Indeed, in the past few years, Will's views have become more libertarian. He's also sharpened his criticisms of neoconservative doctrine.)

From Will's perspective, "television is survival of the briefest. You have to get it said quickly. Thirty seconds is a long time on television."

Will is critical of the tide of talking heads who have come in the decades since *This Week* started. When I ask his assessment of Ann Coulter, who has been a frequent guest on the roundtable of late, he answers, "I'd rather not talk about that." He will, however, say that the endless loop of talking heads and their "ax grinding gets tiresome. In this ever-shorter news cycle, TV is driven to focus on insignificant things. These people on cable think everything is more important than I think almost anything is."

The new generation of talking heads is charting its course in well-traveled waters. The emerging faces of cable news have grown up in a world where the market for opinion is firmly established. For Andrea

Tantaros, becoming a conservative panelist on *The Five*—one of the highest-rated programs on Fox—is the fulfillment of a dream she's had since childhood.

A pretty, 33-year-old lean brunette with the kind of toothy smile and perfectly coiffed hair befitting a sorority president, Tantaros started to prepare for a life in broadcast journalism when she was young. "I have videos of me as a little girl taping my own newscasts," she says. "I'd be sitting at a desk and I'd make a sign for the news. 'We have a tape of someone being abducted. Let's go to the video.' And the tape would be me in a ski mask kidnapping my younger brother, Dan. He would just look at me like, 'What are you doing?'"

While everyone else in her generation was idolizing celebrities such as Madonna, Tantaros says, "I was fascinated with KYW-3 news in Philadelphia." Eventually she made her way to D.C., where she interned at CNN, working on *Crossfire* just before it jumped the shark. She worked on the Hill, then in campaigns and is now a columnist for New York's *Daily News*.

Sometimes more people watch Tantaros on *The Five* than read the top newspapers. And it is through programs such as hers that politics is shaped.

"They beat TV political ads, that's for sure," says Morton Kondracke, senior editor of *Roll Call* and one of the original panelists on *McLaughlin*.

This fall the talking heads will focus their "analyses" on who won and who lost and will likely impact the election like never before. Even in the age of social media, TV—a 70-year-old medium—is still where the big splash is made. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube provide outlets for the ripples.

If the candidates and their surrogates need a choir to preach to, they've got one. Fox News offers up the right, MSNBC delivers the left, and CNN increasingly caters to the leftovers.

Will the surge in talking-head programs help voters cut through the issues and come to a decision? Probably not. Will they help us learn more about Barack Obama and Mitt Romney by Election Day? Maybe. Perhaps the real question is, Why does it matter? It matters because Americans are getting their news from cable news channels more than anywhere else, according to a Pew Research Center study from earlier this year. And those channels are chock-full of talking heads.

"On the run-up to the GOP primary in South Carolina, a Republican vastly experienced in politics there told me that they had a poll indicating that 72 percent of all likely voters got *all*—not most, not some but *all*—their news from the Fox News Channel," says Will. "That means that a candidate who appeared on Fox News, or bought advertising there, wasn't broadcasting. He was narrowcasting." The same could probably be said for what comes out over the MSNBC airwaves.

Many people will claim that reliance on talking—or shouting—heads is unhealthy for America and the political process. Michael Kinsley disagrees. "When you think about what else they could be watching," he says, "I don't think that's so terrible."



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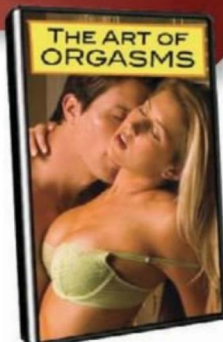
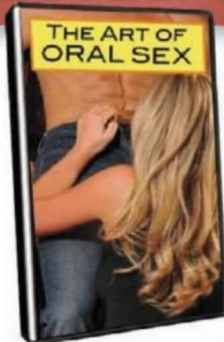
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COLBERT

(continued from page 62)

would like that. That connection.

PLAYBOY: Your father and two brothers died when you were just 10.

COLBERT: That's right.

PLAYBOY: They were on a commercial airliner that crashed while landing in thick fog. Your brothers were both teenagers, and your father was taking them to Connecticut to enroll them in private school. How did you make sense of their deaths?

COLBERT: Things didn't seem that important anymore. Nothing seemed that important anymore. My mother said to me—and I think she said this to all my brothers and sisters—she urged me to look at everything in the light of eternity. In other words, it doesn't matter what I wear. I just wear the uniform of my youth. I wear an oxford-cloth shirt and khakis. What does it matter? What does it matter what I wear?

PLAYBOY: As a 10-year-old boy who just lost his dad, that advice helped you?

COLBERT: Sure, absolutely.

PLAYBOY: It's been almost four decades since it happened. Does the grief dissipate?

COLBERT: No. It's not as keen. Well, it's not as present, how about that? It's just as keen but not as present. But it will always accept the invitation. Grief will always accept the invitation to appear. It's got plenty of time for you.

PLAYBOY: "I'll be here."

COLBERT: That's right. "I'll be here when you need me." The interesting thing about grief, I think, is that it is its own size. It is not the size of you. It is its own size. And grief comes to you. You know what I mean? I've always liked that phrase *He was visited by grief*, because that's really what it is. Grief is its own thing. It's not like it's in me and I'm going to deal with it. It's a thing, and you have to be okay with its presence. If you try to ignore it, it will be like a wolf at your door.

PLAYBOY: It's a loud wolf. It huffs and it puffs.

COLBERT: [Laughs] It does, doesn't it? It can rattle the hinges.

PLAYBOY: Not long after their deaths, you immersed yourself in science fiction.

COLBERT: It was right after we buried my father and brothers. I was staying with my brother Ed, who's 18 years older than I am and was married with kids. I was in their guest bedroom, where they kept stacks of science fiction books. I just randomly picked up *The Long Arm of Gil Hamilton* by Larry Niven. I read it and loved it. From there I just dove into the world of science fiction. When I was 13, one of my friends pressed into my hands *The Lord of the Rings* and said, "You've got to read this." And I loved it. As you can tell, I'm a little obsessed. [points to a *Lord of the Rings* pinball machine in the corner of his office]

PLAYBOY: What appealed to you about the books as a teenager?

COLBERT: In some ways it was about escape.

I think there's absolute truth in escaping the reality of your present predicament. And that can just be about being young. It doesn't have to be tragedy. There's a tragedy to being 13. Things are changing. Friends are changing. Your body is changing. You need to escape that. My additional emotional crises don't necessarily explain my interest in it.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you visit the *Hobbit* film shoot in New Zealand?

COLBERT: I did. [Director] Peter Jackson invited me to the set last year. I flew out and watched them shoot some scenes and went to some locations. I saw a 25-minute cut, and it was amazing. Jackson knows I'm a big fan of the films.

PLAYBOY: You flew out to New Zealand just to watch? He didn't hire you as an extra or something?

COLBERT: [Smiles]

PLAYBOY: Are you telling us you're in the *Hobbit* movie?

COLBERT: Could be. [smiles]

PLAYBOY: Can you elaborate?

COLBERT: [Fumbles with paper on his desk] So, uh, I was just writing Mr. Jackson a note to congratulate him on making *The Hobbit* into three movies. Because I think that's just fantastic.

PLAYBOY: You're not going to tell us anything, are you?

COLBERT: [Smiles, says nothing]

PLAYBOY: You sneaky bastard.

COLBERT: You were asking how the book affected me as a teenager.

PLAYBOY: Sure, let's talk about that.

COLBERT: I think [*Lord of the Rings* character] Aragorn is the model of manhood. He's the Apollonian ideal. He's a warrior, a scholar, a poet, a healer. He's all things you can aspire to be. As a kid I thought I wanted to be like that.

PLAYBOY: But it wasn't all science fiction and fantasy for you. You also had a collection of Bill Cosby stand-up records.

COLBERT: Yeah, after the boys died, I inherited their record collection. I had *Bill Cosby Is a Very Funny Fellow...Right!* and *Wonderfulness*, and I listened to them over and over and over again, every night. [pauses, looks at his feet] I just wore them out.

PLAYBOY: Do you still have them?

COLBERT: Not the originals, no. But somebody sent me those two albums on CD, as a thank-you for something. I have them on my iPod now, and I can do every joke. I can do every joke with the exact same rhythm and timing that Mr. Cosby does them, after 30 years of not listening to them, because they were so deeply ingrained in me. The funny thing is, the albums were so scratched that I missed entire punch lines. He'd be doing a setup, and then it would skip ahead to a huge laugh. And in my mind I was like, What could that punch line have been? I was writing Bill Cosby's punch lines in my head.

PLAYBOY: Now that you've heard the CD versions, were you close?

COLBERT: Not at all. [laughs] My jokes were so far off.

PLAYBOY: Were those albums the only things you inherited from your brothers?

COLBERT: No, I got clothes and all kinds of things. I still have...I still have my brother Peter's belt. I've been carrying it in my closet since I was 10. I didn't even realize I'd been holding on to it until last year, when my son Peter had to go off to school one day.

PLAYBOY: Your son is also named Peter?

COLBERT: Yeah. I think it was a school concert, and he had to wear a belt and couldn't find his. I said, "Oh, I have something that might fit you." I went and found it and put it on him. It was a small belt. Peter was a skinny guy. I belted it on my son and my wife, Evie, said, "Where did this belt come from?"

PLAYBOY: Was that when you realized?

COLBERT: Yeah. I said, "Oh, that's Peter's." And she said, "You have your brother's belt?" And it occurred to me at that moment that I had moved that belt from closet to closet for 37 years without telling anyone, not even my wife, whom I've known for 20 years. We moved many times, and in every new house I've been [mimes clicking the belt onto a hook].

PLAYBOY: That makes sense. What were you going to do, throw it away?

COLBERT: That's exactly it! What do you do with these things? The other day I thought, I wonder what happened to that belt. And I realized that I don't care. Now I don't care.

PLAYBOY: Because you gave it to your son?

COLBERT: Because it got used. It got used. I remember when I was a teenager, I went skiing in Vermont. I had an aunt up there, my mother's older sister, who lived in Plainfield and was a dairy farmer. You need goggles when you ski, and I wore my uncle Eddie's goggles. These were black, heavy rubber goggles, with dark green lenses. He wore them while he was a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne.

PLAYBOY: The Screaming Eagles?

COLBERT: That's right. He died in the war. These were the goggles he wore on D-Day, and I would ski in his goggles. I remember on one of these ski trips, I lost the goggles. I had to tell my mom. I was devastated. And she said to me, "These things are to be used."

PLAYBOY: She sounds like a wise woman.

COLBERT: She is.

PLAYBOY: Was she supportive of your becoming an actor?

COLBERT: Absolutely. She had wanted to be an actress at one point in her life. She spent a lot of her college years doing theater, but then she got sick. She was bedridden for much of a year. When she recovered, my father said, "Let's get married." And they did, and she never did theater again. Her mother wanted to be an actress too, but that was very frowned upon in my grandmother's day. Being an actress was akin to being a streetwalker.

PLAYBOY: So you have acting in your DNA?

COLBERT: I do. My mother always loved acting and taught us as kids how to do falls.

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PLAYBOY: Pratfalls?

COLBERT: Right. She would be in the kitchen and she'd suddenly just faint in a swoon, put a hand on her forehead and fall backward like this [*demonstrates a melodramatic swoon*], like Cleopatra learning of the loss of Antony or something. She would teach us to do the roll-down so you wouldn't hurt yourself as you fell. "Remember, it's ankle, knee, hip, chest, arm, head." We all learned how to do the falls. And we'd fall all over the house, all the time, and my mom was fine with it. I guess that love for all things theatrical just rubbed off on me. Also, I met my wife at the theater because of my mom.

PLAYBOY: How so?

COLBERT: She had an extra ticket to the Spoleto Festival in Charleston. She asked if I wanted to go, and I said sure. I walked into the theater, and there across the lobby was my wife. I thought, Oh, wow, there's my wife.

PLAYBOY: You knew immediately?

COLBERT: There was never a doubt in my mind.

PLAYBOY: Did you talk to her first, or did she talk to you?

COLBERT: [*Laughs*] That's a two-hour story, I'm afraid. It really is. People who have heard the whole story—and it's not a bad story; it's a good story—will later say to Evie, "Stephen told me the story of how you guys met." And Evie will go, "I'm so sorry." I can't start it and leave out any details, because to me it's somewhat miraculous that we're married. Let's just say I met her at a theater and leave it at that.

PLAYBOY: Didn't she know Jon Stewart before you did?

COLBERT: She did. She was an actress living in New York, on the Lower East Side in Alphabet City. Jon was a young guy trying to do comedy in New York. A friend of Evie's, her roommate, dated Jon's roommate. Or something like that. So Jon ran in her social circle. It was this gang of people who hung out, some of whom came to New York to be actors, some of whom came to do architecture. They were all University of Virginia people. Some just came to New York to be part of the go-go 1980s. It was very *Bright Lights, Big City*.

PLAYBOY: Was there lots of cocaine and recreational sex?

COLBERT: [*Laughs*] I don't know what they were doing. Jon just remembers the world not being enough for these people. Evie remembers Jon being a quiet guy. He was the one nursing a beer in the corner. And not funny. He was not the funny one. A nice enough guy, but his friend was the funny one. When Jon got the gig on *The Daily Show* years ago, Evie was like, "Jon Stewart? He's not funny." [*laughs*] She likes to lord that over me. "Oh, I knew him long before Stephen did."

PLAYBOY: Is it true you met Stewart for the first time while asking him a question at a press conference?

COLBERT: Yeah, that was it. I'd been doing *The Daily Show* when Craig Kilborn was hosting. I heard they were doing a press conference to announce that Jon

was the new host, and I said, "Isn't that the sort of thing we should be covering?" So I went, sat down in the audience and raised my hand when they opened it up to questions. I was like, "Stephen Colbert, *Daily Show*." Oh God, how did I phrase it? "Does this announcement have any effect on the prospects of me getting the hosting job?" Jon looked at Doug Herzog, who was the network president at the time and is again, and said, "You said he wasn't funny."

PLAYBOY: Are you and Stewart friends or just friendly?

COLBERT: We're actually friends.

PLAYBOY: When it's just the two of you, do you talk about politics?

COLBERT: Not politics specifically, but we'll talk about the news. We also talk about our families. We talk about anything friends talk about. That's grown over the years. I'm an ardent admirer of his. I would say the thing that has kept me from being as good a friend to Jon as I would like is just that I am such a fan. I am gobsmacked by his abilities. But that being said, we go out to dinner, and we sometimes pick up the phone just to say, "How are you?" Or, "Do you mind if I

*I have no interest in behaving
or thinking cynically. But
it's an easy trap to be cyni-
cal about anything, certainly
when you're talking about
politics or the media.*

tell you how I am? I had a shitty week."

PLAYBOY: It can be shitty sometimes?

COLBERT: Rarely, but yeah, it happens. That's another reason not to be tied to the news cycle. It's damned depressing. I have no interest in behaving or thinking cynically. But it's an easy trap to be cynical about anything, certainly when you're talking about politics or the media.

PLAYBOY: Doesn't comedy require a little cynicism?

COLBERT: Not really. I believe that people, more often than not, act with the best possible intentions. And when they don't, that's funny to me. That's why comedy ends up seeming cynical, because you're talking about the gap between what people say and what they do. You seem cynical because you're always talking about that selfish behavior that's dressed up as altruism. It doesn't mean there isn't altruism. It just means that it's harder to make jokes about altruism.

PLAYBOY: There have been quite a few books written about you.

COLBERT: I heard that that exists.

PLAYBOY: There's *America According to Colbert*, *The Stewart/Colbert Effect*, *Colbert's America: Satire and Democracy*. The list goes on and on.

COLBERT: It's all poison to me.

PLAYBOY: Poison? How is it poison?

COLBERT: Other people's deconstruction of your motivations doesn't help you do what you do. You can't swallow and think about swallowing at the same time.

PLAYBOY: You don't think about why a joke works or doesn't work?

COLBERT: I do sometimes. Comedians dissect jokes all the time. Comedians are beautiful structuralists. But ultimately it's an athletic endeavor. You have to be able to just hit the backhand. You can't think about all the pieces of it. You can't think about your swing. You just have to do it. Reading someone else's deconstruction of what I do, all it does is put me in my head. On nights when the show goes particularly well, I am not aware of its fluidity. A lot of nights I'm just worried that I'm not going to be as good as the script in front of me.

PLAYBOY: You have more faith in the script than your own abilities?

COLBERT: There's a great book called *The Lyre of Orpheus* by Robertson Davies, a Canadian writer. In it someone has written a symphony. It's part of her doctoral thesis, and she brings it to a professor, who says, "Okay, I'll let you know what I think." He's asked, "Don't you want to hear it?"—there's an orchestra at this school—and the professor says, "No. All an orchestra can do is get the notes wrong. I'll play it perfectly in my head." I understand what that means. When I look at a script for one of our shows, I'm playing it perfectly in my head. All I can do is fuck it up.

PLAYBOY: You recently extended your contract with Comedy Central through the end of 2014. Is it exhausting to think about doing *The Colbert Report* for another two years?

COLBERT: I try not to think about it in terms of years. You can't do 161 shows. It can't be done. All I can do is today and tomorrow and have some idea of what we're doing next week. That's all I can worry about. I have a script for today, I have probably half a script for tomorrow, and that's as far down the road as I ever look. I know the mechanism of my show, and I know how it works. There's a joy in that.

PLAYBOY: You've called the process of making *The Colbert Report* "the joy machine."

COLBERT: It still feels that way. I have no fear of doing the show. I have no exhaustion in doing the show. I have no idea what's going to happen tomorrow. I can't predict what we'll be trying to make jokes about in the next six months. I don't know what the next super PAC game will be for us or who will win the election. You can't plan for any of that. If I thought I knew what was going to happen, it wouldn't be worth doing. The challenge is how joyfully, with what sense of fun and adventure and playfulness, we will greet it. We don't have to look for what the next thing will be. If experience is any judge, it'll come flowing toward us like a river.



GOLF

(continued from page 80)

Nicolae Ceaușescu and, from the Sandinistas of Nicaragua, a stuffed crocodile standing on its hind legs, holding a tray of drinks. America gave a basketball signed by Michael Jordan. The ball led our minder, Mr. Liu [some names have been changed], to ask where we were from.

"America," admitted Josh, the wiseass in the bunch, a sweet-swinging six-handicapper working undercover for *Golf Magazine*. "Land of Michael Jordan."

Mr. Liu said, "Down with America!" Which made everyone a little uneasy until he cracked up.

Exhausted, we finally landed at our hotel. A 47-floor tower on an island in the Taedong River, the Yanggakdo International Hotel is the tallest habitable building in North Korea. I say "habitable" because the Yanggakdo is dwarfed by another nearby building, the empty Ryugyong Hotel. Looming over Pyongyang like a 1,000-foot alien rocket, the 105-story Ryugyong was meant to be the nation's showplace, the tallest hotel in the world. But Russian financing fell through. Twenty-five years after construction began, the Ryugyong stands deserted. It appears on no maps. It's bad form to mention its name. Until recently the regime denied its existence even as the so-called Hotel of Doom cast a mile-long shadow over the capital city.

"Can't see a thing," Simon said, staring right at it. "Anyway, our crib's superior."

He was right. Aside from its arm-biting elevators, the Yanggakdo tops most Hiltons. We spent our euros, the preferred imperialist currency, in a subterranean floor featuring a bar, swimming pool, casino, barbershop, massage therapist, billiard and Ping-Pong tables and a three-lane bowling alley. The rest of the hotel was mostly off-limits, with Westerners restricted to a few VIP floors where the rooms were said to be bugged. We were especially not allowed on the fifth floor, which was said to be the spies' floor, where eavesdroppers listen in on the VIP floors above.

Mr. Liu and his colleague Miss Song monitored our movements. The gifts we presented them—cartons of Marlboros for him, chocolates for her—made them rich compared with most North Koreans. Mr. Liu told me I was free to jog up and down the river island but not to cross the bridge that led to the rest of Pyongyang. "Soldiers will stop you," he said. In 2008, when a South Korean woman wandered away from her tour group, a North Korean sentry shot her in the head.

We looked bloody conspicuous in our Titleist and TaylorMade caps, taking practice swings outside our hotel the night before the second annual DPRK Amateur Golf Open. Later, toasting our grim-faced hosts over beers, grayish vodka and several more beers, Josh filled us in on North Korea's golf history. It consists mainly of one tall tale: In 1994, dictator Kim Jong Il teed up at the course we would play the next morning. It was his first round of golf, witnessed by 17 armed guards and members of the regime's

media office. And according to every last witness, the so-called Dear Leader made a hole in one that day. And then he made 10 more. He finished 38 under par for 18 holes, with 11 aces—the best round in golf history. The dictator's score was more than 20 strokes better than any other round anybody ever shot.

Lying in bed that night, I couldn't help thinking that a golf tournament was a pretty stupid reason to fly halfway around the world to a place you might never escape. The only stupider thing would be to fly halfway around the world to a golf tournament and lose.

I had come to win.



On day one of the open we breakfasted on fried eggs, strong coffee and kimchi, the national pickled-cabbage dish, then piled into a tour bus for the drive to the most exclusive golf course in North Korea. Because it's the only golf course in North Korea.

We doped out the tournament on the way. Wisecracking Josh, the *Golf Magazine* mole, was the foremost golfer in a field full of whack-a-mole hacks. Then there was Anti from Finland, a lanky blond engineer with 300-yard power. He might be a threat. The same went for bearded, beery Simon from London. His mate Alex, a garrulous journo from one of Rupert Murdoch's tabloids, swung like he was fending off subpoenas, but Simon could flip a flop shot like Phil Mickelson. His 36 handicap was fishier than sushi.

Aussie Mike's fluid swing got leaky under pressure. Fifty-year-old Kiwi, a genial chop from New Zealand, wouldn't break 100. I was a long shot with no short game, a once-decent 80-shooter who hadn't made a 10-foot putt since 2010. And nobody knew what to think of the Mongolian foursome, who dressed like tour pros. They'd learned the game by watching a David Leadbetter DVD.

The 20-mile ride to Pyongyang Golf Club took an hour. There was no traffic in the smog-shrouded capital, where only party leaders have cars. The deserted eight-lane boulevard was pocked with potholes that forced our bus driver to pick his way forward like a man in a minefield. We passed work crews tending rice paddies and cabbage fields. Old women bent under the weight of water buckets hanging from yokes strapped to their backs. Workers stopped to glance at our bus. We were a novelty, a bunch of foreign guys in golf caps rolling by in air-conditioned splendor.

The clubhouse at Pyongyang Golf Club is a green-gabled hulk on top of a hill. It was dim inside. A painting showing Kim Il Sung greeting world leaders filled one wall, but it was hard to make out the details. Here as elsewhere lights stayed off during the day to conserve electricity. As our eyes adjusted we beheld a row of white-gloved young women in lavender uniforms. Clearly chosen for their looks, our caddies could have passed for Korean Air flight attendants. They had little training as caddies and spoke next to no English. Mine, the beaming Sun-Yi, could say "iron seven," "wood one," "good sha"

and "caddie fee 10 euro." Determined to prove herself, she insisted on marking and cleaning my ball even on the practice green.

"Attention, *s'il vous plaît*." That was Maxime, the tournament director. Plump, silver-haired Maxime, a former PGA European Tour rules official who had made Ryder Cup rulings for Jack Nicklaus and Seve Ballesteros, would take no guff from the sorry likes of us. Rather than stroke play or match play, he announced, we would play the first round by the Callaway scoring system.

"First on the tee will be...Mr. Cook from America!"

I hadn't hit a golf ball in six months. There was no driving range; I was jet-lagged, surprised, with no time to concoct an excuse to let somebody else hit. Sun-Yi handed me a gleaming Top-Flite and a tee. Photographers from the Associated Press and North Korea's Ministry of Sport crouched beside the tee marker to record my opening shot. Josh strolled past with a word of encouragement. "Better you than me, dude," he said.

I took a practice stab. Swing easy, I thought. Rotate hips and shoulders over the left knee. Or is it the right knee? Don't think. Above all don't think about dribbling a grounder off in news photos worldwide. Or whiffing.

At the top of my swing, the ball looked like Pluto. The next sound surprised me: polite applause. My ball climbed over the fairway as Sun-Yi reached for my clubs. "Good sha!" she said.

"The 2012 Democratic People's Republic et cetera, et cetera is under way," Maxime said.

On the green, Sun-Yi went into her elaborate ball-marking ceremony. Stooping at the knees, she marked my ball with a one-won coin, cleaned the ball and cupped it in her hands as if it were a robin's egg. When my turn to putt came she replaced the ball, studied my line to the hole, then showed how the putt would break with a swooping motion of her arms. I pictured my Top-Flite swooping into the cup. Instead it died on the way. The greens were seeded with a strain of grass that seemed to exude glue.

"Five," I told my playing partner, a Mongolian lawyer named Chuluun Munkhbat. "How about you?" Per Maxime's instructions we were keeping each other's scores, just like tour pros.

"One," he said.

"Funny! For a second I thought you said one."

"Yes. One."

I'd watched him make bogey. Maybe this was golf in the Kimdom—we all knew about Kim Jong Il's 11 aces and "official" score of 38 under par in his first round of golf. I wouldn't be party to a third-world plot to bust the records of the old Scottish game. "Mr. Chuluun, you didn't have a hole-in-one," I said.

"Yes, one. Like you."

It took a minute of batting phrases through the language barrier to figure out that Mongolia's golfers, all 50 or 60 of them, keep score by recording how many strokes over par they shoot on each hole. A bogey's a one, a double bogey a two.

We shook hands. "Mr. Chuluun, let's make some zeroes."

His face lit up. "Call me Munkhbat."

He zeroed both par-three holes on the front nine. I zeroed the par-fives. Feeling jaunty as we made the turn, I expected a hot dog at a halfway house but got a multicourse meal instead. In a dining hall at the top of a rickety staircase, where a boxy RCA TV showed ranks of marching soldiers, silent waitresses served bean sprouts in soy sauce, thin-sliced pork, steaming dumplings, crunchy whitefish, rice curry, kimchi, clams, mushrooms in peanut paste and peas with orange and purple tendrils of something or other. We washed it down with ice-cold Tiger beer, the Singaporean lager featured in *Tropic Thunder*. Londoner Alex had us hip-hooraying our hosts until he noticed the numbers stamped on the bottom of his beer can.

"Two fowsin' ten?"

All our beers were past their expiration dates. Importing stale beer helps North Korea fight its trade deficit, which the regime blames on American sanctions.

Alex held his Tiger beer aloft. "Drink up, lads," he said, "before it's too late!"

Munkhbat and I waddled to the 10th tee with bellies full of Tigers. We spent much of the afternoon up to our knees in the

course's jungly rough. Two hours later I limped in with a round of 90. Bogey golf.

Maxime collected scorecards. By his reckoning, given our handicaps and some strange rules that made no sense at all, my 90 was worse than Munkhbat's 102. I'd shot my way to second-to-last place with the second-best score of the day. Our leader was Simon. Alex offered his countryman a toast. "To Simon. Cunt-gratulations!"

In the evening our minders led the way to the Pyongyang Circus. A live orchestra accompanied acrobats and dancing bears while the crowd—mostly soldiers—applauded in unison as if keeping time to music. We golfers cheered the waltzing, rope-skipping bears and went wild for the feature attraction, a baboon that roller-skated down a slide to the stage, where he leaped and dunked a basketball.

Celtics fan Josh yawned. "Big deal. Nobody was guarding him."

Back at the Yanggakdo, the state-sponsored TV channel was running a nature documentary. In one sequence a colony of ants encountered a stream. The ants formed a raft, a squiggling Frisbee-size mass of themselves, and floated into the water. The ones on the bottom drowned, but the others made it across. I wanted to yell, "Korean ants, save yourselves!" What would the electronic ears in the walls make of that? Instead

I did push-ups and practiced my putting. Let them listen to grunts and groans.



Day two brought a new scoring plan called the Stableford system in which double bogeys and worse don't hurt your score. My new playing partner, Kiwi, the genial duffer from New Zealand, said he ran a candy factory in China. "Guess what's one of our top items," he said, pronouncing it "oitemes."

I guessed candy.

"Edible underwear! Quoit popular with the Chinese. We also make a gummy dildo."

After a bouncy nine and another multicourse lunch, we joined the others at the 10th tee for a long-drive contest. I set the pace until the second guy hit. Antti, the tall Finn, thumped one 310 yards but was DQ'd by Maxime when his ball ran into the rough, leaving the 40-euro pot to Simon for his 300-yarder.

I needed to par the long 18th hole to stay alive in the tournament. My three-wood second shot bounced into sticky rough a hundred yards from the green. "You moit tike a drop," Kiwi clucked. But I hadn't flown 8,000 miles and surrendered my cell phone to play for sixes. I took an iron seven and slashed. Leaves and roots flew. Sun-Yi covered her eyes. The ball blooped into a gully short of the green. My chip ran past the hole. My putt rifled off the back of the tin cup, popped straight up and fell in. "Nice pa!" Sun-Yi chimed. We shook hands, a folded 10-euro bill passing from my hand to hers. Ten euros, equal to about \$13, was a windfall for Sun-Yi, who probably gave it to her father when she got home. If he's a typical worker, her father earns about \$21 a week.

Maxime, tallying scores in the clubhouse, promised to decipher his rankings in time for tomorrow's final round. Simon looked unbeatable with his 30-plus handicap and net scores in the 50s. Dinner was sizzling beef at North Korea's number one restaurant. That's its name: Restaurant Number 1. Picking strips of meat off steaming hibachis, we dipped them in soy and mustard sauces. Until Mr. Liu mentioned that we weren't eating beef.

Two dozen chopsticks stopped in midair. Kiwi, who knew his way around East Asia, said we moit be foinding a new meaning for *dogleg*.

Mr. Liu said, "Duck!" Aussie Mike ducked his head as if dodging a bullet. "It's duck," Mr. Liu repeated.

After dinner Mr. Liu led us to a firing range. "Don't worry. We won't be shooting you," he said. The range was a warren of half-lit channels with bull's-eye targets at one end and trigger-happy golfers at the other. There was nothing virtual about this first-person shooter game. Pretty girls handed out small-bore .22 rifle shells in brass casings. Unnerved at the thought of using live ammo—we could spin around and slaughter Simon!—we spent the first few minutes shooting walls and floor.

I liked my wood-stock rifle better than my putter. Placing the sight on a bull's-eye 55 yards away, I sipped a breath, held it and



"After they smoked the peace pipe, everyone got the munchies, so they invented Thanksgiving."

squeezed the trigger. The bullet struck the target a couple of inches off-line. My next shot was closer. My last bullet drilled a hole in the bull's-eye. Damned if I wasn't going to finish first in something in this hemisphere.

"Perfect," Mr. Liu said. "Good shooting for an American."

The pistol was another story. You can't brace a handgun against your shoulder. You have to aim it in your outstretched hand. None of my shots hit near the bull's-eye.

"Let me try," Mr. Liu said.

Our minder was 30 years old, with sharp cheekbones and dark, watchful eyes. Officially a tour guide, he was also a representative of his government, trained for mental and physical excellence, and this was the first favor he'd asked in a week of looking after us.

"Sure thing." I handed him the gun. Mr. Liu shut one eye and squeezed off a round. He missed the bull's-eye by half an inch.

"Almost," I said.

He fired again. A little higher.

"Almost!"

Two more shots left two more holes, evenly spaced half an inch off the bull's-eye. At this point I quit talking. I was catching on. Mr. Liu squeezed off three more rounds, completing a ring of bullet holes around the bull's-eye. Then he gave me a look that said, Sometimes I get tired of watching you pampered fucks screw around in my country. Maybe his look meant something only he knew, but the general point crossed the DMZ between us. He was more than a tour guide.

Next he led us to an outdoor enclosure. "Here you shoot chicken." Sure enough, a man scooting past with a squirming bundle released two birds, a rooster and a hen, into a dirt-walled enclosure 50 yards away. "Five euros per shot," Mr. Liu said. A premium price to put our live ammo in live animals.

Nobody moved. Finally Josh tossed his bucket hat aside. "You wusses!" Hoisting a rifle, he asked how many of us were vegans. He put the rifle sight on the cock's red chest and pulled the trigger. But he chickened out, purposely shooting high. A warning shot, he called it.

The tour bus waited, air-conditioned and karaoke-ready. During the ride to the hotel the Brits used the karaoke mike to regale us with their version of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic": "Jesus can't play rugby cuz his dad would rig the game./Jesus can't play rugby cuz his hands are full o' holes./Jesus can't play rugby cuz his crown would burst the ball./Jesus saves, Jesus saves, Jesus saves!"

And then Miss Song surprised us by taking the mike. After a moment of looking at her shoes she began a slow lament for a lost love. Two lovers belonged together, the song went, but were apart for so long that their hearts were torn in half. Eyes shining, she explained that the song was about the two Koreas. The bus went quiet. Maybe the party line about reunification had been drilled into Miss Song since girlhood, and maybe she knew little or nothing of the world beyond this blinkered country whose bosses spent billions on nuclear weapons while hungry citizens huddled

in the dark. But she meant what she sang. Her patriotism made a busful of half-drunk cynics give her a round of applause.



"You da mandrill! Da manicurist. Da Mandingo."

I had the Mongolians heckling the Brits.

"You da mammogram!"

Too late. Simon was home free. Somebody asked Josh, who'd shot 77 in the second round and lost ground, what he'd need to shoot today in order to win. "I'd have to shoot Simon," he said. And if Simon made a wobbly target after draining enough Taedonggangs to make the state-run brewery step up production, he was no wobblier than most of us. We'd closed the bar at four A.M. and gathered four hours later.

With everyone but Simon playing for booby prizes, we swung with abandon on the last day. Sun-Yi learned to say, "Good bogey!"

After scrounging a Mongolian zero at the 17th I needed a third straight par on the par-five 18th to shoot a third straight 90. The definition of bogey golf. To Emerson, foolish consistency was the bogey of little minds, but to me it was a goal that could make or break my week in North Korea. My excuse is that there are only about 1,000 freaks on earth who can really play golf. The rest of us are out for small victories: a career-best round, a winning bet, a par on the last hole.

Sun-Yi marked my ball on the 18th green. She cleaned the ball, replaced it and swooped her arms to show how the putt would break.

A short sidehill putt. Sink it and I could doff my cap and shake hands all around. Miss it and I would have to picture and re-picture this five-foot putt during the long ride back to the hotel, tomorrow's flight to Shenyang, the trip to and a four-hour lay-over in Seoul, a 15-hour flight over the Arctic to JFK and the rest of my miserable life.

"You can moik it," Kiwi said.

Five feet. I'd have to hit it hard. I took a breath and fired. When I looked up the putt was a foot from the hole, losing speed like a North Korean rocket.

We sang Mongolian drinking songs in a clubhouse strewn with beer cans. Simon, posing with the trophy, smiled while we hurled cracks at him. Kiwi handed out breath mints from his factory. The second secretary, who'd fired a net 55 to finish second, called for order. He nodded to Chuluun Munkhbat, who held a bottle of Chinggis vodka.

"Mongolian spirit," Munkhbat called it. Pouring a shot for Simon and one for himself, he toasted the victor, saying he'd see him again "with lower handicap!" Then he went around the room, dispensing a shot and a few words for each player. Fully toasty by the time he got to me, he called me a name that made me forget my putt on the last hole. Chuluun Munkhbat, son of Chuluun of Ulaanbaatar, a descendant of Genghis Khan, touched his shot glass to mine.

"See you again," he said, "golf brother."

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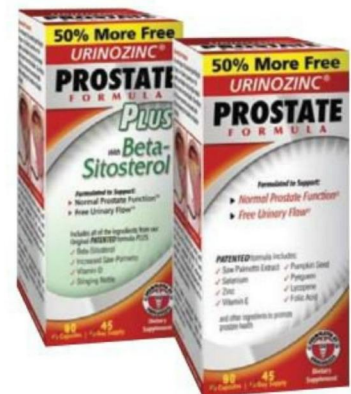
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STEEPLECHASE

(continued from page 87)

it once is a full helping, and Constable Oldchair and Mr. Measlie, the parish medical examiner, and Roderick Loose, who writes the monthly newsletter, and the postman and every bad elbow up and down the bar at the Ivory Fetlock and every person who ever leaned against a fence in our timeworn shire has had the awful word in their mouth and said it then only to throw more disturbing fear into our sweet country air. Since coming across this dead bloke who looked vaguely familiar and much like he was sleeping with the little wall as his pillow, my three riders are nervous and the horses are jumpy, and not in the way they need to be for the coming annual steeplechase championship.

If the town would just stop with that word. "Exsanguinated, the body was exsanguinated." "Oh yes, they found him where he must have hit his head on the pony trail wall, which killed him dead, as it would, but did you know what was funny about it was that he was exsanguinated." "It's not every day you find a citizen dead in the woods having been exsanguinated."

We've had citizens die in every season in Stirrupshire. Their hearts give out bringing in the milk or they get full of Rimstill's bitter, which everyone knows is stiff as whiskey, and they fall in the creek, which is mainly a rock gully most of the year. Or they have a stroke being chased by some of the aggressive squirrels that have emerged in the district. We've had *inebriated*, but we've never before this character knocks himself into the next world had *exsanguinated*. Not a drop of blood in him. Everybody in town has been out to the spot where the trail widens and enters the wood to see where the blood should be and there is no blood. "Where's the blood?" someone will ask. Honest to Venus, Mars and Jupiter, I'd never heard that sentence before while trying to sneak in a second pint at the Fetlock, and then all of a sudden instead of talking about our fine equestrian team and our chances in the most important horse jumping competition in these hills, you hear some weary expert saying, "Where's the blood?"

And suddenly there's the sleepy journalist Roderick Loose with his notepad open writing down such remarks, which is poor form in a public house, if you ask me. I know for stone-wall certain that it is a question for which everyone has a theory. No one, for the last two weeks, has said, "Dunno, mate, where is the blood?" Everyone has an idea if not two. Rimstill moves up and down the bar, the bar towel over his shoulder, and he must hear it all: "Oh, he was killed over in Saddleshire and transported here"; "Oh, he's not human and had no use for blood. There's aliens among us. Just look around the pub"; "The blood evaporated. He's part of an experiment from the secret labs at Moldshire. You could see the secret government stamp on his neck."

That last one might have a bit in it. I found the body, leading the three members of our championship steeplechase team. The man, who was dead and pale as froth, did have a big angry canker on his neck, something

the size of a large circular fist, which I took as where he may have struck himself. The mark itself became a topic that raged like a rubbish fire, and our citizenry decided it was either the wax seal of the devil or a rash from toxic chemicals being stirred up at Moldshire. The government put an agricultural station over there and it gets blamed for something once a month—aliens, stolen passwords, crop circles, fluoride.

"Now, Mr. Blinken, what did it look like?" Rimstill and his towel had stopped across the bar from me and looked into my face for clues. He was wiping a glass and speaking loud enough for others to hear. "Was the mark bloody and such as if made by a pocket-knife or was it as they said some kind of imprint from the exsanguinating machine?"

I love a pint and I know the world wants me to have a pint, and I love the Ivory Fetlock and its old scarlet carpets and the walnut bar burnished by better men than me drinking worse beer, but the conversations in this dear close were almost putting me off my libations. Almost. I wiped my lip and told Rimstill, who had asked, and dreary Roderick Loose, who was leaning in with his notepad once again (I'd already spoken to him at length on two occasions while grooming the horses in the barn), and Felicia Rungbell, who rides steeplechase with the team (a strapping 30-year-old who mourns her lost fortune every day in her repeated tale of how her father was robbed of his title by brigands in Shloperdshire and the manor house in which she was a golden child is now full of some nasty branch of her nasty family), that I'd not heard of the exsanguinating machine (which was happily quite true), but I could not bring myself to say the phrase, and so I told them that the mark on the neck of the deceased appeared to me to be some kind of brand or impression, and yes, it had appeared angry but not bloody.

"That's because there was no blood!" Felicia Rungbell cried again.

"Was there some mark or someone's initials in the marking?" Rimstill asked. He was ardent for clues. Everyone was ardent for clues. I had had my fill of clues. I did not want to find a dead man in the bridle path. I did not want to have our horses think every time they jumped at that wall, which would be part of the weekend's championship tournament, the culmination of a year's work, there would be some crude cadaver sprawled exactly where they should come to ground. I didn't want the riders fearful. I didn't want Wilda Bloom to resign the team and go back to her father's place in a town in Wales with a name too long to put on an envelope. This last was my greatest worry. If Graham Hoosh quit, or Felicia, we could replace them in two days. Wilda had already told me the magical promise: If we won this year, she would be my bride. We needed to win this year! I had made a little joke about bridle path and bridal path and Wilda had smiled, and I told her we would win at all costs, that she now in fact was the prize. If this puts a glimmer in my ardor, so be it.

"There was no signature and a flour-ish, Mr. Rimstill," I told him, and the bar at large, "no *esquire* cut into the flesh, just the red circle with marks around the inside like, I suppose maybe, a clock." And as soon

as I said it I regretted it because the word *clock* rang up the bar and back and the theories tripled and I knew what I would hear next even though I had my lovely pint glass tipped up and I was at my nectar once again, knowing now this was a three-pint evening.

"And what time did it read?" Mr. Rimstill asked, determined to be as good a detective as he is brewmaster, though that would be a long climb.

"Time for another pint," I said and slapped down my coins before he could draw it for free and I'd be obligated to another chapter of our interview.

Now the pub door broke open and the bells rang loudly as Gann Lanolin rushed in swatting at her skirts and we all knew she'd had a close one with our rodents. When she was sure she was unattached, Gann looked up at the room and said, "Chased by squirrels! Do they have this atrocity in any other bloody shire? Draw me a pint, Mr. Rimstill, if you'd be so kind."



There's one stained glass window in the Ivory Fetlock and it's above the front nook, the tiny booth where many an evening after practice I have sat with Wilda Bloom, our number two in the steeplechase, although number one to me, drinking Rimstill's elixir and smelling of horses. The window is a stirring classic of a red horse flying a lavender river in a golden sunset, the facets all gleaming like jewels, or maybe not jewels but whatever such a picture could be made of to be so warm that it reaches for your heart. Wilda is the one person in the village of Stirrupshire who hasn't said the word *exsanguinate*, and in fact when I joined her tonight on the blue velvet cushions of the booth, she expressed again her sadness at the death of the man, who has turned out to be a riding instructor from Lathergloom who was a jump judge in last year's marathon steeplechase championship. In fact, he was the head of the judges' panel.

"The news is that it wasn't an accident," Wilda said. "But who would kill a judge?" I looked into her face, always a pleasure, but this time I was looking for fear. The dear girl seemed brave. The village has become a beehive of nasty language and speculation, there have been reports of creatures in the woods, shadows moving through the thickets, big shadows creeping down Loobermarl Lane and gigantic forms slipping silently through the heath, and along the sides of the old barracks, shadows even at night when it is difficult to generate a shadow, though it seems that now we have more shadows than ever. Don't go out at night, people are saying. Something besides the giant squirrels is afoot in Greater Stirrupshire, but what?

"Did you hear?" Graham Hoosh said, coming over. "I think he was the tall man, very slender, who oversaw the final jumps at Closedown Arena, right?"

"I don't know," I said. But I knew. He was the finish judge. His name was Randolph Nooper and he was a lifelong jump judge and a nitpicker from a long line of them, a champion of fault-finding and cavalier of cavilery, who would never deduct one point when he could deduct two. He would take points if your horse

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blinked in the takeoff or landing or just running the chase, and he set the timbers in the final area on the stanchion edges balanced on a narrow half an inch so that a heavy shadow would make them tremble and fall. He was known as "Teeter" Nooper because of these cruel adjustments. I was sorry for his demise, but I didn't like him.

Graham went on: "He was old-school. Judging was in his blood."

"That's all gone now," I said. I couldn't help myself. "There's none left."

The Fetlock's bells rang and in came Yowden Oldchair, the constable, famous for having in his 17 years in that post arrested one person, and that being his father, for the crime of keeping squirrels for fighting, which he was in fact doing. The animal rights people marched Constable Oldchair to the pens behind the old man's house, and so the squirrels, some big as dogs and mean, were set free and old Mr. Oldchair went away for two and a half months. The experience and the subsequent phone calls about marauding squirrels and squirrel attacks have sort of spoiled the job for Yowden, though he was happy to keep the salary and uniform allowance. But by Saturn, Mercury and Earth, he now had a case, what with this dead jump judge in the mortuary over at Mount Abrasion. The whole pub quickened to a holy silence when he came in and then they saw his face and it got even more quiet.

"You're pale as the dead man," Rimstill told the official.

"There's been a body in the jumping pond," Yowden Oldchair said. "Discovered just an hour ago." His little eyes grew dark in his big blanched face and he staggered

back a step as if hit with a broom. He sat suddenly next to Wilda, and that's when Wilda broke the spell and joined the crowd by saying a word everyone in the room was thinking: "Exsanguinated, wasn't he?"

"It's a she," the constable said.

"Bloody hell," Lorry said.

"No blood," the constable said back to every waiting face in the room. "Just hell."

There is no way to properly state the importance of the Great Cumberbund Steeplechase Championships, which are the famous annual meets of flying horses on the colossal four-kilometer course, which spans three shires, one county, two rivers and four towns. It means everything hereabouts. The price of a pint is determined and whether we can walk through the high street in Edendredge or have to slip along the cattle fence by the river and whether anyone in our town can wear lavender and green, even by accident, out in public, and it decides whether Feint Saint Noxious will be spelled Feint or Fient for the entire year. The amount wagered by race day is uncountable, but you know as a fiduciary fact that there's a sheaf of slips in everyone's pocket. Bragging rights they call it, but it's more than that; it's all the rights. It's who we are.

And having lost last year, narrowly, the pressure on our four riders has doubled and then doubled again, and would have doubled twice more in these final weeks had it not been for the bloodless bodies piling up in the vicinity. Instead of everyone picking at my shirtsleeves in the Ivory Fetlock with tips about how to handle the big fence at Wickenpurge or the mud landing after the Hedges (or worse, the many

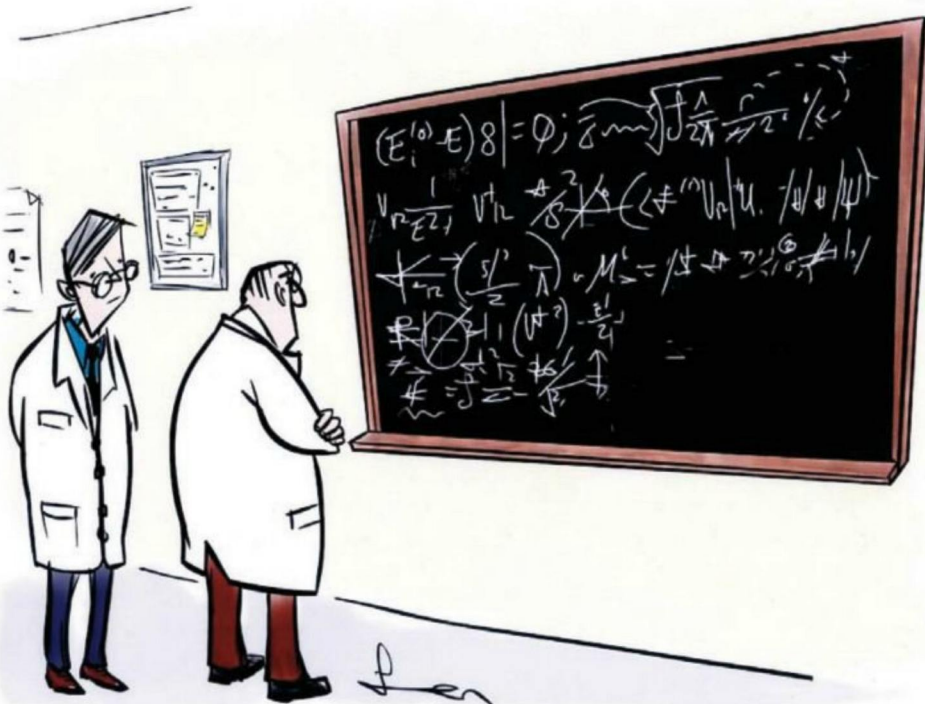
offerings to cheat I get as the steeplechase nears), I was relieved finally to have something else as a topic of conversation. I heard *exsanguinated* a few more times than I'd like, but it was better than having Colin Moonagen saying that after we leaped the turning gate at Feedout Commons first, he would start it afire. He said it to me four times last year and he's a bloke who always smells of kerosene.

The other thing we did after last year's loss was send out to find these fine flying horses. We went down the bloodline of grooms and found the princess of horses, Esbernisha Wygossi, who is part horse herself the legend says, and if that is true then you could see it would be her jaw and that bottom row of teeth. We sent her deep into Europe with her instinct and a blank check. Procuring these horses in Romania or near it meant our village will not pave the high street this year or next and that the squirrel roundup is also going to have to wait two years. But if we win, we will lord it over all of our neighbors for a full year, 365 delicious, hard-earned, long-time-coming days, totally worth it. A little mud on the high street and keeping an eye out for aggressive squirrels when one goes to the grocer and back is a small price to pay for our being able to wear our lavender vests anywhere we damn well please.

We, on the select squad of riders for the tender village of Stirrupshire, take our mission seriously. We need to win and we practice like demons. The four horses are all sleek giants, three stallions and the mare, and they are tended to like the pasha's children. They eat oats with gypsy gravy, something Esbernisha mixes up twice a day, a stew that smells like the air before a storm, and for the two months prior to the Great Cumberbund Steeplechase there is a liniment shortage all the way to Scotland. These animals get more massages than the Woopercoop Manhandlers, who won the Burnthills Rugby Cup last fall.

As with any great contest there have been moments of sabotage. Six or seven times in recent weeks, the daybreak groom has found Far Cry and Pegasus and Curdler and Sawtooth standing in the garden browsing the carrot ferns at dawn, all of them totally run out and pasted with sweat. This happened after we installed big galvanized latches with wooden pegs. Somebody had pulled the pegs and whittled them into splinters. Someone is trying to wear out our brilliant horses.

I have a strategy supper at the pub with the team: Felicia, Wilda and Graham Hoosh, the best riders I have ever known, even going back to Pony Colony when I was at school. I must say we had a civil meal (Rimstill's baked potato soup), talking about our plan for handling the high gates over the hills where some of the timber fences are five meters. It is our strength, the tall stuff, and we know it. These new horses fly, just as Esbernisha said they would. When she described them, she held her hand out and flew it before our faces like a hawk or an eagle or, I suppose, a bat. Regardless, it is key to clear the high gates.



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We're free of a wicked, nitpicking judge, but we'll still need to fly. Half the horses in the steeplechase canter around those gates, ignoring the wings, and such a deour earns five demerits.

Then while we were eating, the bells on the old doors of the Ivory Fetlock rang and in walked Constable Oldchair, setting his feet down like Talbot Crane playing Hamlet, one then two, and the bar heard the signal and quieted for the lesson. You can tell the constable was enjoying the crime wave. More people had talked civilly to him in the last fortnight than for years, and he was thinking that these bodies might mean folks would forget the savage squirrels, but I could tell him right now that is not going to happen. You can't go out of the house anywhere in Stirrupshire without seeing someone being chased by the large furry bastards. Rimstill's got liniment and bandages in the cabinet in the loo and goes through dozens a week.

"A little news then, my friends," Oldchair said. "The lady we found in Purvis Pond last Monday deceased and completely exsanguinated," the constable paused and turned stage left and then stage right, finally facing the bar and bringing his fingertips up and together in a perfect church roof. Now he was old Montgomery Chaff playing *The Ancient Barrister*. Who knew that this lawman had been so often to the theater? "Well, she turned out to be Gladiolis Duff from Saddleshire, where she taught primary school for 30 years before becoming a dress judge for the Great Cumberbund Steeplechase. Last year, maybe some remember, she was there at the stables with her clipboard when the mounts went out."

"Was there the mark of the devil on her neck?" Roderick Loose said.

"There was a bloody carbuncle on her white throat," the constable said, lifting his chin and putting his hand against his own neck. Now he raised that hand and held it out and slowly swept the room, a move I saw last when poor old Lear tried to negotiate with the elements. "We suspect foul play." That last phrase he whispered loudly. No one had ever said such a thing hereabouts, ever, and our village dates from the 12th century.

"Now, who among you knew Mrs. Gladiolis Duff?" Constable Yowden Oldchair continued. This was his shining hour. Five hands went up and four of them confessed to having been in Mrs. Duff's finishing class years before. Dear Wilda Bloom offered, "Mrs. Duff taught us the way to fold a proper handkerchief and how to use a bookmark and never dog-ear the corner of a page."

"She was a fine sort," Yowden pressed. "A good woman. And just what did she teach you, Mr. Blinken? Do you dog-ear the corner of a book page?"

"I never have," I told the constable. He had moved near me, as if this part of his performance would soon require a dagger. "I care for my books. I mark my place with 10-pound notes, sometimes two." This

drew a laugh from the pub crowd, which infuriated the official before me, and he jumped back as if shocked and snatched a sheet of paper from his jacket pocket not unlike a drawn knife and he waved it in the air, again like good King Lear in that wind, and he rattled it like a tambourine and then held it top and bottom before me like a short scroll of the last laws.

"Perhaps what Mrs. Gladiolis Duff taught you, Mr. Blinken, was how to iron the crease in your riding trousers, which, on this judge's sheet from last year's steeplechase she seems to have honored you with four demerits." Constable Oldchair now stood still like Mazzelcramer playing King Henry IV, his chin held so high it seemed he was addressing unseen multitudes in the ceiling. His declamation was breathtaking and we were all, even me, captured by it. "She was the dressing judge, remember? And you saw her as she walked around you in the starting arena and she checked here and here and here and here, where your exquisite riding clothes fell short of the mark. These demerits burned into your heart like sizzling brands, didn't they, Mr. Blinken? Four burning wounds! And you remem-

*A horse person always
knows when there is a horse
behind him, and halfway
out Loobermarl Lane I
became aware of a horse
at my back.*

bered them every day as the year turned and every day as the Cumberbund Steeplechase again approached, and it was enough to fuel your insane rage toward this kindly hanky-folding spinster."

Well, we'd never had such a speech in the Ivory Fetlock since Marjorie Fodder came and retrieved her husband three or four years ago and she recited the first four pages of "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and I don't know what other people do, but accused or not, I applauded. We all did.

Then, when it grew quiet again, I said: "The demerits disappointed me, but I didn't kill the lady, or anybody really. I'm sorry for her death and," then I joined the ranks of the sensational in Stirrupshire by adding, "her exsanguination."

"Don't you say exsanguination to me, sir," the constable was still speaking in a stentorian register. "Where were your whereabouts on Wednesday last?" The constable played his trump card, I suppose. "Because Missus Fintree, your landlord, doesn't remember seeing you come in." Then, despite his proximity, I stood up at the pub and was now face-to-face with Yowden Oldchair, who said to

me, "Where are we going, Mr. Blinken?"

"It's my shift at the barn," I told him. "We need to guard our precious horses. We have a steeplechase to win." This garnered again a little polite applause and allowed me to avoid further attention and slip out the door.

A horse person always knows when there is a horse behind him, and halfway out Loobermarl Lane I became aware of a horse at my back. I turned in the dark and saw only the lights of the village, a glint and a gleam, and the yellow squares of the windows of the vicar's house. It was just supper time. Then I felt a gust of wind and smelled a horse, very close, and I felt a shape above me, occluding the new stars, and I heard the noise Far Cry makes deep in his nose when we change gaits, a little pip, a high groan. I called his name, Far Cry, and felt again only a blast of air and the dark shape I sensed was gone. I stood there like a dolt for a full minute, like a man in a trance, and then I ran for the barn, cutting across Doister's fennel field and over the back rail fence. The big barn doors were wide open and straw floated in the dark. I checked each stall for our precious champions and each stall was without its horse.

I banged on the plank door of Esbernisha Wygossi's cottage soundly enough that dust drifted out of the thatched roof. "Mr. Blinken," she said upon opening the door. She was in a white blouse covered with a brown shawl and her red skirt had bells in the hem. "What is it?"

"Esbernisha. Where are the horses?"

"I just stepped in. They're in the barn."

I looked at her calm face. "They're gone!" I said. "Can you please saddle old Hazzard for me?"

She was quick with the horse, and I knew where I had to go. There was only one judge left. Riding old Hazzard, whom I'd been on a thousand times, was a stark difference from riding our new mounts. He moved steadily but there was no flight in it, and for that I was thankful. I rode the bridle path down past the school, hurrying, rattling all my bones, and into the dale and then we had to walk up the serpentine to the pass at Rathernather and finally down into Saddleshire, our rival township, which I loathe and where the rumor is they have more churches than congregants. Dropping into town from there you can see 11 steeples. Mr. Melbourne Yeastie lived in a little brick house, the last on the hay lane. As I cantered up, I merged with two other horses, which surprised me, as they were occupied by Constable Yowden Oldchair and pale Roderick Loose, the diligent scribe.

"Hurry," I told them.

"Hurry, indeed," the constable said. "And what for? This jumping judge, Mr. Yeastie, is now safe from the likes of you, I'd say."

"Don't write that down," I told Roderick. "Let's find Mr. Yeastie."

"He's at late tea, I would think," said

Yowden. "Like all good townfolk."

The hack Roderick Loose was at the cottage door, knocking, and then we saw him disappear into the lighted place.

"Didn't you think, Mr. Blinken, that I was onto you? How you'd methodically gone down the list of hated judges and was knocking them off one by one and that Mr. Melbourne Yeastie, who was once mayor of Saddleshire, would be next on your murderous agenda?"

"I came to warn him," I said.

"Well, let's go in then and warn him," the constable said, leading me into the neat little domicile.

"Out back, Yowden," the newsman Roderick Loose called. Suddenly there was a great noise on the roof as if there was a row in the attic, but such a house did not have an attic and I could smell horses beyond ours and I heard that little yelp that Far Cry makes when he's working. Suddenly, I knew all about it.

We went into the back garden and found Mr. Melbourne Yeastie flat on the stone terrace, glowing white but quite dead. The mark on his neck was glorious, red and raised, and seeing it this way, I could discern the tooth marks.

"He's still warm," Roderick said.

"How did you do this?" Constable Oldchair asked me. "By what magic? Just tell me how."

"I didn't do anything," I told him. "I was with you."

"You applied your exsanguinating machine and killed Mr. Yeastie."

"I exsanguinated no one," I said. "Ever." I turned to the scribbler Roderick Loose and told him: "Write that down." After the first casualty Roderick had ceased asking people how to spell exsanguinated.

"Well, he's been exsanguinated."

"He certainly has," I agreed. "But I rode over the hill to warn him."

Oldchair folded his arms. "I guess you did," he said. "But what on earth has happened here?" The constable now looked like an actor in a silent comedy, where a house has fallen in and the problem of putting it back up has him vexed anew. I could see where Mr. Yeastie had been having his soup at the wooden table in his little kitchen when he got up thinking he heard horses in his garden. It would have been a cruel surprise to see those four equine faces when he opened the door and then all those teeth.

Now the dark air above us was empty and I knew we were safe. The horses had flown back to their sorceress and were eating fresh oats in their warm barn, a late meal to go with their morbid cordial.

This is when I saw a sheaf of blue betting slips sticking out of Roderick Loose's ratty notebook and another packet of the things protruding from the constable's riding jacket pocket.

I pointed. "Have you bet on Stirrupshire?" I asked.

"Of course," Yowden said to me.

"Good," I said. "Keep those tickets. Tomorrow night at the Fetlock I have a powerful feeling that you'll be buying."

SCREWED

(continued from page 66)

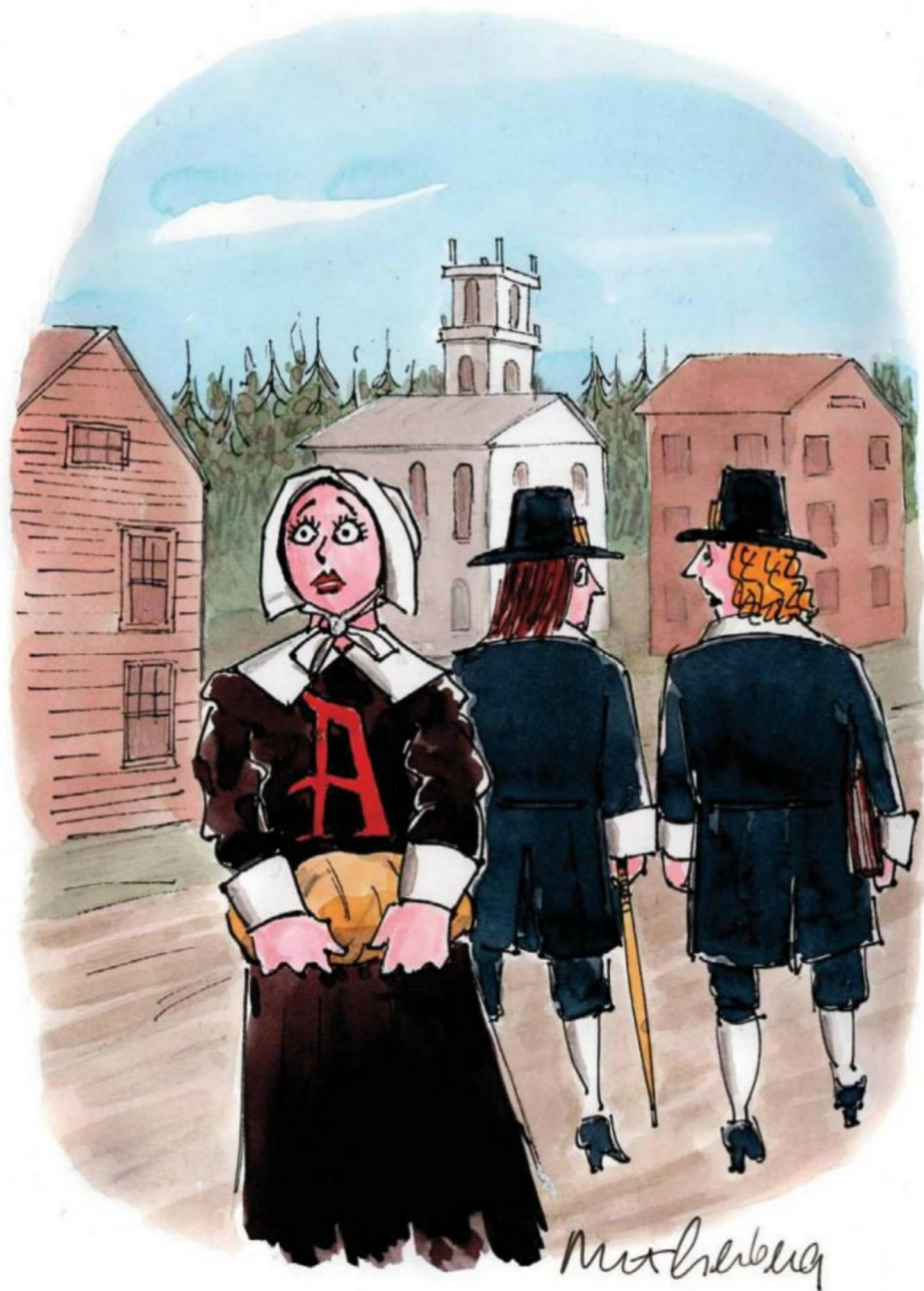
certainly not. But if you're single and live in the Bible Belt, you might want to start laying in supplies.

In red states, it's a near certainty that Republican politicians will impose onerous regulations on birth control. Expect insurers to drop contraception coverage to avoid the harassment of antisex bureaucrats combing through their balance sheets. Don't expect men and women under the age of 18 to be able to buy condoms legally or get a prescription for hormonal birth control. Laws restricting access to contraception for unmarried adults could even be passed. Think that is out of the question? The 2010 Texas Republican Party platform called for raising the age of sexual consent to 18. The Utah state criminal code

defines "fornication"—that is, sex between single people—as a Class B misdemeanor.

More proof that the attack on abortion is a war on birth control comes from the personhood movement—the new frontier of the anti-abortion religious right. Personhood initiatives define "life" as beginning at fertilization—the moment the sperm hits the egg. As the 2012 Minnesota Republican Party platform puts it, an individual's inalienable right to life begins "when the DNA of Mankind is joined." Personhood advocates falsely claim that hormonal contraception and the IUD work as forms of abortion. Combine these two notions—no abortion after "life" begins and birth control is abortion—and you end up with abortion bans that treat taking the pill as tantamount to murder.

The Romney-Ryan ticket and the GOP platform have endorsed the goals of the



"Personally, I didn't think she rated more than a B-minus."



personhood movement. Romney said, a year ago on Mike Huckabee's Fox News show, that he "absolutely" supports constitutional amendments defining life as beginning at conception. Often Romney parrots the far right's talking point that "the pill kills" when he calls contraception and the morning-after pill "abortive pills." Ryan has pushed an even more aggressive agenda by repeatedly partnering with Todd Akin, the representative from Missouri who made headlines on the eve of the Republican National Convention with his comments about "legitimate rape." The duo co-sponsored a federal personhood bill, which said, "The life of each human being begins with fertilization, cloning or its functional equivalent... at which time every human being shall have all the legal and constitutional attributes and privileges of personhood." The 2012 GOP platform calls for a human life amendment, that is, a personhood amendment, to the U.S. Constitution.

Are Romney, Ryan and the GOP gunning for your birth control? You betcha.

★★★

THE DEATH OF CASUAL SEX

Many people presume that Romney, epic flip-flopper that he is, didn't mean anything he said during the GOP primary to swat down the wild-eyed fanatics like Michele Bachmann, Newt Gingrich, Rick Perry and Rick Santorum. They're trusting that the candidate who once swore to Massachusetts voters that he was pro-choice and pro-gay rights is the real McCoy.

That's a comforting fairy tale but a dangerous one.

The evidence from Romney's years as governor—a subject he religiously avoids talking about—shows him to be anything but moderate. Governor Romney reneged on just about every campaign promise he had made to women and gays about sexual rights, personal freedom and privacy. Romney wouldn't even protect a rape victim from having to bear the child of her rapist; he vetoed a bill requiring hospitals to give emergency contraception to rape victims.

Romney may not present himself as a religious zealot, but the passion-challenged multimillionaire from Bain Capital has sealed himself for eternity to the GOP's sex police. So what could America look like after a few years of a Romney presidency?

To get a preview of what might be in store for you, sexually speaking, take a tour of

today's Republican-ruled lands. Start in our nation's capital, where the House spent one out of every seven days focused on America's lady parts, where Senator Rand Paul tried to attach a "life begins at conception" rider to the National Flood Insurance Program while Florida was bailing out from Tropical Storm Debby. Head north to Wisconsin, home of Paul Ryan, where recall survivor Governor Scott Walker and the GOP legislature defunded Planned Parenthood, ended the state family-planning program and, for good measure, repealed the state's equal-pay-for-women law. Travel through the heartland and over the Rockies into Salt Lake City, where in the shadow of the Mormon Tabernacle a Utah lawmaker defended censorship because saying the word *condom* to students was like encouraging them to "mainline" heroin. End your

was a tyrannical intrusion on American liberty. Meanwhile, a national law requiring women seeking abortions to undergo compulsory transvaginal ultrasounds has gone into effect. The records of their abortions, their sexual partners and the names of their doctors are being stored in a national database.

With the constitutional rights to privacy and abortion wiped out, absolutely nothing stands in the way of the antisex crusaders. Birth control has become less like Viagra and more like medical marijuana: expensive and a bit complicated to procure. Few health insurers cover contraception, tube tying or vasectomies anymore; the government paperwork and personhood protests in front of their corporate offices make it too politically costly to attempt. Condoms have disappeared from store shelves in states where laws prohibiting

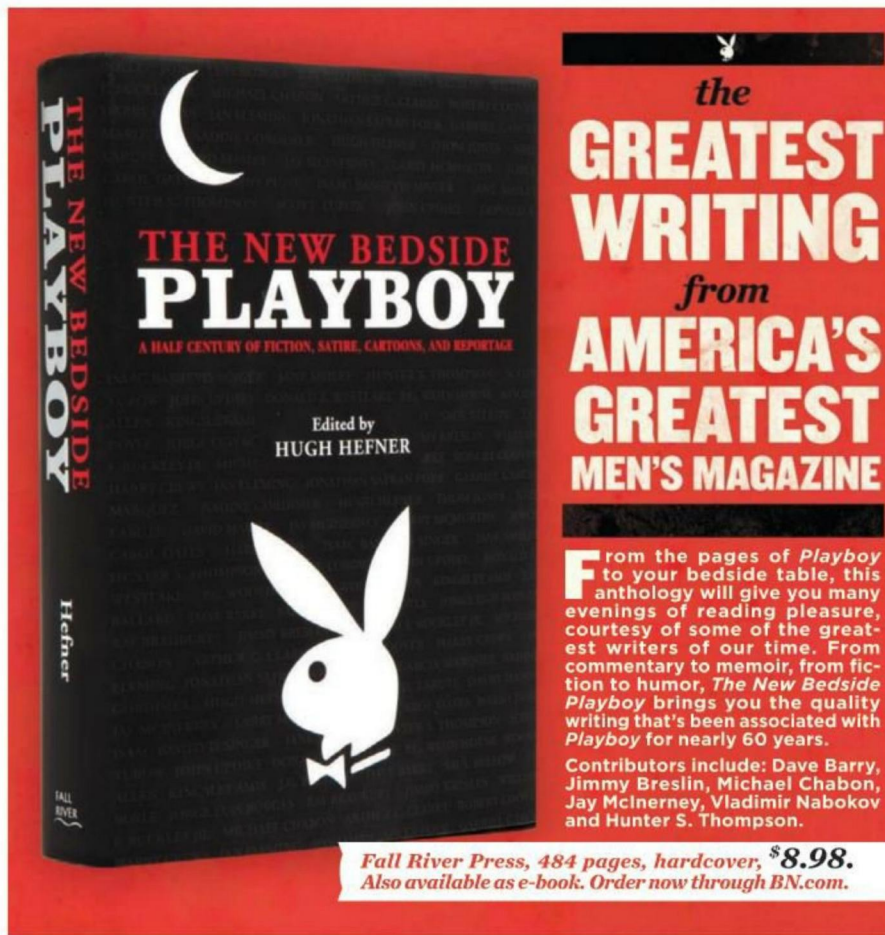
sex outside of marriage have been enacted.

Perhaps President Romney has delivered on an under-the-radar pledge to the Republican base that he made on his first trip down the presidential campaign trail. "We all gotta clean up the water that our kids are swimming in," Romney told a conclave of so-called values voters. "By that I mean the pornography, the drug culture, the violence, the sex, the perversion that bombards them day in and day out. I want to make sure that every new computer sold in this country after I'm president has installed on it a filter to block all pornography and that parents can flick that filter to make sure kids don't see that kind of stuff coming in on their computer." To prove his zeal, he said he wanted "to enforce our obscenity laws."

The Republican Party granted Romney's wish, stating in its 2012 national platform, "Current laws on all forms of pornography and obscenity need to be vigorously enforced."

Now it's 2016. As Americans ready themselves for another presidential election and watch the Rio Olympics, most of the old porn-friendly computers have been sent off to the scrap heap of history. In half the nation abortion is illegal and birth control is rare. The average age of marriage has plummeted to 20. The notion of casual sex is a fantasy, the sexual revolution history. The sexual counter-revolutionaries have won.

Welcome to the future of your sex life. Welcome back to 1950.



journey in Texas, where the Republican Party officially declared the separation of church and state to be a "myth" and called for outlawing no-fault divorce.

Flash forward a few years. The Romney-Roberts Supreme Court has overturned *Roe* and *Griswold*. Abortion is illegal in most of the country and the morning-after pill is no longer an approved FDA drug. When the Defense of Marriage Act came before the Court in 2014, Justice Scalia used the occasion to restore the government's power to outlaw sex acts deemed immoral by overturning *Lawrence and Garner v. Texas*, the landmark 2003 decision that tossed out antisodomy laws. The Affordable Care Act has been repealed by the Republican Congress on the rationale that Obamacare's mandate to buy insurance



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they'll do anything to advance their 'principles.' Whereas Democrats are principled in a completely instrumental way—being principled means holding to fair procedures. I like to think of it in terms of the following allegory: Two congressmen are on their way to an important vote when they see a little old lady hobbling across the street. The Democrat stops to help her even though he risks missing the vote, because he considers that to be the principled thing to do. The Republican completely ignores her in favor of making the vote because he considers that to be the principled thing to do.

"I'm sure in his heyday Lee Atwater would have told you he was acting entirely out of principle, and the principle was saving the country from anarchy by getting Republican candidates elected and making sure Democratic candidates were defeated."

Eric Dezenhall, Republican communications strategist who worked with Atwater during the Reagan administration: "Lee's rise in Washington took place in Watergate's wake, when Nixon had left Republicans with this political-viper archetype. Democratic political hardball was portrayed in the media as healthy, boisterous discourse—if it was portrayed at all. Republican hardball, on the other hand, had the whiff of shadowy operatives driving enemies off a cliff and high-fiving as they sped away into the night.

"Lee was also the first post-Watergate Republican to flush any pretense of media objectivity down the toilet, along with the canard that political aggressiveness was the unique device of Republicans. He knew that Nixon's dark side was catalyzed by what the Kennedys did to him during the 1960 presidential election and that LBJ's crowd placed wiretaps on potentially problematic figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. Somehow, though, Democratic rough stuff had a boys-will-be-boys, Bluto Blutarsky ring of harmlessness to it because the dominant media culture thought the ends were noble. The perception of Republicans was the exact opposite. They were allegedly Doug Neidermeyer vicious—either nasty to great effect or imbecilic, never mind the contradiction. Lee rejected this construct and did what he had to do. He refused to be blackmailed into restraint because he accepted as fact that the Democrats had the news media, academia and popular culture as allies.

"Personally, I was vaguely scared of him. If I was the political freshman in the Reagan White House, Lee was the proverbial hair-trigger senior who drove his muscle car too fast and always left a trail of cigarettes, beer bottles and joints in his wake. He had thin lips, which made him look angry, and veins always seemed to be pulsing around his neck. He reminded me of a mongoose whose eyes redden whenever he sees a snake in the garden."

The first politician Atwater targeted was Tom Turnipseed, a South Carolina Democrat who ran for Congress in 1980 against

Floyd Spence, the Republican incumbent for whom Atwater served as a consultant. "Atwater's antics included phony polls by 'independent pollsters' to 'inform' white suburbanites that I was a member of the NAACP, because my congressman opponent was afraid to publicly say so, and last-minute letters from Senator Strom Thurmond warning voters that I would disarm America and turn it over to the liberals and Communists," Turnipseed recalled in *The Washington Post* in 1991. In an even lower blow, Atwater mocked the electroshock treatments Turnipseed received as a teenager to combat depression, spinning it as though Turnipseed had been hooked up to "jumper cables." "No matter how much Mr. Turnipseed talked about education or crime or dirty tricks after that, voters only saw the jumper cables," *The New York Times* explained many years later.

As Atwater ascended as a Republican strategist, he also began consciously assembling a dictionary of code words and phrases to attract white voters in the South—a cynical ploy that frequently angered the Democratic National Committee and African American groups. "You start out in 1954 saying, 'Nigger, nigger, nigger,'" he told an interviewer in the early 1980s. "By 1968, you can't say 'nigger'—that hurts you. Backfires. So you say stuff like forced busing and states' rights. You're getting so abstract now you're talking totally about...economic things, and a by-product of them is that blacks get hurt worse than whites. And subconsciously maybe that's part of it. I'm not saying that. But I'm saying that if it is getting that abstract, and that coded, that we are doing away with the racial problem one way or the other. You follow me—because

obviously sitting around saying, 'We want to cut this,' is much more abstract than even the busing thing and a hell of a lot more abstract than 'nigger, nigger.'"

All of which leads to Willie Horton. In 1986, Horton, a convicted murderer, escaped to Maryland during a sanctioned weekend furlough from his Massachusetts jail cell. A few months later he was arrested for home invasion, rape and assault. Because Michael Dukakis was the governor of Massachusetts at the time of Horton's furlough, Atwater and the Bush campaign seized on Horton (and the furlough program more broadly) as a wedge issue. The wedge became even more divisive because Horton was African American—and seemingly a prime example of Atwater's abstract race-baiting. Bush surrogates, allegedly with Atwater's full knowledge, ran a particularly damning attack ad that prominently featured Horton's menacing mug shot, which critics maintained played up every possible stereotype of the terrifying black male who preys on innocent white people. "Willie Horton, who murdered a boy in a robbery, stabbing him 19 times," the ad's narrator intoned. "Despite a life sentence, Horton received 10 weekend passes from prison. Horton fled, kidnapped a young couple, stabbing the man and repeatedly raping his girlfriend. Weekend prison passes—Dukakis on crime."

The resulting firestorm led to the ad being pulled and a heated debate about whether or not it was racist.

Willie Horton, from an exclusive December 1989 PLAYBOY interview: "Was the ad racist? Hell, you know it was. And I'm not the only victim of racism. All poor people and minorities are portrayed in a similar manner by people who exploit their woes



"Wow! A glory hole! You weren't kidding when you said that Ethan had a really great lawyer."

in order to whip up public anger and fear. Obviously, many people resent the gains that blacks and poor people have made in recent years. If they had their way, they'd like to return to the good old days, when blacks and poor people had to shuffle for crumbs. Today, these bigots don't go out and beat up black people anymore. They do it with a paper and pen. And that's what happened to me.

"Sadly, there's no black leader who possesses the moral authority of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. If this had happened to me when he was alive, I believe that the public would have known the truth by now. In many ways, blacks are their own worst enemies. We have a tendency to blame everyone else for our problems. And those who do make it often say, 'To hell with everyone else. I made it. And I'm not going to let anybody take it away from me.' And some politicians—like George Bush—won't let the old hatreds die. Why? Because they understand that racial smears win elections.

"Bush said he didn't authorize the ad, that it was produced by the National Security Political Action Committee, which was totally independent of the Republican campaign. Bullshit. The fact is, the committee worked for George Bush. And it was headed by his top media advisor, Roger Ailes. Do you mean to say that Bush had no idea what was going on? Hell, he used to be the head of the CIA. If you believe that statement, I've got some terrific swampland you might like to buy. I didn't graduate from Yale, but I can certainly tell a scam when I see one."

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform and a member of the 1988 Republican Platform Committee's campaign staff: "William Horton—Willie Horton is what Democrats call Horton to make it sound as if people are using a diminutive for a black guy—is a murderer. In retrospect, there has been an effort to suggest the furlough issue was somehow a dirty trick, but it only became a dirty trick when it became a problem for Dukakis in winning the 1988 election.

"When Massachusetts gave up on the death penalty, its people were promised

that murderers would be sent to prison for life without parole. What the public and the juries weren't told was that the state had a furlough system. Every prisoner got a furlough, regardless of what they did. Republican governors had furlough programs too, but those were different: If an inmate had only six months left on his sentence, he was given a weekend off to visit relatives and find an apartment. The chances of escape were low because if the inmate escaped, he was sentenced to another five years in prison just as he was about to get out.

"The furlough program under Dukakis spoke to his mental state and the fact that you wouldn't want him to be president. It was furloughing guys who were supposed to spend the rest of their lives in prison, meaning they didn't have an incentive to return to the penitentiary. Other furloughed prisoners had gotten out and committed crimes; some had even committed murder. The difference with William Horton was that he committed a crime in Maryland. And Maryland started asking questions, such as 'Did he escape?'

"No, we let him out on a furlough. Can you please send him back to us?"

"So you can let him out on a furlough again? He's wanted here for kidnapping and rape!"

"I always thought it was unfair to attack Lee for the Horton ad as if it was a dirty trick. The Democrats looked at Horton and saw a black guy; the rest of the country looked at him and saw a murderer. Who is the racist? The Democrats are obsessed with race. They governed much of the country based on that platform for a long time. But they couldn't deal with the facts on the ground of the William Horton story. What Dukakis did was indefensible. How do you hear that story and still think Dukakis should be president?"

In the months after the 1988 presidential election, Atwater remained defiant. "We had only one goal in the campaign: to help elect George Bush," he said, dismissing criticism of his bare-knuckled attacks against Dukakis—at one point Atwater had vowed

to "strip the bark off the little bastard" (Dukakis is five-foot-eight) and suggested that Horton should serve as Dukakis's running mate. "That's the purpose of any political campaign. What other function should a campaign have?"

But after being diagnosed with brain cancer in March 1990, Atwater, then head of the Republican National Committee, rejected the political crassness of his entire career. As aggressive steroids and chemotherapy treatments distorted his face, figure and persona, Atwater offered a 5,000-word mea culpa in *Life* magazine.

Lee Atwater, from that article, entitled "Lee Atwater's Last Campaign": "In 1988, fighting Dukakis, I said I 'would strip the bark off the little bastard' and 'make Willie Horton his running mate.' I am sorry for both statements: the first for its naked cruelty, the second because it makes me sound racist, which I am not. Mostly I am sorry for the way I thought of other people. Like a good general, I had treated everyone who wasn't with me as against me. After the election, when I would run into Ron Brown, my counterpart at the Democratic Party, I would say hello and then pass him off to one of my aides. I actually thought that talking to him would make me appear vulnerable. Since my illness, Ron has been enormously kind—he writes and calls regularly—and I have learned a lesson: Politics and human relationships are separate. I may disagree with Ron Brown's message, but I can love him as a man."

Tom Turnipseed, from a 1991 *Washington Post* op-ed published shortly after Atwater's death: "In the last few months of his life, Lee apologized to me. In a letter dated June 28, 1990, Lee wrote, 'It is very important to me...that out of everything that has happened in my career, one of the low points remains the so-called "jumper cable" episode.' He [also] said in his letter to me that 'my illness has taught me something about the nature of humanity, love, brotherhood and relationships that I never understood, and probably never would have. So, from that standpoint, there is some truth and good in everything.'



"Touched by the sincerity of his letter of apology and subsequent phone conversations, I attended Lee's funeral in Columbia, South Carolina. Sitting across the church from me was a young Republican political consultant whom I recognized. I had recently seen him on CNN boasting about how Republicans were going to drive up the negatives on all the Democrats who voted 'against America' in opposing [George H.W.] Bush's force resolution [for the first Persian Gulf War] and beat them in 1992. How sad.

"I hope those young political consultants who would emulate Atwater's tactics of driving up the negatives of their opponents with the politics of fear will realize that Lee, confronting death, became, through the grace of God, an advocate of the politics of love and reconciliation. Rather than remembering him as one who polarized politics and exploited insecurity and prejudices to win elections, it would be good if we could remember him as a positive role model."

Such a legacy, of course, is impossible. Atwater's earlier antics were too contentious—and effective—to be forgotten or obscured by his deathbed apologies. And maybe just as important, Atwater himself was too fascinating a character to cast as either all good or all evil. He had many redeeming qualities, which made his irredeemable ones even more interesting. To wit, he had an engaging sense of humor that he rolled in and out of his sleeve like a pack of Marlboros. The excellent 2008 documentary *Boogie Man: The Lee Atwater Story* shows a clip of Atwater wearing a Three Stooges T-shirt as he's leaving the hospital after an initial round of treatment for his brain tumor. When a reporter asks him what his shirt says, Atwater turns toward them and replies "Just Say Moel! One of my intellectual heroes." Another incongruent Atwater fact: He earned a Grammy nomination for best contemporary blues recording. In this way, he could not have been more different from the current crop of political strategists.

Chris Lehmann, author of *Rich People Things: Real Life Secrets of the Predator Class* and former editor at *Mother Jones* and *Congressional Quarterly*: "If you live in Washington, D.C. long enough, eventually you don't make a distinction between the two parties. It's like Hollywood. It's a company town, and people do what they can to get their candidates in for one cycle. All the Mary Matalin and James Carville types have a lot more in common with each other than the base of either party.

"Besides, the real political operatives are no longer found within the Republican National Committee or the Democratic National Committee. Instead, they can be found at any of the million lobbying firms in Washington, none of which draws political lines either. Most of these firms have a Republican team and a Democratic team. When Congress is won or lost, each firm simply goes out and buys the party plaque for whichever party happens to be in power at the moment. In that sense, I don't think Atwater would adapt well to this world, because it's post-ideological.

"But the real crime of the contemporary consulting class is that they're so fucking boring. These people have all by and large gone to the same schools; they're all from the same social backgrounds. At a minimum, you want them to be charming. After all, charm is their stock in trade. But today's consultants are an unbelievably charmless group of people—precisely because they don't believe in anything. They're a mushy mass. I literally cannot tell the difference between the ones who are on TV, people like Alex Castellanos and David Gergen. They're trapped in this weird spiritually and technologically unsustainable position of feeling they're in charge of the political discourse. The only thing they have to offer, however, is 'The Obama administration had a bad day' or 'The Romney campaign was unable to get X message out.' Who cares?"

"It offends me on some level that people who put out negative political products today are so bland personally. There's something to be said for being animated enough to get your set of beliefs into a position of influence. Lee Atwater was that kind of personality, which is why I have a perverse admiration for him. He wasn't some generic talking head. By that count, something has been lost."

Jordan Lieberman, political campaign strategist: "Someone like Lee Atwater will never exist again. The industry has changed a lot. What matters in 2012 has nothing to do with the guy who is willing to stay up until three in the morning to come up with a creative idea. Those types of guys are no longer the center of the universe. The important things today are money, access to money and data. With the data I have access to, I can tell you that Texas Republicans are heavy news readers with an IRA value of \$200,000 who watch CBS and don't eat ethnic food unless it has an Americanized label. In the realm of targeted online advertising, that's more important than party affiliation.

"I go to work for the candidates who want to hire the best guys. I've worked on everything from a Democratic primary to campaigns for Tea Party favorites Sharron Angle and Christine O'Donnell. Ten years ago people went to work for the guy they believed in. If he won, they were in luck and on the rocket ship back to the Senate or White House. If they happened to believe in someone who lost, they kept losing until their guy won. Now, though, the campaigning never stops. You can have a career in the industry for the first time. There are graduate schools and best practices for being a political operative.

"These days you will work for any guy who is running. After all, you need a job. Drinking the Kool-Aid is dangerous if you're going to have a successful campaign—and career. Today there is a big discrepancy between your candidate's beliefs and your beliefs. You have to reconcile that. I like to think of my dad. He's a dentist. He cleans the teeth of a lot of people he doesn't like."



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GIRLFRIENDS

(continued from page 121)

in his arms to the Burt Bacharach standard “This Guy’s in Love With You,” the lyrics of which had never felt truer to him. But of course. Similarly, on the night he first got an eyeful (and more) of 19-year-old former Bible-school teacher Sondra Theodore (1976–1981), he swayed her to the slow-jam strings of Barry White’s “Baby Blues” and—voilà: “At that point I was a goner,” she confessed. “No one can slow dance like Hefner. It was like the Red Sea parted.” (Soon after, he draped her décolletage with a diamond-encrusted necklace that spelled out the words *Baby Blue*.) Kismet would be his specialty—spontaneous love combustion—and those who knew him best could spot its every outbreak, so recognizable were the symptoms. “It was much more than lust at first sight,” stressed his old friend John Dante, a Mansion habitué who witnessed the phenomenon repeatedly. “Romance was foremost on his mind.”

Actually, while Dante’s instant-inferno-effect summation uniformly applies to the dawn of each serious Hef relationship, you should know that the quote above refers specifically to Karen Christy (1971–1974), whose arrival at the Chicago Playboy Mansion rendered the master intractably thunderstruck. His own inimitable sizing up of Ms. Christy, whom he crowned Miss December in their first year together: “A voluptuous, baby-faced blonde from Texas who had stepped right out of my erotic, pre-cede Busby Berkeley Hollywood dreams from boyhood.” (He went so far as to add, “When I fell for her, I fell hard,” evincing that theirs “was the most passionate love of my life—while it lasted.”) Which prompts us to now address how, and why, so many of his special ladies have gotten to the heart of Hef as others never could. “My love map,” he has said, “is very much designed and written by Hollywood. I was a Midwestern Methodist boy from Chicago—but the other dominant half of my identity came directly from those larger-than-life dreams I saw in the movies.” More often than not, in fact, he has spotted in his choicest mates irresistible traces of vintage silver-screen goddesses—Alice Faye, Jean Harlow, Marilyn Monroe—who had all jolted his adolescence with carnal stirrings that stir no less powerfully these days. (“First you look at the face,” he once informed me, apropos of all initial encounters wherein his subconscious sifts for any such nostalgia-gilded resemblances.) Barbi Benton, he concluded, “became a kind of Hollywood version of the teenage romance I never really had when I was in high school. I was crazy about her.” Further, she was more than just the first truly necessary primal enticement that had him returning repeatedly from Chicago to Hollywood—via his famously customized all-black *Big Bunny* private DC-9. She also happened to discover the Shangri-la property—right across the street from Bogart and Bacall’s old place—that became Playboy Mansion West, where, as its irrefutable very first lady, she lovingly oversaw the fabled homestead’s Hefnerization metamorphosis

in between his increasingly frequent commutes to the dreamland whose stars had shaped him.

Poetry, thus, lurks in his early proximity to the ghost house of Humphrey Bogart, whose love-torn character in *Casablanca* (Hef’s favorite film) reminds him of himself whenever any of his grandest loves are upended. Romanticized Hefner touchstone therein: the scene in which Bogie stands alone in the rain reading Ingrid Bergman’s farewell letter while its ink soggily bleeds out, much like the heart beneath the stoic hero’s trench coat. “We’ve all been there,” Hef once confessed to me. “We’ve all had our punches in the gut.” And for certain, in recent years he has very publicly absorbed a couple of especially rough blows in the special lady department—the first one landing with the departure of his ultra numero uno among that original troika of *The Girls Next Door*; the telegenically devoted Holly Madison (2001–2007), whose visceral adoration was more than reciprocated by him and broadcast worldwide during five seasons of the E! network’s Mansion-based hit reality series (on which she ostensibly shared him, to a point, with spritely supplemental girlfriends Bridget Marquardt and Kendra Wilkinson, who both left the same year for outside pursuits). And then two Junes ago there came the jarringly thunderous Runaway Bride incident: Crystal Harris, who had emerged as his steadfast leading lady in the reinvented sixth and final *GND* season (twins Karissa and Kristina Shannon this time filled the supplemental roles), found herself on Christmas Eve of 2010 happily accepting—*gulp!*—his (maybe equally jarring) proposal of marriage. However, five days prior to the meticulously planned ceremony, she bolted from the Mansion, overcome by fears real or imagined. (“Ultimately, I fooled myself completely in the relationship,” he later told me, “because that proposal was, without any question, a rebound from Holly’s leaving. In the process, I probably misread Crystal. And so there went the bride.”)

But the larger point here, thematically speaking, is that he withstands such lumps with an enviable philosophical grace not so easily mustered by other mortals. “I’ve always thought about my life like a movie,” he explained, not surprisingly, some years ago as we assembled sage content for *Hef’s Little Black Book*, an invaluable manual created to bolster all dreamers (and reissued this month with updated tales of romance, pain and ongoing wisdom). “You need the drama. If you think of your life that way, you get through the tough times. Plus, the reality is that life—especially in this regard—is very much like a movie. We delude ourselves with the notion that somehow there is only one person out there who is a soulmate. In fact, there are many appropriate people who can be cast in that co-starring role. When you’re dealing with lost love, it’s time to just start the casting process all over again.”

Naturally, then, Hef excels at being his own best casting director—because he has long understood and perfected the epic protagonist character he alone was born to

portray. “It wasn’t difficult to figure out that the most successful sex object I’d created was me,” he once proclaimed. “It was a role I was very comfortable playing. I have built here what could be viewed as a perpetual women machine.” By which he means—due to the nature of his work—there would be no paucity of incoming prospective co-stars to audition as meaningful love interests. (Best criterion for snagging the part, aside from radiant beauty: “Somebody who doesn’t want to change me at all.” Also, great laughs who are not averse to bright playfulness, general or sexual.) Lately, in fact, he’s come to favor ensemble casting, a trend that’s been mainly in place after the less-than-sybaritic hiatus that constituted his unwaveringly faithful relationship with Kimberly Conrad (1988–1997), the second-ever Mrs. Hugh M. Hefner, whom he unwittingly mislabeled Playmate for a Lifetime. “I went to the multiple-girlfriend arrangement because a large number of them can’t hurt you as much as one can,” he would say. Thus, revolving platoons would become the status quo, with certain groupings more memorable than others; his *Girls Next Door*, of course, are now embedded in the pop-culture pantheon. But who could forget, for instance, that name-rhyming trio made up of the exquisite Brande Roderick and the wily twins Mandy and Sandy Bentley (1998–1999)? Even now, with the return this past spring of the genuinely contrite Crystal Harris as his number one Special Lady, she willingly consented to join the dedicated stock company already ensconced in his affections—Trisha Frick and Chelsea Ryan (who had genially supplanted predecessors Shera Bechard and Anna Sophia Berglund, the heart-rescue team that endearingly dressed the wounds left by Crystal’s vanishing act). He was quick to announce this time around, “There are obvious differences. I’m not about to get married. I think that was a dumb idea to begin with. And I’m not giving up my other girlfriends, because I think there is safety in numbers.”

Frankly, what could be better news? Because a married Hef is not the same Hef whose phantasmagoric escapades have vicariously sustained the imaginations of admiring men for era upon era upon era. Shouldn’t every generation be privy to scrutinize the evolving, exacting standards and predilections of the master at his craft? How else could we have gotten to “meet” and “know” the bounteous likes of special ladies immemorial—the Janet Pilgrims, the Joyce Nizzaris, the Christa Specks, the Lillian Müllers, the Hope Olsons? (These are but a fraction of the pluperfect specimens captured both by him and by the retrospective pictorial you’re likely still staring at.) Even he has come to this same satisfying conclusion: “The truth of the matter,” he says nowadays with wistful but firm resolve, “is I should be single. I’m better served that way.” And so too would be much of the male populace at large, I’m thinking. Adamantly ageless at the age of 86 (propelled by that wide-eyed boy inside him who damn well refuses to entirely grow up),

he has found that marriage for him is a twice-cursed been-there-done-that experiment in illogical confinement. Of his first try at it, with college sweetheart Mildred Williams, he lamented, "It was a period of dreams lost, dreams set aside—trying to follow a different road, a road not charted in my own terms."

Terms changed, delectably so, when in 1953 he launched this magazine with all its built-in accoutrements. And thus, less than a decade after initial blastoff, we can still glimpse him in full swing—because his life had by then indeed become a movie (with several more yet to come) or, in this case, the focus of a defiantly hip award-winning 1962 documentary aptly titled *The Most*. "I have a certain reputation for being a man about town, a guy continually with a beautiful and oftentimes different chick on my arm, night after night," he suavely informs the camera, propping himself in a stately doorway—all of 35 years old, lithe, self-possessed, sharply tailored, cucumber cool, waving his iconic smoldering pipe like a scepter, lording over yet another jazzy Chicago Mansion bacchanal afforded by his soaring corporate brand, already worth a jaw-dropping \$20 million-plus. "I enjoy being with women very much. Most of the girls I date are several years younger than I am—18 to 24, 25, probably." (Famously, his romantic pursuits would never stray far from that same tender-blossom demographic, no matter his own ripening vintage; it's how cyclical rejuvenation always looks and feels best on him. "To a great extent, it's what keeps me alive," he says now. "I love to hear their laughter.") Anyway, he also handed the filmmaker this slippery demurral when citing one newspaperman's estimation "that I had probably made love to more beautiful women than any other man in history. Now, I'm very sure this probably isn't true...."

Actually, now we can probably be very sure that it's likely profoundly true—give or take. Quantity, however, has never been the point—even when his bed has swarmed with six or more bodies. "Something would always happen," Hef explained not long ago, "because I'm essentially a romantic—an unusual romantic, perhaps. But I inevitably found myself becoming truly, emotionally drawn to and involved with just one of the girls, which tended to override the other connections and grow, relationship-wise, into something more focused and traditional." (This was how Holly, for instance, first emerged for him; yes, their eyes met across a crowded bed.) Nevertheless, he quite openly consumed an unending array of new and different flavors during each major romance (the Kimberly Conrad marital years excepted), which rarely went over too well: "He dates other girls and I don't like it," Cynthia Maddox, his first truly serious live-in lady love (1961–1964), pouted on-camera in *The Most*, with mild impatience that escalated over time, as it always would with his greatest leading ladies. Not that they didn't rationalize away this habitual quirk of his; their love and concern for him were every bit as all-encompassing as his for them. "He was lonesome," semi-empathized

Barbi Benton. "When the cat's away," she added ruefully, "the mice will play." Sondra Theodore tried shrugging it off this way: "The others are just adventures." ("My bed," he'd say, beaming reassurance to all, then and now, "is a democracy!")

"Let's face it, the man knows how to treat women," sighed the lustrous and well-lavished Shannon Tweed (1981–1983), who last year became Mrs. Gene Simmons after decades of common-law togetherness. No, this golden succession of Hef's special ladies moved on and out largely because they could not make him theirs alone, never mind theirs in matrimony. ("Hef getting married was such an absurd idea," recalled Tweed. "We thought it was funny.") And yet he genuinely loved falling in love with each and every one of them, cherished how they individually re-empowered him and never stopped loving them after gently setting each one free to fly on her own. Of course, in doing so, he brought upon himself funks of recurring heartache—from the mid-1950s light-years onward through the latter-day platinum-posse period. "Broken hearts are like broken legs," he once lectured as only he could.

"They needn't be fatal. Only a foolish person doesn't leave the heart open for the joy and pain of love again."

And so he shall persist: "Being in love completes me. I need to be in love." He could not have been more emphatic when he told me those things recently. He knows the romantic perfection he lives to find is perfectly unfindable. But he will never call off the search, because that search is the full yearning essence of who he is, of who he always must be: "I realize that it is the way of things—that people remaining faithful, for instance, turns out to be a long shot. And of course, if one looks for an unrealistic relationship to begin with—because in the passing of the years, I'm looking for relationships with young, beautiful women—that itself is asking for trouble." He paused here and gave a sly omniscient smile: "There's a great old song, the lyrics of which go, 'If love is trouble, that's what I'm looking for.'"

He believes the words to the song are true, by the way. "But," he added in case we hadn't yet figured it out, "at least I'm very consistent."



"Did you or did you not suggest I bring home some lonely person to spend the holiday with us?"

CASTRO

(continued from page 69)

revolution and began to institute its sweeping social changes, several hundred thousand Cubans have renounced their country and fled to the United States. If the revolution is really for the good of the people, how do you account for this mass exodus?

CASTRO: There were many different reasons. Many of those who emigrated had lived from gambling, prostitution, drug traffic and other illicit activities before the revolution. They have gone with their vices to Miami and other cities in the United States because they couldn't adapt themselves to a society that has eradicated those social ills. Before the revolution, many stringent requirements were imposed on people applying for emigration to the United States, but after the revolution, even such unsavory parasites as these were admitted. All they had to do was say they were against communism.

Others of the emigrants were those with a very clear class position, who had been in the forefront against any change in social structure and felt themselves tricked when changes came about. Even though we had proclaimed them in our initial program, they didn't believe we would implement them, either because they had gotten used

to changes never occurring or because they thought such changes would not be possible in Cuba because they would affect the American interest, and that any government that tried this was destined to be rapidly swept away. Others left out of opportunism, because they believed that if a great many of their class left, the revolution wouldn't last very long. Some also left out of fear of war or from personal insecurity. There were even some who left after a whole series of revolutionary laws had been passed, when counterrevolutionaries spread a rumor that a new law was going to be passed that would take away the right of parents to bring up their own children. This absurd campaign succeeded in convincing many people, especially those who already had a lot of doubts. They sent their children out of the country and later left themselves.

PLAYBOY: If there had been active opposition to the revolution from the middle and upper classes, do you think you might have lost?

CASTRO: I don't think so. It would have been a longer struggle, more violent, keener from the beginning, but, together with the poor peasants and the workers, we would have overthrown Batista [Fulgencio Batista, the Cuban dictator deposed by Castro] even if he had had their solid support.

PLAYBOY: Given Batista's vast superiority of troops and armaments—with or without

middle- and upper-class support—some American military strategists feel you could have been defeated if it hadn't been for his ineptitude. Do you think that's true?

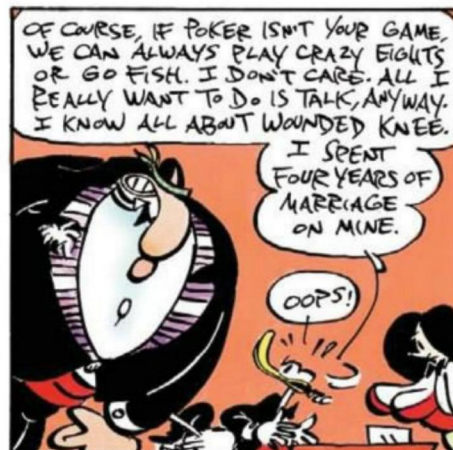
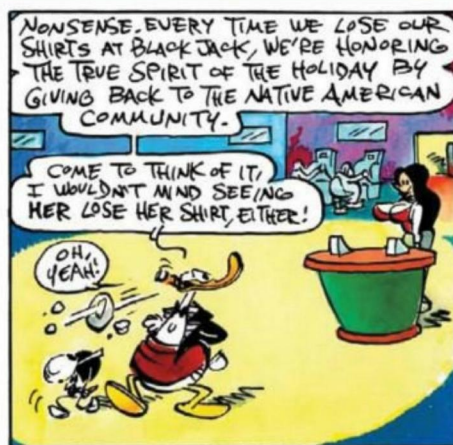
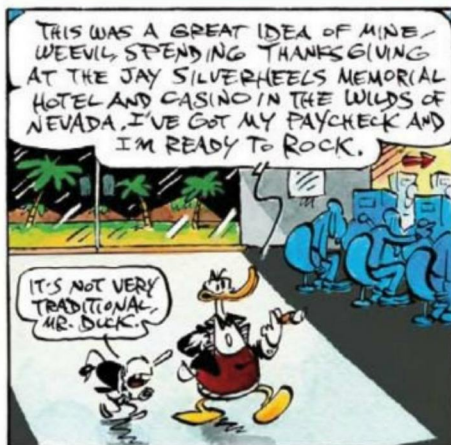
CASTRO: Unquestionably, if Batista had been a wiser and a braver man, a man of different characteristics, he would have been able to instill more spirit in his soldiers. By leading his troops more skillfully, he could have prolonged the war, but he would not have won it.

He had his only opportunity right at the beginning, when we were few and inexperienced. By the time we had gained a knowledge of the terrain and had increased our force to a little more than 100 armed men, there was already no way of destroying us with a professional army. The only way he could have contained us then would have been by fighting us with an army of peasants from the mountains where we were operating. For that, it would have been necessary to obtain the genuine support of the exploited peasant class. But how could he have gained that support? An army that served the landowners would never have been able to get the exploited farmers on their side.

PLAYBOY: Is it your conviction that the U.S. would be better off under socialism or communism?

CASTRO: No. I am a Marxist, and as a

Dirty Duck by Bobby London



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Marxist, I believe that revolutions are engendered by a state of misery and desperation among the masses. And that is not the situation of all the people of the United States but of only a minority, especially the Negroes. Only the masses can bring about a change of social structure, and the masses decide to make those great changes only when their situation is one of desperation. Many years could pass without that happening to the masses of the United States.

In reality, the struggle between the classes is not being conducted inside the United States. It is being conducted outside U.S. borders, in Vietnam, in Santo Domingo, in Venezuela and in certain other countries, including Cuba. Though I understand that a certain amount of protest and dissent is being heard in some North American universities, it is not the masses of the U.S. who fight today against the North American capitalists, because U.S. citizens have a relatively high standard of living and they are not suffering from hunger or misery.

PLAYBOY: Wherever the U.S. has intervened militarily since World War II, it has been to defend the underdeveloped nations from the threat of Communist subversion or aggression.

CASTRO: Why does it regard communism as a threat?

PLAYBOY: To put it simply, our government's position is that the goal of international communism is to enslave peoples, not to liberate them.

CASTRO: That is an absolutely erroneous point of view. Look at the case of Cuba: The United States wants to "liberate" Cuba from communism, but in reality, Cuba doesn't want to be "liberated" from communism. In order to "liberate" Cuba from communism, the United States organized the followers of Batista, the most reactionary people of this country—torturers, conspirators, thieves,

exploiters of all types. It organized them, trained them and armed them in order to come to "liberate" the people of Cuba. But none of those counterrevolutionaries had ever considered the needs of the Cuban people. They hadn't solved the problem of unemployment, ignorance, the lack of medical care, the poverty and misery that existed before the revolution.

PLAYBOY: In a 1964 newspaper interview, you said that one of the points you would consider as a basis for negotiations with the United States would be the question of abandoning Cuban assistance to revolutionary movements in other Latin American countries. Is this no longer your position?

CASTRO: What I said at that time was that our country was ready to live by norms of an international character, obeyed and accepted by all, of nonintervention in the internal affairs of the other countries. But I believe this formula should not be limited to Cuba. Bringing that concept up to date, I can say to you that we would gladly discuss our problems with the United States within the framework of a world policy of peace, but we have no interest in discussing them independently of the international situation. We are not interested in negotiating our differences while the U.S. is intervening in Santo Domingo, in Vietnam and elsewhere, while it is playing the role of repressive international policeman against revolutionary movements.

Before long, the United States will find itself required to overextend its forces in order to fight interventionist wars of a universally hateful nature against the revolutionary movements in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America. It will find itself increasingly alone, isolated and repudiated by world opinion. The revolutionary movement will break out sooner or later in all oppressed and exploited countries.

PLAYBOY: At the end of the Missile Crisis, one of the points of the accord between the U.S. and the Soviet Union was a pledge by the U.S. that it would not invade Cuba. Do you consider that agreement still in effect?

CASTRO: That is indisputable. The agreement is a matter of both fact and legality. The United States has since alleged that because we haven't permitted inspection, there is no such agreement, but de facto, they accept it.

PLAYBOY: Has there been any diminution of counterrevolutionary activities in Cuba since the Missile Crisis?

CASTRO: No, the CIA maintains its activities incessantly and with all possible resources. It works systematically with all the Cubans who are now in the United States, with the relatives and friends of the counterrevolutionaries who are there, trying constantly to organize webs of information, espionage and counterrevolution. Much of the news related to the activities of the CIA we do not make public. Many times we know when agents come. We are always capturing agents, launches, boats, radio-communication equipment.

PLAYBOY: What do you do with the agents you capture?

CASTRO: The same thing we did with the prisoners captured at the Bay of Pigs.

PLAYBOY: How many political prisoners are you holding at the present time?

CASTRO: Although we usually do not give this kind of information, I am going to make an exception with you. I think there must be approximately 20,000. [According to *Time* (October 8, 1965), the number is closer to 50,000.] This number comprises all those sentenced by revolutionary tribunals, including not only those sentenced on account of counterrevolutionary activities but also those sentenced for offenses against the people during Batista's regime, and many cases that have nothing to do with political activities, such as embezzlement, theft or assault, which because of their character were transferred to revolutionary tribunals. Unfortunately, we are going to have counterrevolutionary prisoners for many years to come.

PLAYBOY: Why?

CASTRO: In a revolutionary process, there are no neutrals: There are only partisans of the revolution or enemies of it. In every great revolutionary process it has happened like this—in the French Revolution, in the Russian Revolution, in our revolution.

PLAYBOY: You once stated that if the U.S. government would agree to cease fostering counterrevolution in Cuba, you would consider freeing the majority, if not all, of your political prisoners. Has your position changed on this matter?

CASTRO: We made that proposal because we believe that the counterrevolutionary activity directed and encouraged by the United States is the fundamental cause of the existing tensions and, therefore, of the measures that we find ourselves obliged to take. I am certain that without the support of the United States, there would be no counterrevolution. If the counterrevolution ends, the necessity of keeping many of the counterrevolutionaries in prison will end too. Thanks to our rehabilitation program, I have no



“...And for all of those sitting at home wearing a Santa hat and sipping some eggnog, just a reminder: It's only October 24.”

doubt that many of these men will come to be revolutionaries themselves.

PLAYBOY: What kind of rehabilitation?

CASTRO: There are two kinds. One is for persons living in rural areas who collaborated with the counterrevolutionary bands that were operating in the Escambray Mountains. These cases were not sent to prison; they were transferred to agricultural work for a period of one to two years on *granjas* [state farms]. During the period of time between their arrest and their release, the revolutionary government has taken care of all the needs of their families. Upon their final release, they have been and are being relocated as agricultural workers, and they and their families are given new living quarters built for them by the government. The other type of rehabilitation has to do with cases of persons under sentence for offenses against the people during the time of Batista's tyranny, as well as with those sentenced for counterrevolutionary offenses since 1959. Their rehabilitation has three stages: first, the participation of the sentenced person in agricultural work, study and other activities; a second stage in which he is allowed to visit his family periodically; and a third stage when he is paroled.

PLAYBOY: You've spoken of prerevolutionary Havana as an overdeveloped city in an underdeveloped country. But today it looks to most visitors like a crumbling relic. Its streets, which have fallen into disrepair, are almost empty of traffic; its buildings are run-down; its public utilities are inefficient; its housing shortages are acute. If Cuba can't maintain its own capital city, how can it be expected to fulfill its international financial obligations?

CASTRO: A modern city has many expenses: To maintain Havana at the same level as before would be detrimental to what has to be done in the interior of the country. For that reason, Havana must necessarily suffer this process of disuse, of deterioration, until enough resources can be provided. Of course, everything that's essential will be taken care of in Havana: the public services—transportation, water, sewerage, streets, parks, hospitals, schools, etc. But construction of new buildings—like those lavish skyscrapers that were built before the revolution, to the detriment of the interior of the country—has been discontinued for the time being. Moreover, under the Urban Reform Law of 1960, all rents were reduced and many people are now paying no rent at all.

PLAYBOY: Is the scarcity of living quarters in the cities one of the reasons you have permitted the continuation of that old Cuban institution, the *posada* [a government-run chain of motel-like establishments where young Cuban couples go to make love—for a nominal fee and no questions asked]?

CASTRO: The problem of the *posadas* poses a series of questions of a human kind that will have to be analyzed in the future. Neither customs nor traditions can be changed easily, nor can they be dealt with superficially. I believe that new realities—social, economic and cultural—will determine new conditions and new concepts of human relations.

PLAYBOY: Concepts shorn of the strict

religious traditions that still form the basis of prevailing Cuban attitudes toward sexual relations?

CASTRO: I think it's not only a matter of religious traditions, which naturally have an influence, but also of certain Spanish customs, which are stricter in this respect than, for example, Anglo-Saxon traditions. Naturally, those centers to which you refer have been in operation because they satisfy a social need. Closing them would make no sense. But what has definitely been fought is prostitution. That is a vicious, corrupt, cruel thing; a dead weight that generally affects women of humble origin, who for an infinite number of economic and social reasons wind up in that life. The revolution has been eliminating it, not in an abrupt, drastic, radical way, but progressively, trying to give employment and educational opportunities to the women so that they might learn other skills that would permit them to work and earn their living in a different manner. This, too, raises the future necessity of approaching the problems of sexual relations in a different way. But we believe that these are problems of the future, and they are problems that cannot be determined by decree—not at all.

PLAYBOY: To what extent does the curriculum in Cuban schools include political indoctrination?

CASTRO: What you call political indoctrination would perhaps be more correctly called social education; after all, our children are being educated to live in a Communist society. From an early age, they must be discouraged from every egotistical feeling in the enjoyment of material things, such as the sense of individual property, and be encouraged toward the greatest possible common effort and the spirit of cooperation. Therefore, they must receive not only instruction of a scientific kind but also education for social life and a broad general culture.

PLAYBOY: Is there an attempt to teach such subjects as art and literature, and their criticism, from the Marxist point of view?

CASTRO: We have very few qualified people as yet who could even try to give a Marxist interpretation of the problems of art. But as a revolutionary, it is my understanding that one of our fundamental concerns must be that all the manifestations of culture be placed at the service of man, developing in him all the most positive feelings. For me, art is not an end in itself. Man is its end; making man happier, making man better.

PLAYBOY: Is there any attempt to exert control over the production of art in Cuba—of literature, for example?

CASTRO: No—but a book that we did not believe to be of some value wouldn't have a chance of being published.

PLAYBOY: In other words, an author who wrote a novel that contained counterrevolutionary sentiments couldn't possibly get it published in Cuba?

CASTRO: At present, no.

PLAYBOY: Why not speak of the evolutionary changes that are taking place in the U.S.? Why not tell the Cuban people the whole story?

CASTRO: Because altogether there have not yet been any evolutionary changes in a positive sense in the United States. But rather, politically speaking, a true regression.

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From our general point of view, the policy of the United States—above all, its foreign policy—has veered more and more toward an ultrareactionary position.

PLAYBOY: We weren't talking about U.S. foreign policy.

CASTRO: But in reality, that is what most affects us.

PLAYBOY: It seems to most outside observers that anybody who has a point of view substantially different from the government line about American foreign policy—or almost anything else—has very little opportunity to express himself in the press here. It seems, in fact, to be an arm of the government.

CASTRO: What you say is true. There is very little criticism. An enemy of socialism cannot write in our newspapers—but we don't deny it, and we don't go around proclaiming a hypothetical freedom of the press where it actually doesn't exist, the way you people do.

PLAYBOY: This brings up a commonly held view in the U.S. that you are an absolute dictator, that not only intellectuals but the Cuban people have no voice in their government and that there is no sign that this is going to change. Would you comment?

CASTRO: As far as the people having a voice in government is concerned, we are Marxists and look upon the state as an instrument of the ruling class to exercise power. In Cuba, the ruling class consists of the workers and peasants; that is, of the manual and intellectual workers, directed by a party that is composed of the best men from among them. We organize our party with the participation of all the workers in all the fields of labor, who express their opinions in a completely free way: in assemblies, proposing and supporting those they believe should be members of the party or opposing those they believe should not be. You also asked about power concentrated in one person. The question is: In leading the people, have I

acted in a unilateral manner? Never! All the decisions that have been made, absolutely all of them, have been discussed among the principal leaders of the revolution.

PLAYBOY: The American system of government expresses the will of the majority through a president and a Congress elected by rich and poor alike. How do Cuba's people express *their* will?

CASTRO: By struggling and fighting against oppression. They revealed it in the Sierra Maestra by defeating the well-equipped army of Batista. They revealed it on Girón Beach [the Bay of Pigs] by destroying the mercenary invaders. They revealed it in the Escambray in wiping out the counterrevolutionary bands. They reveal it constantly, in every public demonstration that the revolution organizes with the multitudinous support of the masses. They have revealed it with their firm support of the revolutionary government in the face of America's economic blockade and by the fact that there are hundreds of thousands of men ready to die in the defense of their revolution.

PLAYBOY: But if Cuba is not a dictatorship, in what way are your people able to effectively influence the leadership?

CASTRO: There is a mutual influence of the people over the leaders and of the leaders over the people. The important thing is the identification of the leaders with the aspirations and the emotions of the people. There are many ways of establishing this identification. The best way of all is to maintain the most immediate contact possible with the masses.

PLAYBOY: The hero worship they feel for you, in the opinion of many outsiders who have seen the fervid reception you receive at huge public rallies, has a mystical, almost religious intensity about it. Do you feel that's true?

CASTRO: To some extent, perhaps principally among the farmers, but in personal contact they do not treat me like that. I visit many places. I talk a great deal with the farmers.

I go to their homes and they treat me with great naturalness in a very friendly and informal way—which means that this mystical business really doesn't exist in person. Far from any kind of reverence, there is a certain feeling of familiarity.

PLAYBOY: Is this familiarity enhanced by the thousands of idealized, inspirational portraits and photographs of you posted prominently in nearly every Cuban home and public building?

CASTRO: I don't know whether you are aware that one of the first laws passed by the revolutionary government, following a proposal of mine, was an edict against erecting statues to any living leader or putting his photograph in government offices. That same law has prohibited giving the name of any living leader to any street, to any park, to any town in Cuba. I believe that nowhere else, under circumstances such as ours, has a similar resolution been passed, and it was one of the first laws approved by the revolution.

Now you *will* see, in many homes and schools and public places, a small photograph in a little frame on the bookshelf or a corner of the desk. But where do most of these photographs come from? From magazines, from newspapers, from posters connected with some public meeting. Some people have even done a business in photographs, printing the ones they like and selling them in the street. But all of this has taken place—and anybody can verify it—without any official initiative whatever.

And permit me to say, finally, that I don't experience any personal satisfaction whatsoever when I read some of the flattering qualities that are attributed to me in the press. I have never spent a single second of pleasure over such things.

PLAYBOY: What role do you yourself expect to play in the government of the future, once the party is fully established and the constitution is in effect?

CASTRO: I think that for a few more years I will figure as the leader of the party. If I were to say that I didn't want that, people would think I was crazy. But you want me to speak sincerely? I will try to make it the least amount of time possible. I am attracted to many other things that are not official activities. I believe that all of us ought to retire relatively young. I don't propose this as a duty but as something more—a right.

PLAYBOY: Can you really picture yourself as a retired "elder statesman"?

CASTRO: It is more difficult for me to imagine myself as an old man than as a retired statesman because of the hardship it will be for me not to be able to climb mountains, to swim, to go spear-fishing and to engage in all the other pastimes that I enjoy. But there is one thing to which I am very much attracted that old age will not deter me from: studying, experimenting and working in agriculture. But perhaps I will fall into the habit that comes to all of us, of thinking that the younger generation is bungling everything. That is a mania characteristic of all old people—but I'm going to try to remain alert against it.



"To the abundant harvest, the peace amongst us, and to the Indian maidens who ain't afraid to show a little skin."

Excerpted from the January 1967 issue.





PLAYBOY DATE NEWS



MISS FEBRUARY 2003

CHARIS BOYLE LAUNCHES AN ACTION-SPORTS CLOTHING LINE

PANIC SWITCH ARMY

"Panic switch is that moment when your heart skips a beat," Charis Boyle says of the inspiration for Panic Switch Army, the high-octane fashion line she developed with her husband, Luke Burrett. Launched in August with moto rider Mike Mason

as part of the Army, the brand makes gasoline-alley fashion for the 21st century. "Moto riders push themselves with speed, tricks and a unique style," Charis says. "We draw from action sports, the military and vintage rock posters." Switch your look.

PLAYMATE NEWS



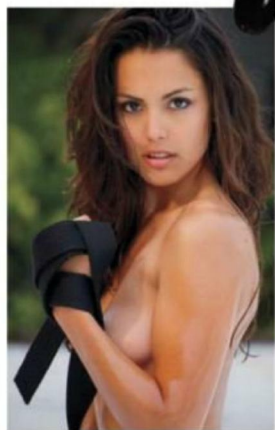
BETTIE PAGE

Auction house Guernsey's has acquired a trove of Miss January 1955 Bettie Page memorabilia. Among the items that will be on the block early next year are **PINUPS, WHIPS, CHAINS, ROPES, HEELS** and cameras that photographed the Queen of Pinups.



PMOY 2007

SARA JEAN UNDERWOOD stars in a new **Carl's Jr.** commercial.



MISS APRIL 2012

RAQUEL POMPLUN
and

MISS FEBRUARY 2011

KYLIE JOHNSON

have been cast as new Blackbelt TV "fight jocks."

“
I've sworn off men until November. I try to stay out of trouble because I'm a self-sabotager.”

”

MISS FEBRUARY 1990
PAMELA ANDERSON



#twitpics

Miss February 2000 Suzanne Stokes puts the S in "sexy." PMOY 2002 Dalene Kurtis loves body shots.

girlTALK

- Playmate of the Year 2012 **Jaclyn Swedberg** got nibbled by Steven Tyler at Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp.
- Miss September 1995 **Donna D'Errico** went looking for Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat this summer. "I know everybody thinks it's a big joke and people don't believe in it, but I do," she says.
- Miss April 1997 **Kelly Monaco** and *Dancing With the Stars*' Cheryl Burke were doubles partners for beach paddleball in Malibu.



PLAYMATE FLASHBACK

"I am a playboy trapped in a Playmate's body," Miss November 1992 **Stephanie Adams** said. Twenty years ago this month the descendant of John Adams—part Pilgrim, part Cherokee, part West Indian—embodied the beauty of America's melting pot in our Centerfold.

RITTER

(continued from page 84)

it's because they really are crazy. I just wasn't aware; I had no fear. But I have not one single regret or feeling of resentment, because of where I am now. I have a good head on my shoulders. I learned all my lessons on my own.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You appeared nude—only slightly blurred in all the expected places—in the pilot for your show. Was that second nature for you?

RITTER: When I read the script I thought it was the best pilot, the best character I've read and unique. I was naked in the pilot. I had a switchblade. I was getting a kid drunk. I was dancing in a rap video. I wasn't going to find anything flashier, so I was down for it. Then, on the day I was supposed to actually be naked, I was like, Aw, shit. I don't like to be in my underpants in front of all the crew guys. You catch them looking and you're like, No! But I got a Mystic Tan, so that made me feel less naked.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Does Mystic Tan have some sort of magic power we don't know about?

RITTER: No, but a good tan is the key to being able to wear a bikini, I think. It makes you feel as if you have clothes on.

Q10

PLAYBOY: On the show, Chloe is so legendary that there is a Japanese graphic novel based on her life called *Tall Slut No Panties*. Is that based on truth?

RITTER: No. I wear underwear, but my biggest fear is that I'll get locked out of my hotel room when I'm naked. The doors always shut on you. I met somebody who carries a wedge with them to hold the door open because they were so sick of hotel doors closing.

Q11

PLAYBOY: We haven't seen many naked hotel guests in our travels. Has it actually happened to you?

RITTER: There are times when maybe I have a little nightie on and I'll push the room-service tray out really quick. Something could happen. Really.

Q12

PLAYBOY: Everything written about you talks about how striking you are. Do you wish you were a little less easy to spot?

RITTER: On some days I do. I think my friends and my boyfriend wish that. My boyfriend [Brian Geraghty, who starred in *The Hurt Locker* and has appeared on *True Blood*] is a character actor. He can hide. But I'm a cartoon character. I have black bangs. I can't hide. People are mostly respectful and kind. But at one in the morning in Vegas, when everyone's wasted and yelling at you,

you wish you could just kind of disappear, and you can't.

Q13

PLAYBOY: It doesn't help that, unlike other actors, you're actually taller than you appear on TV.

RITTER: A lot of people think I'm going to be shorter when they meet me. When I was starting out, I would get called in for auditions off of my tape. When I'd show up in person, they'd be like, "Oh my God, you're much taller than we thought." They think it's because I'm petite. It reads as a normal-size person. I mean, I think I'm normal size, but everyone is always like, "Oh my God, you're so tall. What are you, six feet?" I'm five-foot-nine. Relax, everyone. All the other actresses are so little that they get to wear heels. I can't wear heels on set because the set is too small. If they put me in heels, you'd be able to see lighting in the shot. When I met my boyfriend he knew me only from watching me on *Breaking Bad*. I was wearing heels when I met him, and he was like, "Oh, wow. You're really tall." We have a thing: If we're going to a party for me, I can wear big heels. And if we're going to a party for him, I wear the small heels.

Q14

PLAYBOY: You played a particularly haunted drug addict named Jane on *Breaking Bad*. Were you able to draw on first-person experience?

RITTER: Oh my God, no. But in New York I knew some people who did drugs. I remember seeing them on drugs and thinking, Oh, it's not what I thought. You'd see people on heroin nodding off and falling over, and you'd see people on heroin buzzing around clubs.

Q15

PLAYBOY: Jane was a recovering heroin addict who fell off the wagon when she fell in love with Jesse, the character played by Aaron Paul. In your swan song, you choke on vomit in bed and are given CPR by Jesse when he wakes to find you dead. Which is more awful, an extended choking-on-your-own-vomit scene or lying still while someone pounds on your chest and sobs?

RITTER: Those were both pretty intense things. I'll go with playing dead. You have to basically suck out of your body and just lie there. I was basically like, *Don't move, don't move, don't move, don't move*. You have to zone out.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You spent your summers modeling in Tokyo and the rest of the year as a regular high school student. Were you worshipped or hated at school?

RITTER: I was always picked on. When I became a model, it got even worse because the girls became meaner—"Oh my God, I can't believe she's a model. She's not even pretty." At some slumber

party they tape-recorded their night, and it was about me getting bashed. And these were some of my best friends! Not anymore. Someone gave my high school boyfriend the tape. You know, high school is all subterfuge and scandal. I was just counting down the minutes until I turned 18.

Q17

PLAYBOY: At least you had a boyfriend. What was he like?

RITTER: He was so angsty and bad. He was a real bad boy. He gave me a school picture that year that said, "Okay, Krysten, I love you. You give me a boner." That's how we started dating. His name was Damian, but my parents called him "Demon." Our first time was in his parents' van before basketball practice. I don't remember it being very pleasant.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Your parents divorced when you were young. Did that sour you on marriage?

RITTER: I was never the little girl who dreamed about a wedding or a big white dress. It was never my thing, but I don't think I'm sour on marriage. I just don't know if I'm the type. Marriage seems scary to me. I'm in a serious relationship. We have a dog together. We live five minutes from each other. It's heaven. I think that might be the key: separate houses, separate bank accounts. Why mess with that?

Q19

PLAYBOY: How does a TV star live without owning a working television?

RITTER: I did it to spite Time Warner. They said my house was wired for cable, then when they came out—late—they said, "Oh, we can't. You're not wired." They were supposed to come back, but no one showed up. I said, "Forget it. I don't want anything to do with your company." Now I wish I did have TV because I end up watching stuff on iTunes. I'm cheap. I thought, Oh, I can save \$150 a month by not having cable. But now I think I'm spending that anyway on reruns of *Friends*.

Q20

PLAYBOY: What's the difference between being on a hit network show and being on a basic cable show?

RITTER: More people see you on a network. And the network people know where you are at all times. I've been around so long I approach every job exactly the same whether it's big or small. For me it didn't feel different until I heard on the walkie-talkie, "Krysten is at craft service," "Krysten is around the corner," "Krysten is there." They're always keeping tabs on you. They always know where you are. You say you're going to the bathroom, and someone comes with you. I'm like, "Dude, I promise you I'm going to come back. Don't come with me to the bathroom."

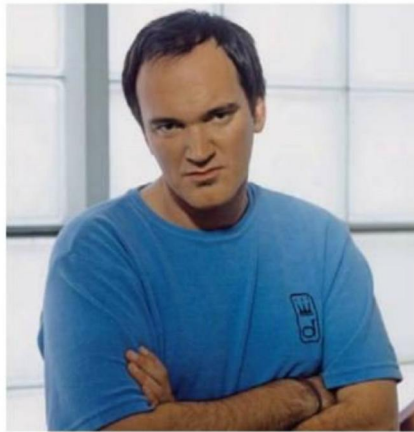




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