

PLAYBOY

A full-page photograph of Kelly Bensimon, a woman with long brown hair, smiling and wearing a bright red, strapless, form-fitting dress. She is posing with her arms crossed over her chest and one hand on her hip, revealing her midriff. The background is a solid red color.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

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BRAVO TV'S
THE REAL HOUSEWIVES
OF NEW YORK CITY

KELLY
BENSIMON
UNWRAPPED

THE SEX &
MUSIC
ISSUE

NEW
FICTION
FROM
MARTIN
AMIS

STEPHEN
KING RETURNS

2010 SEX
STARS

SCARLETT
ANGELINA
BEYONCÉ
MEGAN
AND MORE

ROCK THE
RABBIT

FEATURING
THE ROLLING
STONES
SNOOP DOGG
PETE YORN
HALL & OATES
MICHAEL BUBLÉ

BLOWN
AWAY

THE GIRL FROM
THE BURBS
WHO ROSE TO
POWER IN
HIP-HOP'S
COCAINE
UNDERWORLD

THE
INTERVIEW
JOHN
MAYER

FROM THE PRODUCERS



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PART 4 PRODUCED BY ROBERT SCHENKKAN AND GRAHAM YOST. PARTS 5 & 6 PRODUCED BY LAURENCE ANDRIES AND BRUCE C. MCKENNA. PART 7 PRODUCED BY BRUCE C. MCKENNA AND LAURENCE ANDRIES AND ROBERT SCHENKKAN. PART 8 PRODUCED BY ROBERT SCHENKKAN AND MICHELLE ASHFORD
PART 9 PRODUCED BY BRUCE C. MCKENNA AND ROBERT SCHENKKAN. PARTS 1 & 2 PRODUCED BY TIM VAN PATTEN. PART 3 PRODUCED BY DAVID NUTTER. PARTS 4 & 5 PRODUCED BY JEREMY PODESWA. PART 6 PRODUCED BY GRAHAM YOST. PART 7 PRODUCED BY CARL FRANKLIN. PART 8 PRODUCED BY TONY TO. PART 9 PRODUCED BY DAVID NUTTER / JEREMY PODESWA

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A promotional poster for the TV show 'Justified'. Timothy Olyphant is depicted from the waist up, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. He is also wearing a dark fedora hat and a large, ornate silver belt buckle. He is holding a black handgun in his right hand, pointing it towards the viewer. The background is a textured, light-colored wall with some darker, mottled patches. The overall tone is serious and gritty.

TIMOTHY OLYPHANT

JUSTIFIED.

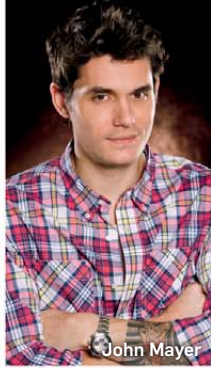
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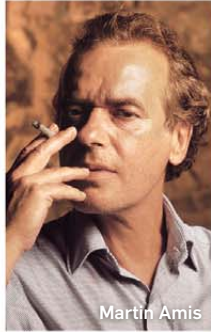
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PLAYBILL

Musician **John Mayer** has been called both a “douche bag” and “the best guitarist of his generation.” Now we let him speak for himself through the *Playboy Interview*. Here’s a taste: “There have probably been days when I saw 300 vaginas before I got out of bed.” Bold words. Not unlike the ones that issue so effortlessly from **Martin Amis**, one of modern literature’s brashest troubadours. By turns pyrotechnic and restrained, *The Dawn of Sexual Intercourse* is excerpted from his new novel, *The Pregnant Widow*. We don’t know another writer who could turn young love and blossoming sexuality into something so impudent, luminous and heartbreaking. **Shaun White**, on the other hand, worries more about broken necks. The 23-year-old snowboarding legend chats in this month’s *20Q* about what it’s like to have the whole world watching you do your thing. It’s a feeling **Kelly Bensimon** is somewhat familiar with. As one of the stars of *The Real Housewives of New York City*, she leads a life on display at all times. At least the parts when she’s wearing clothes. What happens the rest of the time? Turn to page 92 to find out. Speaking of great pictures, **Mick Rock**, one of music’s most iconic visual chroniclers, brings you our annual *Rock the Rabbit* feature. This year our fashions are worn by Michael Bublé, Snoop Dogg and Hall & Oates. Eclectic, sure, but not as wild as the pics that open **Kim Anami**’s adventurous take on the multiplicity of feminine climax. (Be sure to check out Anami’s marvelously sexy web magazine, *filthygorgeousthings.com*, by the way.) For *The Multi-Orgasmic Woman*, provocateur photographer **Tony Kelly** used extensive digital manipulation to create the kind of visual orgasm you’ll find on page 84. This month’s issue also features **Charles Bukowski**, because we’re convinced he hasn’t been dead these past 16 years, just sleeping off a particularly nasty hangover. He sure feels alive in *The House of Horrors*, a gleefully corrosive rumination that teaches us there’s nothing duller than a good writer and nothing more insufferable than a bad one. Death, of course, haunts **Stephen King**’s stories, even when they aren’t filled with demons, ghouls and killer clowns. In the case of this month’s poem, *Tommy*, it’s dead hippies. But they’re not coming in through the windows; they’re more whispering in his ear at night. We want you to read *Tommy*. Then look at a beautiful nude woman. Then remember why the hell you’re here and what you’re going to do next. Let’s make it spectacular, yes?



John Mayer



Martin Amis



Shaun White



Mick Rock



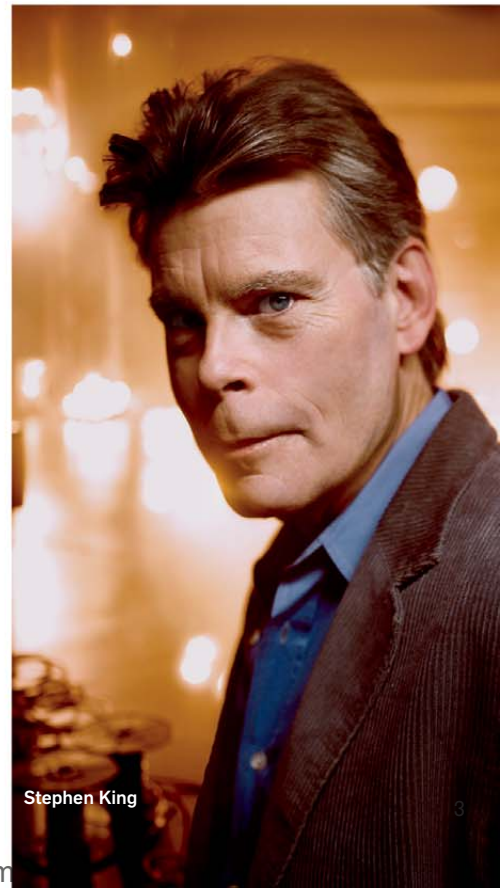
Tony Kelly



Charles Bukowski



Kelly Bensimon



Stephen King

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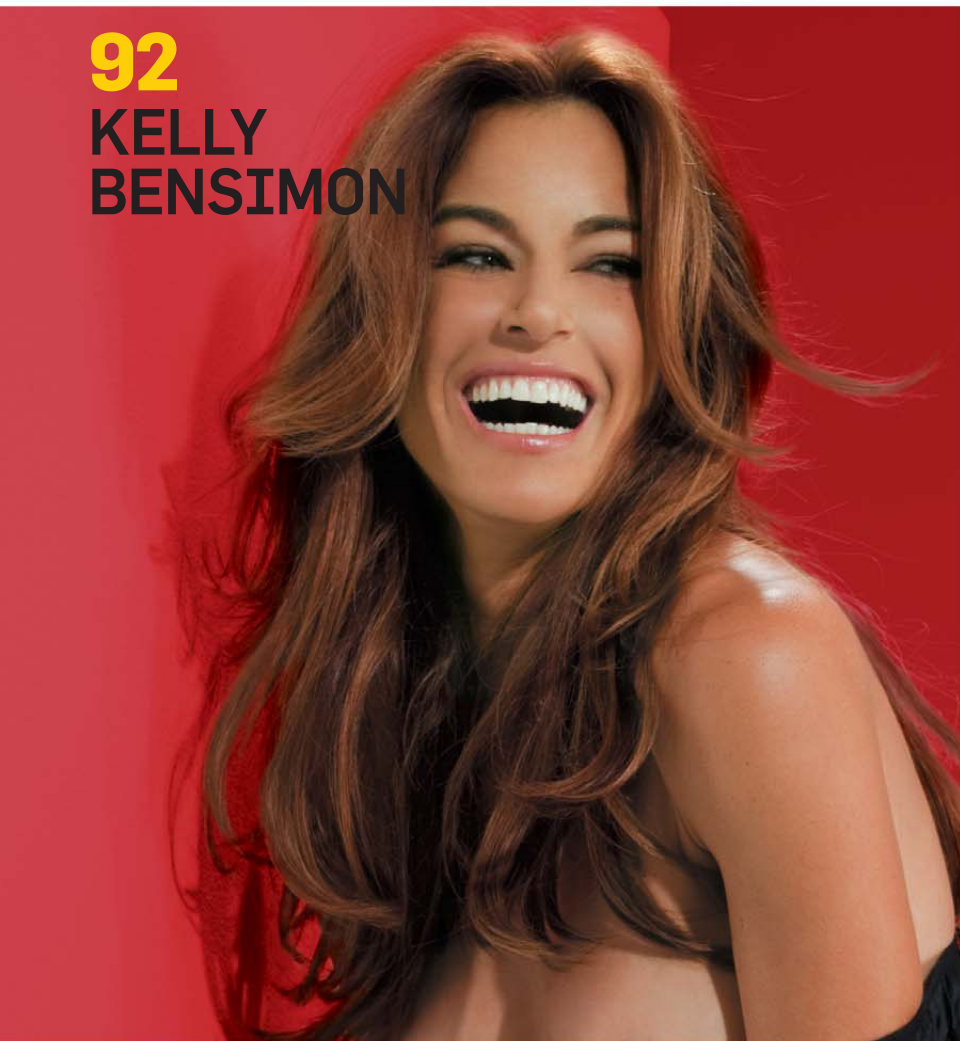
CONTENTS



BLOWN AWAY 34

The party's over for Rian Thal. The hip-hop promoter to the East Coast elite was found with a bullet wound in the side of her head and a stash of cocaine and cash in her tony Philly apartment. **FRANK OWEN** finds out how a nice girl from suburbia ended up dead.

92 KELLY BENSIMON



FEATURES

44 THE HOUSE OF HORRORS

CHARLES BUKOWSKI writes about the most insufferable people—other writers.

48 THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FIRST ROCK STAR

The Rolling Stones' Brian Jones died in 1969, but the authorities and **ROBERT GREENFIELD** are still asking questions.

52 PLAYBOY'S 2010 MUSIC AWARDS

You helped make the ultimate mix tape.

56 EROS VINYL

Where'd all the sexy album covers go?

58 TOMMY

STEPHEN KING waxes poetic about the death of hippies, their music and ideals.

72 SCHOOL OF FISH

Pick up a thing—and a tuna—or two at Tokyo's fish market with **SEAN MCCUSKER**.

84 THE MULTI-ORGASMIC WOMAN

Come this way with **KIM ANAMI**.

INTERVIEW

29 JOHN MAYER

He's entertaining to listen to. His music isn't bad either. By **ROB TANNENBAUM**

20Q

86 SHAUN WHITE

America's new goofy Olympic golden boy (sorry Phelps). By **JASON BUHRMESTER**

FICTION

88 THE DAWN OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

MARTIN AMIS brings us Keith, Lily and Scheherazade's tales of hot Italian nights.



COVER STORY

With the advent of the terms *cougar* and *MILF*, the *woman* next door has been getting longing looks—coveting of thy neighbor, if you will. Top fashion photographer Gilles Bensimon shot his ex-*Real Housewife* of New York City, Kelly Bensimon, nude for us. And while Kelly is still on the market, our Rabbit tries to wrap her up.

PLAYBOY

CONTENTS

PICTORIALS

38 PLAYBOY'S SEXIEST CELEBRITIES

Scarlett Johansson made our list—and we have 25 more hot stars for you.



60 PLAYMATE: KYRA MILAN

She had dreams about becoming Miss March. Luckily, dreams come true.

92 KELLY BENSIMON

Whoa, Kelly! The Real Housewife of New York City tries to seduce us.

CARTOONS

76 SATYRS AND NYMPHS

In **DEDINI's** world, all the women are divine and all the men are horny.



FASHION | ROCK THE RABBIT

Michael "Young Blue Eyes" Bublé, Snoop Dogg, Pete Dinklage, Maxwell and Hall & Oates headline our remixed fashion pages. By **JENNIFER RYAN JONES**

60 PLAYMATE

KYRA MILAN



NEWS AND NOTES

9 THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

Hef and Crystal Harris attend the launch of Taschen's *Los Angeles: Portrait of a City*; December cover girl Joanna Krupa trips the light fantastically; the Shannon twins make Barack-o'-lanterns; the Mansion transforms into a haunted house for Halloween parties (yes, plural).

124 PLAYMATE NEWS

Sockin' Sara Jean Underwood and Box'in Brittany Binger add a kick to BlackBelt TV; we can't read Jayde Nicole's poker face; Kelly Gallagher is a domestic-design goddess; Stacy Fuson steals the show as a guest star on ABC's *Modern Family*.

DEPARTMENTS

3 PLAYBILL

11 DEAR PLAYBOY

15 AFTER HOURS

18 REVIEWS

25 MANTRACK

27 PLAYBOY ADVISOR

70 PARTY JOKES

132 GRAPEVINE

THE PLAYBOY FORUM

127 OF MONEY AND MEMORY

Computers make fiscal shenanigans easier than ever. By **JARON LANIER**

128 THE NEW AD AGE

It's not just your friends who watch your Facebook page. **BEN PARR** explains why that might be a good thing.

THIS MONTH ON PLAYBOY.COM

A-LIST: PIZZA Pizza is like sex: Even bad pizza is still pretty good. But we'll show you where to get mind-blowing pie.

MUSIC VIDEO VIXENS The sultriest women ever to provide visual stimulation for bands' videos. It's too hot for MTV.

THE WEEK IN SEX What's going on between the sheets and in the media? We have it covered.

CLASSIC PLAYBOY Whether for nostalgia or to get into a retro-cool mood, peruse swinging Playmates, the best journalism of the past century and hep art.

REAL DIRTY TALK An embedded female reporter uncovers what women say about sex when we boys are not around.



86
20Q

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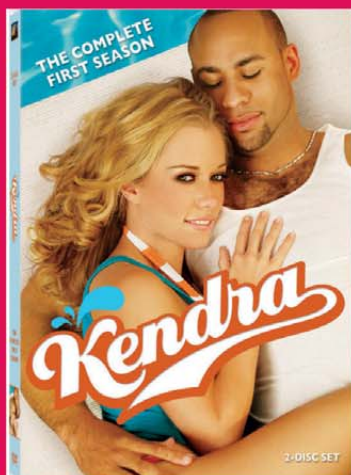
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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

L.A. STORY

Hef, who brought the party with him when he moved to the City of Angels, is a subject in Taschen's *Los Angeles: Portrait of a City*. Diane Keaton and Benedikt Taschen hosted the launch, where Hef and Crystal Harris chatted with former model Peggy Moffitt and David LaChapelle, who photographed Hef for the book.

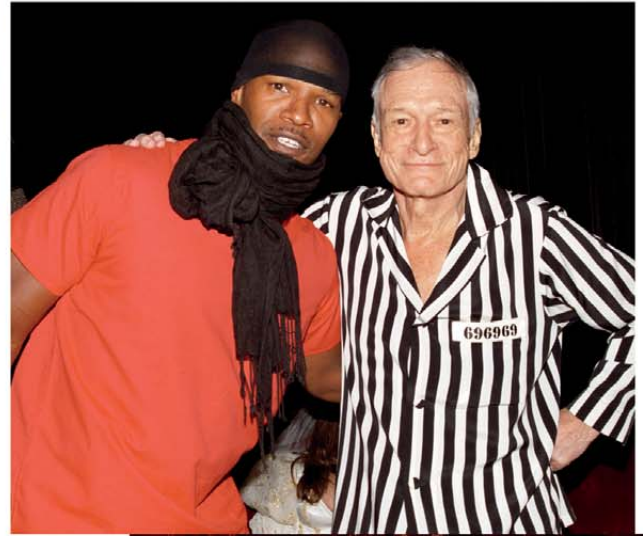


THE MODEL WOMAN

Model Joanna Krupa was a runner-up on *Dancing With the Stars* and graced *PLAYBOY*'s December cover. When asked about the controversy created by those who objected to her spread, Joanna answered, "I think they suffer from lack of knowledge and tunnel vision. It's pathetic."

THE GREAT PUMPKINS

Crystal hosted the annual Pumpkin Carving Night at the Playboy Mansion. The Shannon twins carved Barack Obama, Crystal made Ariel, and Sara Jean Underwood, who flew in from Oregon for the party, created a pumpkin self-portrait.



MANSION MONSTER BASHES

At the Mansion there is no such thing as too much of a good thing, and with that thought Hef hosted two Halloween parties for charity. He started with the Kandy costume affair and then threw his own fright night at the Mansion/haunted house to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project. PMOY 2001 Brande Roderick, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, PMOY 2008 Jayde Nicole, Heidi Montag, Spencer Pratt and Jamie Foxx were among those who came for mischief. Hef and Crystal (who met at 2008's Halloween party) dressed as prisoners of love, and the Shannon twins served as prison guards.





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THE AGE OF BECK

In *The Triumph of the Conservative Underground* (December), Thomas Frank highlights the paradox of the pro-capitalist, antitax, anti-redistributionist and anti-progressive Glenn Beck laying claim to the legacy of American patriot Thomas Paine. As Frank notes, it seems inconceivable that Beck would embrace the radical and social democrat Paine, who in *Common Sense* calls for a nation that would prosper in its diversity and pluralism and guarantee the separation of church and state, in *Rights of Man* lays out plans for a publicly funded welfare system, in *The Age of Reason* attacks the power and authority of religious leaders and in *Agrarian Justice* proposes taxing the rich to provide grants to the young and pensions for the elderly as a way of countering the exploitation and oppression of the nascent industrial-capitalist world. Although Beck cites Paine to attack the liberals and progressives with whom Paine would identify, the talk-show host apparently recognizes in the pamphleteer what many Americans have lost sight of: Paine turned us into radicals, and we have remained radicals at heart ever since.

Harvey Kaye

Green Bay, Wisconsin

Kaye, who teaches history at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay, is author of Thomas Paine and the Promise of America.

I am not defending Beck, but I am disturbed by Frank's blithe dismissal of the government's role in the financial crisis. The Federal Reserve provided the liquor of cheap, easy money to bankers drunk on greed. Yet those bankers would never have made subprime loans had they not been strong-armed and shielded by powerful members of Congress determined to see every American own his own home whether or not he could afford it. And let's not pretend we have a free-market economy. In fact, it has long been a government-manipulated version of capitalism.

Joseph Comfort
Eustis, Florida

Frank's article on the nation's idiot in chief is further evidence of what I have always told my friends: I subscribe to *PLAYBOY* for the articles. I applaud you for your well-known support of civil liberties, as well as for shining a light on this modern-day Lonesome Rhodes.

Stephen Lyons
Boston, Massachusetts

Beck's style annoys me, but his program is not shallow. His comments are certainly no worse than Chris Matthews saying President Obama gives him a "tingling sensation" up his leg.

Frank Goudy
Cuba, Illinois

Frank covers the facts as he believes them, and he shuttles off the rest by saying

DEAR PLAYBOY

"Best Nude Scene Ever"

In *Sex in Cinema 2009* (December), how could you overlook the best nude scene of the year and, in my opinion, of all time? Betsy Rue goes full frontal for a total of four minutes in *My Bloody Valentine 3D*. *The Hollywood Reporter* has called it "one of the most unabashedly gratuitous" nude scenes in the history of horror films. The movie grossed \$100 million at the box office worldwide, no doubt in part because of Rue's eye-popping performance.

David Polus
Chicago, Illinois



"the story has its complicated aspects and its technical details." The reason people listen to Beck is simple: He empowers us to think for ourselves.

Dan Ballard
Saginaw, Michigan

When a reader complained in December's *Dear Playboy* about interviewees who slam Fox News, you responded, "It's time to put aside the petty name-calling on both sides." Yet your attack on Beck is little more than that.

Rick Ramirez
Columbia, Missouri

After seeing what you think of me and other conservative readers in that incendiary photo illustration, I guess my money is better spent on guns and ammo.



Is this a vision of Glenn Beck's America?

I find it ironic a magazine with such a rich history of defending free speech would dedicate seven pages to marginalizing someone for exercising that right.

Ray Berry
Atlanta, Georgia

As an independent who finds the ongoing catfight between the far left and the far right intriguing—and more than a little sad for our country—I came away from Frank's article feeling he is frightened of Beck's überconservative views. But both Beck and Frank are examples of why our country needs a third political party for those who lean left or right of center on social issues but would like to see more fiscal common sense. A third party is vital if we are ever to see the compromise that will allow our country to survive.

Bill Mattos
Fremont, California

THE RIGHT CHOICE

Hef made two great decisions this past year: choosing Crystal Harris as his main girlfriend and selecting her as the December Playmate (*Holiday Crystal*).

Ronald Creno
West Jordan, Utah

ROGUE WARRIOR

It is not uncommon for prosecutors to present the testimony of drug agents they know (or should know) have cut corners. The truly shocking thing about the case of former DEA agent Lee Lucas (*Dope*, December) and similar scandals is how easily an innocent person can be convicted. Ambitious prosecutors too often ignore the red flags that pop up when they rely on crooked cops and present evidence they could, with some due diligence, expose as false. Any prosecutor who stands up for justice risks his job. The firing of Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Gruscinski, who expressed his reservations about Lucas's tactics to colleagues, recalls a case two years ago in which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the retaliatory demotion of an L.A. County prosecutor who questioned the veracity of an officer's search warrant affidavit. The court ruled the prosecutor had no First Amendment right to blow the whistle on a



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bad case. The insular culture that punishes police and prosecutors who do the right thing calls to mind Juvenal's question: *Sed quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* "Who will protect us from the protectors?"

Jack King
Washington, D.C.

King is director of communications for the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

A BINDING LOVE

Paulo Coelho may be giving away all but 400 of his books so they won't "remain immobilized on a shelf" (*Dust in the Wind*, December), but a computer search will never replace the thrill of finding a long out-of-print volume in a used bookstore and taking it home to add to your library. There are readers and there are collectors. As collectors we may not sit down with a particular find for months, but we always know it's there when we're ready. There's nothing like holding a book in your hands. Also, millions of books have not been digitized—and may never be because so few people want to read them. But what if you're one of those few?

David and Susan Siegel
Yorktown Heights, New York

The Siegels are authors of *The Used Book Lover's Guide* series (bookhunterpress.com).

SQUEEZING PYTHONS

The reptile industry downplays the seriousness of pythons in our ecosystems (*The Great South Florida Python Scare*, December), but large constrictor snakes pose genuine risks to people, pets and wildlife. The killing of a two-year-old girl by a snake kept in her home was the fourth death caused by a pet python in the U.S. since 2006. The other victims were adults who had experience with reptiles. When people realize they can't handle these large constrictors, they often dump them in the wild. That's one reason we support federal legislation to prohibit the trade in nine species of large constrictor. These snakes are magnificent animals, but they belong in their native habitats.

Michael Markarian
Washington, D.C.

Markarian is chief operating officer of the Humane Society of the United States.

Thanks to Pat Jordan for dispelling much of the crap written about the Everglades python. We will learn to live with these snakes just as we did the marine toads in the 1960s and other nonendemic species. There is no doubt Hurricane Andrew is responsible. When I went south to lend a hand, I saw half a dozen or more breeding facilities that had been wiped out. I keep reptiles, mountain lions and a host of other animals at home; folks will have whatever pets they have for any number of reasons. Finally, I can't believe the pythons are being used to get funds to repair the ecosystem. There is no repair!

Alan Rigerman
Miami, Florida

A MODEST PROPOSAL

My boyfriend, Arthur, is a serious PLAYBOY fan who reads every issue from front to back. I would like to propose marriage to him in the magazine. Can you help?

Chara Burgh
Valley Village, California

Sure. So, Arthur, what do you say?

T.O. TAKEDOWN

Joanna Krupa's verbal disembowelment on *The Superstars* of crybaby Terrell Owens ("You're the one who fucked up. We could have won. So shut up.") is the highlight of the 2009 television season, and her picto-



Joanna Krupa: Hell hath no fury.

rial in December (*Joanna*) is the highlight of the 2009 PLAYBOY season.

Bob Hogg
Las Vegas, Nevada

FOR THE RECORD

In *Sex in Cinema 2009* the actress from *Bad Lieutenant*: Port of Call New Orleans is not Eva Mendes but Fairuza Balk.

David Sawyer
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

You're right. Our apologies to Ru, as well as to Willa Ford, whom we identified as Julianna Guill in the shot from *Friday the 13th: Killer Cut*.

WORKS OF ART

I love the artwork in November by Karol Lasia (*A Weird Calm at the Edge of the Abyss*) and Phil Hale (*The Bone Church*). PLAYBOY is to be commended for its continuing commitment to four-color illustration.

S. Matthews
Dallas, Texas

Thank you for a fabulous December issue. With fiction by Vladimir Nabokov (*The Original of Laura*), a *Playboy Interview* with top director James Cameron, an admonishment of Glenn Beck, Gore Vidal's tribute to a war hero (*Brothers in Arms*), plus R. Crumb's drawings (*The Book of Genesis*), what's not to like?

Harley Holmes
San Diego, California



In 1780, I was turned down
by the Navy. They said I could
better serve Ireland if I kept
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John Jameson

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WIRED

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AUGUST 2009

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PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS

BECOMING ATTRACTION

Ali Sonoma

"God blessed me with a great body," says model and budding actress Ali Sonoma. "I can't help it that I'm sexy. I was just born this way." That natural sex appeal has made Ali a popular spokesmodel and was key to her winning the UFC Octagon Girl Search 2007. The 26-year-old from St. Louis has a movie in the works with (no kidding) Corey Feldman and porn star Savanna Samson. But taking pretty pictures remains her bread and butter, and frankly we like the taste of it. She's particularly fond of naughty costumes. "I love the cop outfit," she says, "with black leather. I really like playing the authority figure. I like to carry a gun and handcuffs." Amen to that.

"I can't help it that I'm sexy. I was just born this way."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEREK CABALLERO



Smoking Hot Jacket Required

Custom-tailor emporium SEW has a history of making smoking jackets. According to proprietor Scott Evan Wasserberger, when male customers try one on they invariably inquire, "Man, do I look like Hef?" Thus the designer's new "Hef" jacket was born. The merlot-and-black jacket is made of French silk-blend velvet, with silk satin lapels. It has already become a favorite of certain *Sopranos* cast members. The price for looking good enough to snag seven girlfriends? A cool \$1,800 (sewnyc.com).



Classic Look of the Month Made in the Shades

The actual Persol sunglasses Steve McQueen wears in *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968) sold at auction for \$70,200. We recommend the new Persol 714 McQueen replicas (\$389, eyegoodies.com). Here's how to complete the look: tie and pocket square (\$295) by Brioni, three-piece Garrison plaid suit (\$2,095) by Ralph Lauren and dress shirt with long point collar (\$340) by Gucci. Tough-guy stare that could peel a woman's dress off from 10 yards away? Sold separately.

Rolling Sculpture The Art of the Automobile

This month Atlanta's High Museum of Art opens *The Allure of the Automobile*, a collection of 18 incredibly rare classic cars built between 1930 and 1965, all monuments to design, engineering and speed. Pictured: the 1961 Ferrari 250 SWB that won its class at Le Mans and a 1957 Jag XKSS Roadster owned by the man pictured above.



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Dinner Is Served Spring Lamb

This recipe is courtesy of chef-owner Joey Campanaro of the Little Owl, the most romantic bistro in Greenwich Village. Campanaro makes it with minted fava beans and cherry preserves, as pictured. You can also pair it with mashed potatoes and spinach. Serves four.

Spring Lamb Shanks Braised in Milk

4 large lamb shanks
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
¾ cup diced celery
½ large onion, finely chopped
5½ cups whole milk
1 bunch rosemary
2 tbsp. smashed garlic cloves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup dry white wine

In a large roasting pan, combine lamb, carrot, celery, onion, milk, rosemary, garlic, salt and pepper. Bring liquid to a simmer over medium heat. Partially cover the pot and cook for about three hours, turning occasionally, until meat is tender when pierced with a fork. Transfer meat to a cutting board and cover with foil to keep warm. Raise heat and cook the liquid until it's reduced and lightly browned. Pour juices through a strainer into a bowl, then pour the strained juices back into the pot. Add the white wine and simmer until the liquid is thick, about 20 to 30 minutes, scraping bits on the bottom with a wooden spoon. Place shanks into pot to heat, then plate and pour sauce on top.



Employee of the Month Becky Wunder

PLAYBOY: It says here that you worked at a junkyard.

BECKY: Can we call it a car parts center?

PLAYBOY: Sure. How was it?

BECKY: Dirty.

PLAYBOY: So what's your real name?

BECKY: Becky Wunder, for real.

PLAYBOY: Surely you've been called Wonder Woman, then.

BECKY: Well, a few of my roommates call me Wunder Butt.

PLAYBOY: That's appropriate.

BECKY: I do love my butt.

PLAYBOY: We do too. Your roommates have a great eye.

BECKY: They've seen enough of me. Sometimes I traipse from my room to the bathroom without clothes on.

PLAYBOY: So it wasn't difficult to disrobe for this shoot?

BECKY: Right, I love being naked.

PLAYBOY: We can appreciate that. But we also love a woman we can have a decent meal with. Are you the salad type?

BECKY: On the contrary. I love to eat and cook. Check out my new cooking blog, WunderfulKitchen.com.

PLAYBOY: How do you maintain such a curvy yet trim body?

BECKY: I do all types of traditional and quirky workouts. I go to the

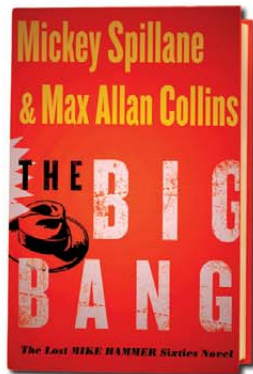
gym, take pole-dancing classes and hula with a weighted hoop.

PLAYBOY: You Hula-Hoop?

BECKY: Yes, it's amazing for my curves—the Wunder Butt.



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



Killer Fiction Hammer Lives

Shortly before Mickey Spillane died in 2006, the master crime scribe warned his wife there'd be a "treasure hunt" after he kicked the bucket: maroons looking to get their hands on unpublished material. "Give everything to Max," he told her. And she did. Now Max Allan Collins, Spillane's collaborator and author of *Road to Perdition*, has expertly completed a second Spillane novel, *The Big Bang*, out this spring. The book will transport you back to gritty 1960s Manhattan, where Spillane's antihero Mike Hammer drops acid and takes on the mob.

Hard Sell Buy Sexual

American Apparel has been pushing boundaries with its marketing since day one. You probably saw the recent campaign in which it quietly slipped porn stars (including Faye Reagan, below) into its ads under such innocuous names as *Jillian*. A recent visit to the company's website revealed a close-up of a barely clothed female crotch and assorted nipples. We heartily approve.



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Movie of the Month

Green Zone

By Stephen Rebell

In the taut action thriller *Green Zone*, directed by Paul Greengrass, Matt Damon plays an Army officer who goes rogue and discovers cover-ups by the CIA and other agencies during the futile search for WMDs in Iraq. Inspired by *Washington Post* editor Rajiv Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, *Green Zone* features undercover intrigue as in a *Bourne* adventure. "I learned making *Bourne* that no matter what we tried to invent, we kept being beaten by what was actually going on in the real world," says Greengrass. "So why not set a thriller against that real world? We're giving the audience that enjoys the *Bourne* movies the same kind of dynamic storytelling, a character in search of the truth and lots of action set in a world with a moral dimension. Making a film is like driving into a dark, rock-strewn cavern without knowing you won't hit a brick wall. With Matt, it's like having four headlights instead of two."



DICKING AROUND



Cop Out, starring **Bruce Willis** and **Tracy Morgan** on the hunt for a valuable stolen baseball card, marks director Kevin Smith's first feature from a script he didn't write. Few movies have gone through as many title changes; we liked *A Couple of Dicks* ourselves. At least the script wasn't sanitized as was rumored—it remains a raunchy R.

DVD of the Month

Capitalism: A Love Story

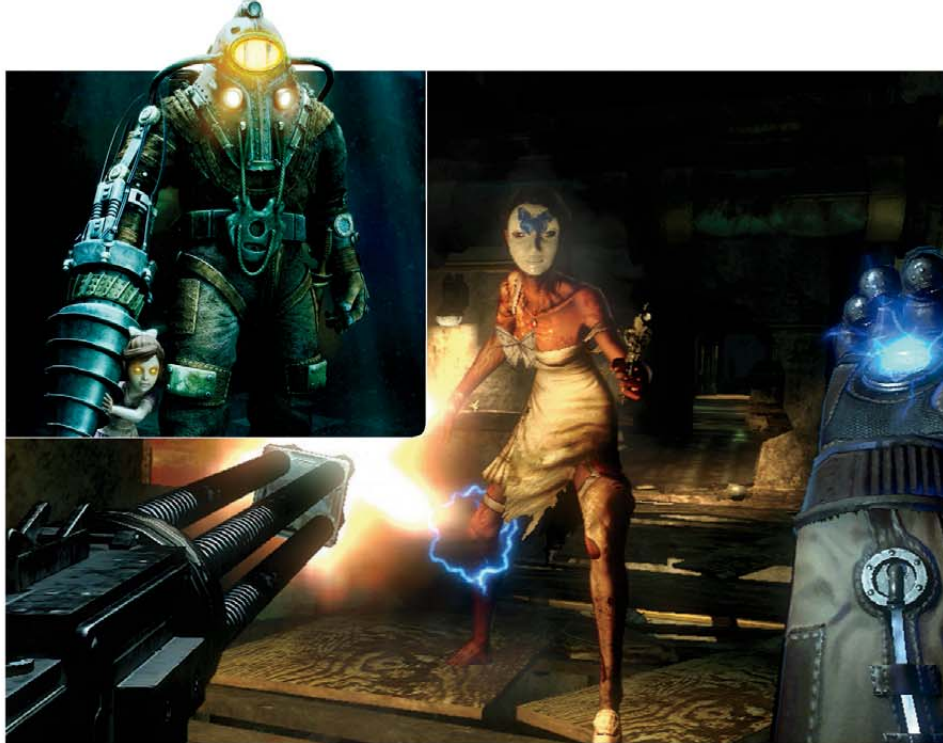
There is no question documentarian and rabble-rouser Michael Moore is adept at putting line-drawing issues on the big screen. The irony of this, his most entertaining movie yet, is that the flannel-wearing populist socks it to the very system that enabled his own success. Moore revisits some of his *Roger & Me* techniques: Grandstanding, he hollers for Big Business to give the people a refund and seals Wall Street

off with crime-scene tape. Moore may be a blowhard, but he's also a terrific investigative journalist who sheds light on things like "dead peasant" insurance policies, which should infuriate anyone with a pulse. He may not have all the answers, but at least he's asking the right questions. (BD) **Best extras:** More than 80 minutes of featurettes and deleted scenes with some famous faces. **★★½** —Stacie Houglund



Tease Frame

English actress **Emily Mortimer** plays a woman who doubts her own attractiveness in *Lovely & Amazing* (pictured). American audiences know better after seeing her in *Scream 3* and two *Pink Panther* movies. In Martin Scorsese's much-delayed *Shutter Island*, Mortimer goes crazy as an escaped mental patient.



Game of the Month BioShock 2

Though we spent most of the first *BioShock* trying to escape the failed underwater utopia of Rapture, we were eager to make the return trip in this sequel to 2007's best game. *BioShock 2* (360, PC, PS3) maintains the original's high polish and superb art direction but with a new story line that puts you in the diving boots of one of the Big Daddies—your tragic, hulking nemesis from the first game. It's no small job unraveling the plots and secrets that have sprung up over the past 10 years while protecting the creepy Little Sisters and fending off attacks from Big Sisters—fast, powerful evolved versions of the Big Daddies. If it sounds complicated, it's because it is. *BioShock 2* is not about blowing people's heads off; it's about pondering deep philosophical questions while blowing people's heads off. 🍌🍌🍌 —Scott Alexander

Also in Gaming...

DANTE'S INFERNO (360, PS3, PSP) Cheating always has consequences. But they usually don't involve traveling to the ninth circle of hell to save your wronged lover from the devil himself. Based *extremely* loosely on the 14th century poem, this hack-and-slash gore fest won't make you smarter, but it's still a great ride. 🍌🍌🍌 —S.A.

MASS EFFECT 2 (360, PC) Sure, you saved the galaxy from certain doom in the first *Mass Effect*, but the real stars were its dialogue system, moral choices and rich environmental storytelling. The talky bits are back this time around, along with needed improvements to the combat and health systems. 🍌🍌🍌 —S.A.

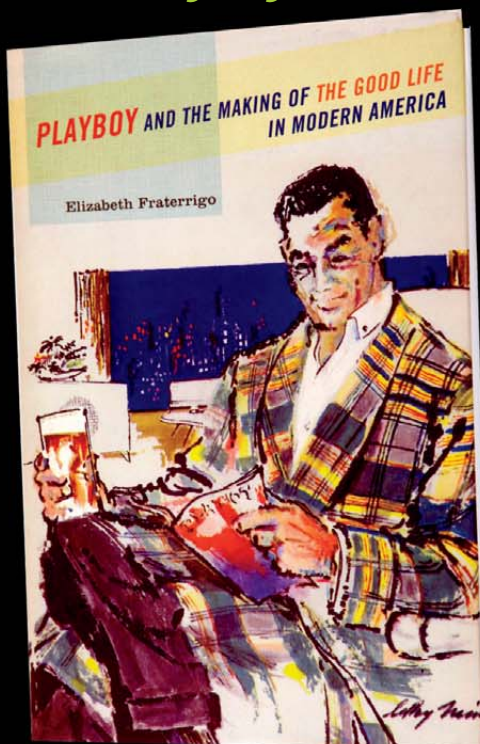


Pixel Perfect

If Sarah Palin were to drop the aw-shucks act (along with her clothes) and start spectacularly slaughtering heaven's angels, you'd get something approaching **Bayonetta** (360, PS3). And you know what? We'd be okay with that.

Book of the Month

How *Playboy* Invented Modern America



Over the past few years historians have started to consider the influence of Hugh Hefner and his magazine on mid-20th century America. To no surprise, they have found *PLAYBOY* to be essential in the shaping of lifestyles after World War II. In *Playboy and the Making of the Good Life in Modern America* (Oxford University Press) Elizabeth Fraterrigo, professor of history at Loyola University Chicago, looks at how this magazine helped liberate American society. Hefner reacted to the domestic unhappiness of the 1950s and showed a way for Americans to lead more gratifying lives. He told *PLAYBOY* readers there was more to life than marriage, work and Calvinist self-denial, that it was okay for the modern male to defy the archaic moral strictures of the past, just as it was okay for

modern women to enjoy sex. Fraterrigo does not hesitate to look critically at Hefner's shortcomings as well as his accomplishments. But it is hard to overstate the magazine's importance, especially in terms of the sexual revolution. *PLAYBOY*, Fraterrigo says, has "played a catalytic role in the refashioning of gender roles and sexuality mores since the 1950s." How much *PLAYBOY* generated these changes and how much they were expressions of the epoch is unclear, but America would surely be a far different place without Hef's rabbit-

America would be a different place without Hef's rabbitry.



ry. Detractors may overlook the social advantages brought about by the magazine, but *PLAYBOY* has always been about more than bosoms and derrieres. As Fraterrigo writes, *PLAYBOY*'s "underlying messages about pleasure, consumption and the freedom to find fulfillment in a lifestyle of one's own choosing are now cornerstones of American culture." —Al Clarke

Playboy TV's Shootout

Consider *Playboy Shootout* our version of *Project Runway* (or *America's Next Topless Model*, perhaps?). We paired 10 amateur models with 10 aspiring PLAYBOY photographers to compete for a layout in the magazine. Host PMOY 2001 Brande Roderick—our own Heidi Klum—explains: “It’s like *Project Runway* in that the models and photographers work together toward earning a spread. And while *Runway* may interest only those into fashion, viewers who enjoy PLAYBOY, photography, modeling or just beautiful women will love this. You find only one Playmate in a million girls, but there are no sour apples in this group.” Along the way Brande and staff photographers Stephen Wayda and Army Freytag assist with bringing the contestants up to PLAYBOY’s par. See which pair catches Hef’s eye. *Shootout* premieres on Playboy TV with a one-hour special Friday, March 5 at nine P.M. (Eastern) and then moves March 14 to its regular time slot on Sundays at 9:30 P.M. (Eastern).



Bryan Batt's Hef Love Seat

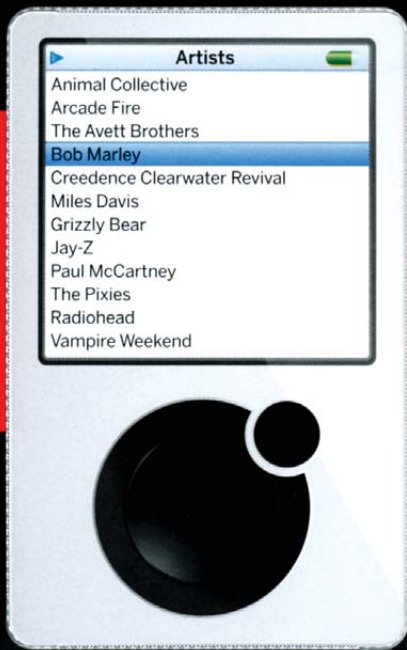
You know Bryan Batt as Salvatore Romano on *Mad Men*, but his day job is interior designing. He created the elegant yet definitively masculine “Hef” love seat. “It has a deco and a sophisticated mid-century feel,” Batt says. “I could see it in Sal’s pad.” The pieces are handmade, and Hef will autograph a limited run. “It’s a love seat in that you can have a glass of wine there with your date and then move on to someplace else,” Batt says with a smirk. Go to hazelnutneworleans.com for details.



Playboy Radio Spring Break!

With the economy in the urinal, go on spring break with the *Playboy Morning Show* via the magic of radio. “Our spring break saves you a lot of money on bribing Mexican cops that you can then spend on booze,” co-host Kevin Klein says. “Who has ever seen a girl agree to have cold buckets of water thrown at her for a Señor Frog’s key chain when sober?” Tune in to Sirius XM 99 the week of March 21.





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RAW DATA

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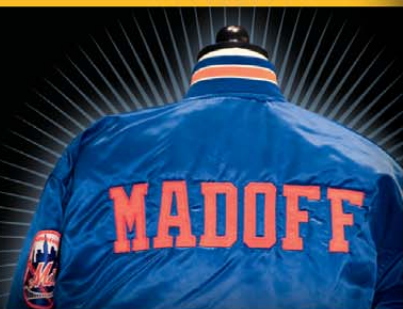


MEN CRY AT LEAST 6 TIMES A YEAR

PRICE CHECK

\$14,500

Price paid at auction for Bernie Madoff's satin Mets jacket, which reads MADOFF across the back.



A RECENT STUDY HAS DETERMINED THAT THE TYPICAL LENGTH OF TIME A WOMAN CAN KEEP A SECRET IS 47 HOURS AND 15 MINUTES

IN A POLL THAT ASKED AMERICANS TO CHOOSE THE WORST SIN A POLITICIAN CAN COMMIT, 2% SAID HAVING AN EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIR, WHILE 37% SAID TAKING A BRIBE.



WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

32% OF WOMEN SURVEYED ON SHOPPING SITE ONESTOPPLUS.COM SAID THEY CONSIDER THEIR BUST TO BE THEIR BEST FEATURE AND THE ONE THEY FLAUNT WHEN THEY DRESS.



MORE LIES FROM WASHINGTON

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NEW YORK **7.5**
CALIFORNIA **7.45**
FLORIDA **7.44**
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KYLIE MINOGUE **\$3.31 MILLION**



THE TOP THREE EARNERS ON THE **FORBES** 2009 LIST OF DEAD CELEBRITIES:

YVES SAINT LAURENT **\$350 MILLION**
RODDERS AND HAMMERSTEIN **\$235 MILLION**
MICHAEL JACKSON **\$90 MILLION**

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Hot Pursuit

With the new Lexus LFA, Japan takes on Europe's sexiest supercars

Lexus has offered highly refined coupes and sedans for 20 years, but until now it has left the supercarmakers alone. No longer. Only 500 LFAs will hit the streets in 2010, and though those numbers may look like a toe in the water, the metal they're slinging makes it clear that Lexus is jumping into the supercar market with both feet. Nine years in development, the LFA is an engineering masterwork, meticulously handcrafted on a lightweight carbon-fiber-reinforced plastic monocoque shell with aluminum extrusions front and back. You won't mistake its crisp, aircraft-like compound curves and razor edges for anything from Europe, and with a front-mounted 4.8-liter 552 bhp alloy V10 and six-speed sequential manual transmission, the LFA will impudently flash its unusual triple exhaust pipes past nearly anything you'll encounter on the road. As expected, when we tested her at Miami's Homestead raceway we found precise steering and instant throttle response as we blasted to 60 mph in a scant 3.6 seconds, thoroughly enjoying every decibel of the engine's operatic 9,000 rpm wails. There's just one catch: You can't actually buy a \$375,000 LFA. Lexus is taking a cue from the Ferrari Enzo and will lease all 150 U.S.-bound LFAs when they arrive in 2011.

American Chopper

The two easiest ways to screw up a fine cigar are to cut it imprecisely and to light it unevenly. We don't take chances with our brown bazookas, so we use Blazer's Chief II (\$55, blazerproducts.com), which features a powerful blue-flame torch and a guillotine cutter that magnetically stows in the lighter's body.



Eau de Oh!

The urbane gents who run the upscale Odin boutiques in New York City are branching out from fashion to fragrance with three unique scents. 01 Nomad offers cedar and juniper, 02 Owari features citrus notes, and 03 Century brings in cypress, birch and mint. Each goes for \$110 (odinnewyork.com).





Use Protection

PYFM—Protect Your Fucking Melon. It's the cardinal rule of all motorcycle riding, before going fast or looking cool, and applies whether you're tooting along on a Vespa or hauling ass on a hog. But there's no law against protecting your melon in style. French design company Les Ateliers Ruby recently added a windscreen to its gorgeous Pavillon, giving it a retro-futuristic twist. The new guy is called Belvédère (from \$970, ateliersruby.com).

Cold Comfort

The high heat of distillation destroys the subtle flavors of gin, so most makers employ a two-stage process. First they distill liquor, then they infuse it with juniper and other botanicals. Turns out, though, in a high-pressure environment alcohol can be made to boil at low temperatures. Which is how the producers of Oxley gin (\$50) can distill and infuse their spirit in one step without destroying its delicate flavors. Way to go, science!



Hack Your Life: Paint Up a Theater

If you want a TV you can measure in feet instead of inches, then turn a stretch of bare wall into a giant screen. It's simple to do. First, pick up a low-end 1080p projector (Vivitek's H1080FD goes for \$1,000). Then grab a can of Screen Goo (\$105 a can, goosystems.com) in either gray or white (the site will tell you which one is right for your projector) and paint the wall you want to use as a screen. For enhanced perceived contrast, figure out the exact image size on the wall and paint a black border around the edges. Depending on the throw distance (how far your projector sits from the wall; the longer the throw the bigger the image), you can get a screen that's 10 feet across, or larger if you don't mind slightly diminished brightness and resolution.



Pockets Full of Future

Thanks to Google's open-source, Internet-focused Android OS for smart phones, we're finally getting interesting options beyond BlackBerry and iPhone. And these all have built-in Wi-Fi (clockwise from bottom right): Samsung's Behold II (\$230 with T-Mobile contract) has a five-megapixel camera and Samsung's TouchWiz interface. The Motorola Droid (\$200 with Verizon contract) offers a full QWERTY slide-out keyboard. HTC's Hero (\$180 with Sprint contract) uses an iPhone-like all-touchscreen, no-keyboard approach. Finally, the Archos 5 (from \$220, archos.com) isn't a phone at all but a Net-connected entertainment device that lets you watch movies, listen to music and surf the web.

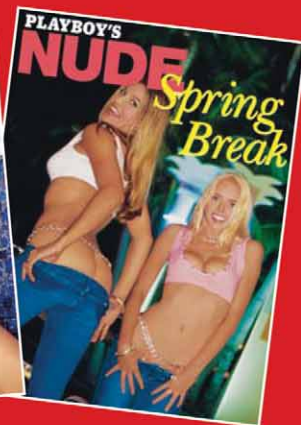


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In November PLAYBOY published a report on women who could reach orgasm by fantasy alone, i.e. without any physical stimulation. Can any men do this?—H.N., Cleveland, Ohio

Most men have. It's called a nocturnal emission, or wet dream, which is a climax with ejaculation that occurs during an erotic fantasy even when a sleeping man is not erect. (Sleep orgasms also occur in women.) As for spontaneous climax while awake, this is much more likely to occur during puberty. Alfred Kinsey noted that while two thirds of 3,588 men interviewed for his 1948 study of male sexuality said they experienced their first orgasm while masturbating, a small number (less than one percent) said it happened during innocuous activities such as reading a book, moving water around in the tub, hearing a bell ring, watching an exciting basketball game or walking down the street. Only a few men reported spontaneous orgasms as adults, either while under emotional stress (e.g., during an exam or while in combat) or by "deliberate concentration" on a fantasy. There's also the case of a man in his mid-20s who told researchers in 1983 that his antidepressant (clomipramine, or Anafranil) not only made him want to yawn but produced a spontaneous orgasm whenever he did.

I'm a 22-year-old college student with a bad habit: I fall head over heels for my friends' girlfriends. I've never acted on these feelings, but I understand why I have them: I don't meet many women who share my schedule, and I can't spend time with these women outside the awkward world of dating. After another guy does the legwork and brings a woman into our circle of friends, all it takes is for him to go away for one night and leave his girlfriend to be entertained by a trusted friend (me, the scoundrel). She and I talk and laugh, and I become obsessed. How do I stop? After three years of this, I'm going bonkers.—I.H., Denver, Colorado

It makes perfect sense that you fall for these women; they're attracted to guys who are a lot like you. And you're right—it's much harder to "cold call" a potential girlfriend than to have her grow to love you. Although harboring such crushes can be painful, getting to know these women has its advantages. First, you are honing your social skills with the opposite sex. Second, these women have friends who may find you irresistible (why not ask?). If your male friends are so proficient at finding women who appeal to you, solicit their help as well. Third,

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



I have a recurring fantasy in which I masturbate in front of a beautiful woman or an audience of women large enough to fill Madison Square Garden. I have no desire to pleasure myself in public, but I worry my fantasy could escalate into an illegal act. Can you help?—J.K., New York, New York

We're confident you will remain an upstanding citizen, especially if you feel no compelling need to take your act to the streets. Besides, the creep in a raincoat is getting off on the woman's shock, not her glee. In *Beyond My Control: Forbidden Fantasies in an Uncensored Age*, a 42-year-old man describes to Nancy Friday a fantasy in which a group of women organize a penis beauty contest, which, naturally, he wins. Friday believes these exhibitionistic daydreams have become more common among men because feminism has made it okay for women to "feast their eyes" in the same way the male gaze soaks up women. But we haven't yet achieved equality, Friday notes: While society views female exhibitionism as a form of seduction, the display of the male body is a hostile act. That's fuel for your fire—women are not supposed to cheer at the sight of an aroused man and certainly not a stranger.

there's always the possibility one of these women will finally fall for your charms, although talk about awkward dating. We're sympathetic to your situation, to a point. It doesn't get much easier to meet women than while living in a relatively closed environment of horny single people your own age. So fourth and foremost, quit spending so much time hanging out with women who have boyfriends.

Do you know of any way to get a crust on a steak like those you see at steakhouses?—B.H., Santa Monica, California

A steakhouse grill burns at 1,000 degrees or more, so any moisture on the surface of the meat instantly evaporates. The result is a steak singed on the outside and juicy on the inside. This can be a challenge on a home grill because it doesn't get anywhere near that hot. However, Tim Love, chef and owner of the Lonesome Dove Western Bistro in Fort Worth, suggests seasoning the steaks with salt and pepper almost to the point at which you think you've added too much. Pour canola or peanut oil into a cast-iron skillet. Heat until you see smoke, then carefully add each steak and cook two to four minutes per side. "That should give you a pretty darn good crust," he says. Or here's another strategy, from the chefs at America's Test Kitchen, near Boston: Pat dry four one-and-a-half-inch-thick steaks, then rub with a mixture of a teaspoon each of salt (for seasoning) and corn starch (to absorb moisture). Place the unwrapped steaks in the freezer for 30 minutes to an hour, until they are firm and dry to the touch. Season with pepper; then grill covered to taste (four to eight minutes per side).

My erection is not straight. Should I be concerned?—T.M., Douglas, Arizona

Yes, though not much can be done unless the curvature is severe enough to justify surgery. The condition, known as Peyronie's disease after the French surgeon who first described it in 1743, affects about five percent of men, usually between the ages of 40 and 60. The curvature appears to be triggered when the fibrous sheath beneath the shaft skin is damaged—perhaps by repeated minor buckling during intercourse—and fails to heal properly. If scarring occurs on top of the shaft, the penis curves upward. If it's on a side, the penis curves to the left or right. If it's on the bottom, the penis curves down. If the bend isn't severe, a doctor may suggest "watchful waiting" for 12 to 18 months to see if the curvature stabilizes. And why not? No vitamins, pills, injections or ointments have been found to be consistently effective. Recently

some companies have started promoting traction devices worn over the shaft that slowly tug it back. Unfortunately, clinical trials have been underwhelming. Last year, for example, a team of Italian urologists tested a device on 15 men with curvatures of less than 50 percent. After six months of wearing the contraption for an average of five hours a day, one patient's curvature had worsened and

eight of the men saw no change. Among the remaining six volunteers, the average erection straightened from 31 to 27 degrees. (The Italians note men with more severe Peyronie's may see better results.) Because a penis may lengthen a centimeter or two as it straightens, an unfortunate side effect of the research has been marketing claims that traction devices are "scientifically proven" as enlargers.

Money has been tight for me, as it has been for many people. Thankfully I am still meeting a lot of great women, and I go out almost every week. Any suggestions for a good, cheap first date?—F.W., Chicago, Illinois

Let's talk about what's not a good first date: the movies. If you're trying to make an impression and get to know someone, why sit in the dark? It's better to share a novel activity that allows for face-to-face conversation, which is the same advice we give married couples. We suggest billiards, the batting cage, a gallery opening, flying your new kite, a wine tasting or festival, a minor league baseball game, antiques shopping, mini golf. Second date? Paintball, bird-watching, hiking, the beach at night with a bottle of wine, shopping for and then having a picnic, horseback riding, dinner at your place. Third date? Orgy. But that's just us.

Are there rules for wearing cuff links? I would like to wear them more but usually feel overdressed. What happened to the days when wearing a shirt with French cuffs to work was de rigueur?—P.S., Bradenton, Florida

Could it be everyone else is underdressed? There are no rules (besides wearing them only with French cuffs, of course), but you may want to avoid "push throughs" that have a cuff on one side and a clip on the other. Although they are easier to get on, they could leave the impression you can't afford the full monty, and more important, they don't allow you to see and enjoy the jewelry. Like ties and pocket squares, cuff links are a way to add "a bit of light" and personality that a button cannot duplicate, notes Alan Flusser, author of *Dressing the Man: Mastering the Art of Permanent Fashion*. French cuffs are also an excellent way to frame the hand. Flusser suggests browsing antique jewelry shops for cuff links made between 1890 and 1930, when he says the craft was at its peak.

I am a 52-year-old man with a problem I don't know how to deal with. It started when I was five years old. While watching my mother do laundry, I picked up a bra and asked what it was for. She snatched it away and told me never to touch it again. As a teen I went into her bedroom while she was at work and saw a pair of pink panties and a bra. For reasons I can't explain I removed my clothes and put them on. I stuffed the cups with hand towels. When I looked in the mirror I came in the panties. One day I put on a garter, stockings, panties, bra, slip and dress. Then I put on a wig, earrings and perfume. I went around the house all day like that. During

college I would dress up only when I came home on breaks. My habits waned after I married and had kids, but two years ago I divorced and began living on my own. I now wear a girdle and stockings under my suit and a pink nightie to bed. I have met a great lady but don't know how she would react to my dressing habits. How do I make myself stop? I wonder if other guys do this.—K.B., Cincinnati, Ohio

You're a cross-dresser and certainly not alone. The sad truth is you may lose this woman. But what are your options? You won't be able to stop, and if you sneak around, you'll be miserable. When you reveal this to your girlfriend, she will be angry, upset and/or shocked. Give her time and, if she's willing to listen, answer her questions. (She'll want to know how it started and whether you're gay, which is a common misconception.) It won't be easy, but it's better to be honest and let her make her own decisions.

Most headphones have markings indicating left and right. I've always wondered: Does it matter if they aren't worn that way?—D.M., Massapequa, New York

It matters only if the music is supposed to come at you from the right or left. With classical, for instance, violins are typically on the left and basses on the right. We also imagine it matters when playing a video game—if something wicked this way comes from the right or left, you may get confused and be eaten.

Can I talk you into taking my husband for a few weeks and returning him as the fit man I married? I don't want him to know about this; he has to believe he won a makeover. Please help. I miss my hot husband.—S.P., Owensboro, Kentucky

An Advisor boot camp? That would work only if you could lose weight while drinking, smoking cigars and watching basketball. We have a better idea—set a good example. A study of 6,072 Americans found spouses tend to follow each other's lead when it comes to health habits. In fact, the data show a husband is 50 percent more likely to start exercising if his wife does and 60 percent more likely to continue if she continues. Similarly, a wife is 60 percent more likely to start if her husband does and 90 percent more likely to continue if he continues. This "spillover effect" also occurs with smoking, cholesterol screening and getting flu shots.

The article *The Golden Age of Pills* (October) mentions that Propecia (finasteride) can "stave off baldness." You should inform your readers that a large study in which I participated found finasteride prevents prostate cancer. Losing hair follicles is not as important as potentially losing the gland to cancer.—D.P., Brentwood, Tennessee

That's true, but the steroid also appears to feed aggressive tumors, which presents a quandary. The Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial that you and 10,000 other men took part in showed convincingly that finasteride reduces the incidence of prostate cancer by as much as 25 percent in men at low risk. But, as Stewart Justman explains in his book *Do No Harm*, volunteers who took the drug were also

much more likely to develop deadly tumors. So on the one hand finasteride reduces the general incidence of prostate cancer, but on the other it feeds tumors that may otherwise have never posed a threat. That's largely why most urologists still prescribe the drug only to treat the benign enlargement of the gland.

What is the best strategy to find inexpensive flights?—M.K., Cleveland, Ohio

Besides marrying a flight attendant? First, visit sites that organize fares for browsing, such as kayak.com and tripadvisor.com/flights. However, search sites don't usually catch every unadvertised sale. That shortcoming inspired travel writer George Hobica in 2006 to launch AirfareWatchdog.com. Rather than rely on computers, he hired former travel agents to search for deals, including those from Southwest, JetBlue and lesser-known airlines. The site e-mails a daily or weekly list of handpicked bargains from whatever metro area you choose. Hobica offers a few more tips: You'll always do better traveling on Tuesday, Wednesday or Saturday and on flights with layovers. Sign up for frequent-flyer e-mail updates, as airlines often send discounts to members. Search for fares early Saturday morning; airlines often lower prices late Friday night so competitors can't immediately match them. Also check weekdays at nine A.M., 11:30 A.M. and seven P.M. Because the airlines make most of their money soaking last-minute business travelers, the cheapest tickets tend to be those purchased at least seven, 14 or 21 days in advance. Finally, don't rule out driving a few hours to depart from a larger hub, especially when traveling overseas.

My boyfriend will soon be working at a lodge in Alaska where the only regular means of communication is e-mail. If I attach nude photos to e-mails sent to Alaska, how likely is it someone could steal them en route? I don't want to see them online.—J.S., San Francisco, California

Rather than being intercepted by a porn gremlin, it's more likely the photos will be compromised after they arrive, particularly if your boyfriend shares a computer with co-workers and/or lodge guests. If you're going to create and distribute nudes, you must be prepared to stand naked before the world, or at least his friends, because even the best relationships go sour and even the seemingly nicest people can become vengeful. What's he sending you?

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereotypes and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages. Write the Playboy Advisor, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or send e-mail by visiting playboyadvisor.com. Our greatest-hits collection, *Dear Playboy Advisor*, is available in bookstores and online; listen to the Advisor each week on Sirius/XM 99.



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: JOHN MAYER

A candid conversation with the tabloids' favorite rock star about Jennifer Aniston, Jessica Simpson, being an honorary black man and why the best sex happens alone

Given the type of news coverage he gets, it may surprise you to learn that John Mayer is also a musician.

His major-label debut, *Room for Squares*, came out in 2001, and within two years he was rewarded with his first Grammy win, followed by praise from every corner of the music industry, from blues masters (B.B. King and Eric Clapton) to rap stars (Kanye West and Jay-Z) to Nashville standouts (the Dixie Chicks and Brad Paisley). His gentle voice and introspective lyrics looked back to 1970s songwriters like James Taylor, and his guitar playing was versatile and masterful.

There hadn't been a new solo male rock star in the music business since Lenny Kravitz, and Mayer fit the bill. He wrote hit songs—the ballads “Daughters,” which went to number one, “Your Body Is a Wonderland” and “Say,” the peppy and clever “No Such Thing,” the bluesy “Gravity” and the soulful “Waiting on the World to Change”—that were solidly constructed from warm sentiments and sophisticated music detail. He wrote “some of the most women-friendly anthems this side of Eve Ensler,” one journalist swooned. Not since Sting had a male singer been both so popular and so respected.

And so handsome, too. Mayer, a taut six-foot-three, was soon dating the kind of beau-

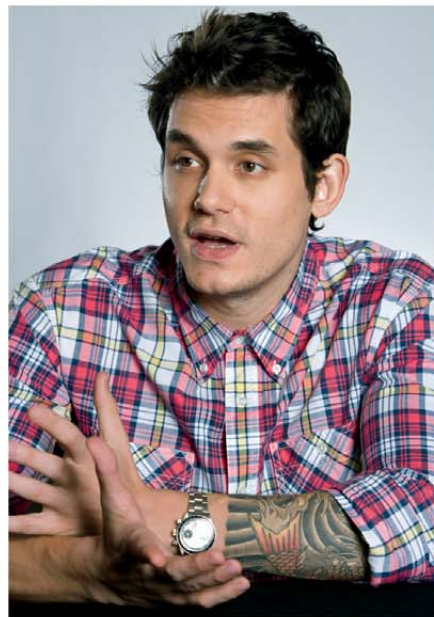
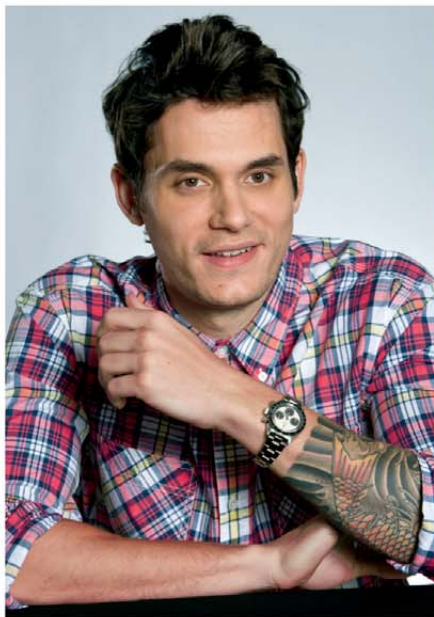
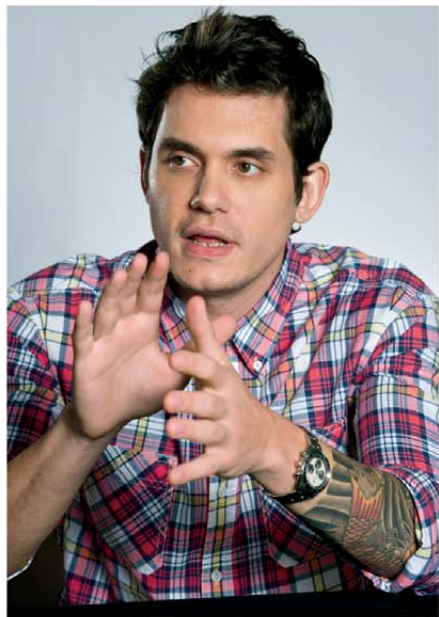
ties who populate magazine covers: Jennifer Love Hewitt, Cameron Diaz and Minka Kelly, most recently seen on the arm of Derek Jeter. In 2006 he surprised some fans by dating Jessica Simpson, who seemed (musically at least) the antithesis of what he stood for. Alongside his music career he's lately had a parallel life as a tabloid topic, due to his romance with actress Jennifer Aniston. They were together from April 2008 to March 2009, including a two-month breakup during their summer together. After he and Aniston split, Mayer released *Battle Studies*, the best record of his career, a set of related songs in which he mourns lost love, rejoices in his independence and castigates himself for romantic failure.

Mayer grew up in Fairfield, Connecticut, the second of three boys raised by Margaret, an English teacher, and Richard, a high school principal 19 years older than his wife. John's guitar prowess led him to the Berklee College of Music, which he left after two semesters to begin a career in Atlanta. He suffered from panic attacks as well as acne “so bad that I would cancel dates and plans and stay in the house,” he has said.

He is beloved (though not universally) as one of the few uncensored stars, speaking with wit and impetuosity. He fills his Twitter

feed with quips and advice, returning often to a few favorite topics: his dreams, his love of pie, Miley Cyrus songs and farting. Mayer has been “creating a new paradigm of fame,” veteran music blogger Bob Lefsetz wrote. As another journalist puts it, “Mayer takes self-awareness to new postmodern heights,” like a football player who provides “color commentary on his own career.”

PLAYBOY contributing editor **Rob Tannenbaum** met with Mayer twice: first at the singer's nearly unfurnished \$7.5 million seven-bedroom villa in a gated community outside L.A., where Mayer poured glasses of 16-year-old Lagavulin neat; and then over lunch in Brooklyn a few hours before he played a secret MySpace show. Tannenbaum reports, “John Mayer talks the way he plays guitar solos—the words tumble out fast, like notes, and he may go on for as long as five minutes. He'll jump out into different themes and suddenly slip in a new idea, but he always returns to his initial theme. He's a prodigious talker, and he always brought up touchy subjects—his relationships with Simpson and Aniston, or his reputation as a douche bag—before I mentioned them, to show he wasn't afraid to address them. From his soft-spoken songs you can't tell how stubborn and defiant he is. Or how much he loves talking about sex. Or



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

“I’ve already won one of the biggest gambles of all time, which was to forgo an education so I could pursue a real all-or-none scenario. I look pretty fucking smart for having done that, though it doesn’t change the fact that it was crazy.”

“I’m a self-soother. The Internet, DVR, Netflix, Twitter—all these things are moments in time throughout your day. Pornography? It’s a new synaptic pathway. There have probably been days when I saw 300 vaginas before I got out of bed.”

“I hate being the heartbreaker. Hate it. If I date somebody and it doesn’t work out, it’s another nightmare for me. I don’t equate sex with release, I equate it with tension. Somewhere in my brain it has probably really fucked me up.”

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how mischievous he is. When I met him in the kitchen of his L.A. home he was talking about not talking anymore: 'I think the world would be better off if I stopped doing interviews,' he said. So we started there."

PLAYBOY: Is this the last John Mayer interview?

MAYER: No, though I have fantasies of it. And that doesn't come out of pretension or laziness. It's difficult for me to explain my life to someone without sounding like I'm complaining, which I'm not. I have no problem saying I'm in a bit of a strange time in my life.

PLAYBOY: What's strange about this time in your life?

MAYER: In one way or another, people probably know my name now. I'm squarely nestled in the crosshairs of their criticism and media reproach. I originally played music because I was an underdog, because I didn't want to be in school, and it always had this quality of an uprising. When you first start out, you want people to know you. There is a quality of the unknown that is very sexy—like thinking, There might be a girl in this crowd who will have a conversation with me because she knows my music. For me, it has never been about fucking lots of girls. I could have fucked a lot more girls in my life if I hadn't been trying so hard to get them to like me. If I have a conversation with a really hot girl that lasts all night and she says, "Wow, I had no idea I was going to like you this much," that is the equivalent, for me, of getting laid.

PLAYBOY: So how has that changed?

MAYER: I'm no longer playing music so I can walk into a party and talk to chicks, because people know who I am now. In fact, now I have a sort of negative connotation with that. [laughs] It's a headache, you know?

PLAYBOY: Meeting girls is a headache? You have to explain that.

MAYER: I hate being the heartbreaker. Hate it. If I date somebody and it doesn't work out, it's another nightmare for me. I don't like the way the odds are stacked. If I date nine more girls before I get married—which I think would be completely appropriate—that would be nine more spats of character assassination. I don't equate sex with release, I equate it with tension. It's given me a lot of pause. Somewhere in my brain it has probably really fucked me up.

PLAYBOY: But who cares if people assassinate your character?

MAYER: I do. I just do. I consider myself a good guy, with the best of intentions. Anybody who has been in a relationship with me would stand by the fact that I've never been callous. I've never been a bad boy. I may have taken someone through the wringer psychologically, but I've never been sinister.

PLAYBOY: So you've lost the motivation of playing music to meet girls.

MAYER: If I was playing it so I could meet hot chicks, I've met hot chicks, quote unquote. If I was playing it to make a ton of money, I've made a ton of money. If I was playing it to be well-known, I am well-known. Once you put aside girls and money, it forces you to realign your motivation for being a musician. Now I'm not a have-not but a have. Which is interesting, because music has to come from a have-not sort of place. And there are many places where I have-not.

PLAYBOY: What motivates you now?

MAYER: My motivation is to prove people wrong, to confuse them. I enjoy the challenge—I must be addicted to the challenge. I've gone from being a musician to being a celebrity. And when people do that, their work usually suffers. There are tunes on *Battle Studies* that are more applicable to other people's lives than anything I've ever written before. This whole time I've stayed vulnerable, stayed frustrated, stayed confused. This record is the trade-off to having sort of brutalized myself for a few years. So if people see that over the past couple of years I actually got a firmer grip on writing songs about the ups and downs of life, they might go, "How did he have the time to make a record? Was he writing 'War of My Life' in the middle of me thinking he was a douche bag? Did I ever actually know him? Maybe he's a pretty solid guy."

PLAYBOY: What if you were to google the phrase *John Mayer is a douche bag*?

MAYER: You'd get a lot of hits. It's this whole perception thing about tabloids, where 85 percent of the stories are not true. If you align yourself to be exactly who you know you are and to have dignity, maybe through that distorted lens you look askew to everyone else. I've done away with feeling aloof and trying to seem suave and bulletproof. I've resigned myself to being slightly awkward and goofballish.

PLAYBOY: It seems as though you realize that celebrities who complain don't generate much sympathy.

MAYER: I have never once said "I wish the press would leave me alone." With Twitter, I can show my real voice. Here's me thinking about stuff: "Wouldn't it be cool if you could download food?" It has been important for me to keep communicating, even when magazines were calling me a rat and saying I was writing a book.

PLAYBOY: Who did that?

MAYER: *Star* magazine at one point said I was writing a tell-all book for \$10 million. On *Star's* cover it said WHAT A RAT! My entire life I've tried to be a nice guy. The best I ever felt was when friends' parents would say, "John can come over any time. We love that kid." When I date a girl and find out her friends approve of me, I love it. I love being liked! I've given microscopic dedication to doing



MR. JACK DANIEL WAS
NO SAINT.



**BUT HE DID START
SOMETHING OF A RELIGION.**



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the right thing, taking the high road, and all of a sudden *Star* magazine says, "He's a rat." I can't tell you it didn't give me that much more bloodlust to do what people thought I couldn't do.

PLAYBOY: It sounds simple, but it's not: *Battle Studies* is an album about love.

MAYER: Sure. It's an album about love in this day and age, and at my age, 32.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean by "in this day and age"? There aren't any references in the songs that would have been unclear 20 years ago.

MAYER: I'm a self-soother. The Internet, DVR, Netflix, Twitter—all these things are moments in time throughout your day when you're able to soothe yourself. We have an autonomy of comfort and pleasure. By the way, pornography? It's a new synaptic pathway. You wake up in the morning, open a thumbnail page, and it leads to a Pandora's box of visuals. There have probably been days when I saw 300 vaginas before I got out of bed.

PLAYBOY: What's your point about porn and relationships?

MAYER: Internet pornography has absolutely changed my generation's expectations. How could you be constantly synthesizing an orgasm based on dozens of shots? You're looking for the one photo out of 100 you swear is going to be the one you finish to, and you still don't finish. Twenty seconds ago you thought that photo was the hottest thing you ever saw, but you throw it back and continue your shot hunt and continue to make yourself late for work. How does that not affect the psychology of having a relationship with somebody? It's got to.

PLAYBOY: You seem very fond of pornography.

MAYER: When I watch porn, if it's not hot enough, I'll make up backstories in my mind. My biggest dream is to write pornography.

PLAYBOY: How did you become a self-soother?

MAYER: I grew up in my own head. As soon as I lose that control, once I have to deal with someone else's desires, I cut and run. I'm pretty culpable about being hard to live with. I have had a good run of imagining things into reality. I've got a huge streak of successes based on my own inventions. If you tell me I'm wrong or that I'm overthinking something, well, overthinking has given me everything in my career. I have a hard time not looking at anxiety disorder as being like an ATM. I can invent things really well. I mean, I have unbelievable orgasms alone. They're always the best. They always end the way I want them to end. And I have such an ability to make believe, I can almost project something onto my wall, watch it and get off to it: sexually, musically, it doesn't matter. When I meet somebody, I'm in a situation in

which I can't run it because another person is involved. That means letting someone else talk, not waiting for them to remind you of something interesting you had in mind.

PLAYBOY: Masturbation for you is as good as sex?

MAYER: Absolutely, because during sex, I'm just going to run a filmstrip. I'm still masturbating. That's what you do when you're 30, 31, 32. This is my problem now: Rather than meet somebody new, I would rather go home and replay the amazing experiences I've already had.

PLAYBOY: You'd rather jerk off to an ex-girlfriend than meet someone new?

MAYER: Yeah. What that explains is that

JESSICA SIMPSON, FOR ME,
IS A DRUG. AND DRUGS
AREN'T GOOD FOR YOU IF
YOU DO LOTS OF THEM.
THAT GIRL IS LIKE CRACK
COCAINE TO ME.



I'm more comfortable in my imagination than I am in actual human discovery. The best days of my life are when I've dreamed about a sexual encounter with someone I've already been with. When that happens, I cannot lay off myself.

PLAYBOY: There are some angry, accusatory songs on the record, but there are also self-critical songs. It goes through all the changing moods you have on the worst night of your life.

MAYER: Yeah, *Battle Studies* is that feeling between 10 P.M. and two A.M. when you have this wild level of arousal and optimism. It's about the things people do to each other during those hours. I have wasted four hours of my life refusing to masturbate and believing that somehow the phone would ring

and I'd get a call from somebody I hadn't talked to in years.

PLAYBOY: The phone will ring and your life will change?

MAYER: Yeah. It's like looking for a fix. I'll spend four hours not even putting anything into motion, just believing somehow it's going to come my way.

PLAYBOY: You talked before about being an underdog. What were you like at 16?

MAYER: I wasn't paying attention in school. I would come home and play guitar, playing for all the moments I had that day when I couldn't feel alive. I visualized I was a superhero with an alter ego: "By day, a gawky, zit-faced 16-year-old boy...." I would sleep with my guitar because I thought it would make me play better. I had a 100-disc CD player in the basement, and I would load it up with Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Miles Davis, Kenny Burrell and Bill Evans and play CDs while I slept on the floor. Like somehow, by osmosis, the music was getting into me. It was the only way I could build enough armor to go back to school the next day.

PLAYBOY: How many hours a day were you playing?

MAYER: Three to four hours a day when I was in school, and in the summertime five to six hours a day. I wasn't smoking cigarettes or drinking, and I wasn't trying to hook up. I wasn't going to parties. I remember being in my room when there was a party across town, sitting in my room and pretending I was at the party and playing for them. I remember saying to myself, If I have to sleep on a pool table every night on tour, I'll do it. I always had that desire to be a rock star.

PLAYBOY: Were you one of those smart kids who hated school?

MAYER: I would act up and get sent to the dean's office and talk to him as though I was an adult. "I'm not trying to upset anybody, sir. With all due respect to you and your staff, I'm just not supposed to be here. It's quite difficult for me to sit in class, because I'm supposed to be a guitar player, sir." I was very cocky. But from the outset, there was opposition. My parents were not the biggest fans, to put it diplomatically. I grew up saying, "You'll see. I can't explain it yet, but you'll see." Early in my career, when I was 19 or 20, I'd meet presidents of record companies and refuse to give them my demos. I'd say, "We'll see each other again sometime."

PLAYBOY: That is really cocky.

MAYER: It was incredibly cocky. I was so tempered in opposition that when the opposition went away, I started to look like a total asshole. When my first record came out, I was still saying, "You'll see. Check out what I did. *Eat it.*" It gave me this reputation for being really arrogant. I probably should have stood on top of a roof and yelled, "Fuck you!" That "I'll

(continued on page 107)

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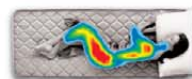
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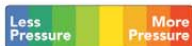
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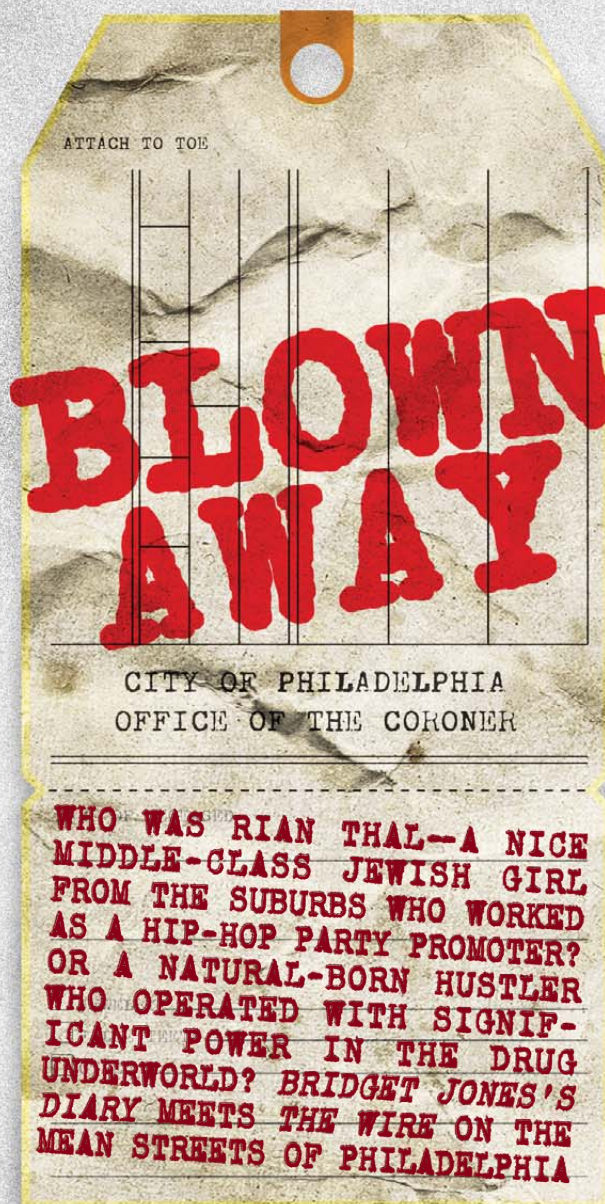
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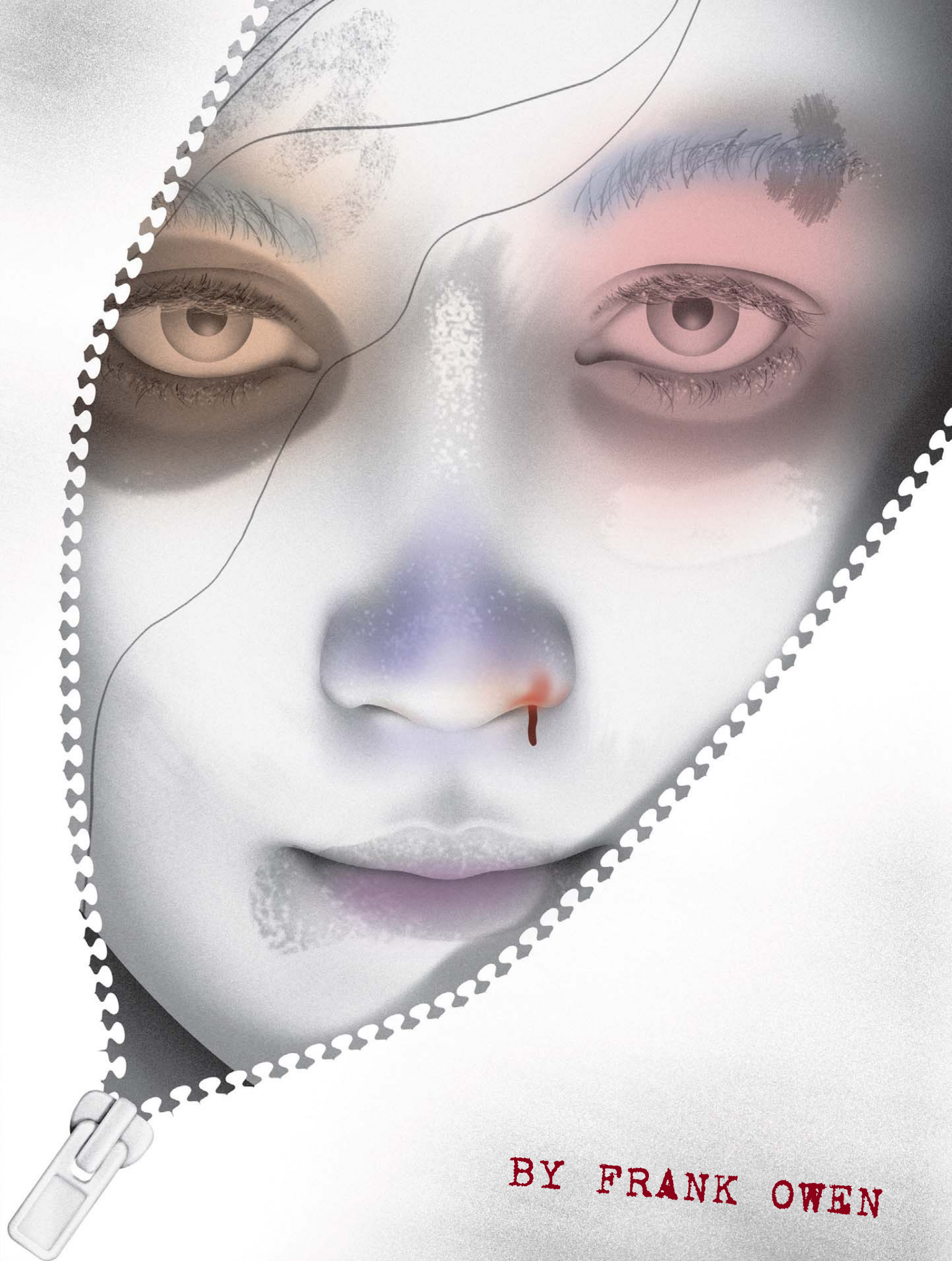
He was a criminal from the ghettos of North Philadelphia, a bear of a man with a reputation for allegedly ripping off other drug dealers, a person whose childhood nickname, Pooh, was enough to strike fear in the heart of rivals. A real gangster this one: He'd been shot on the street before and had done hard time for drug trafficking.

She was a nice Jewish girl from the Philadelphia suburbs, a 34-year-old eye-catching blonde hip-hop socialite with a big mouth and the smile of a pageant queen, who threw high-profile parties that attracted celebrities such as Donald Trump, Carmen Electra and the Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb. She was even on first-name terms with Mayor Michael Nutter.

And together—according to the testimony of another man who will soon be involved—Will Hook and Rian Thal planned a robbery. If all went as planned, the job would net them a half-million-dollar payday, the score of a lifetime.

Though it's hard to know for sure, the plot might have been hatched one June night at Hook's home in Strawberry Mansion, a bleak neighborhood where graffitied walls memorialize the names of dead drug dealers and where it's as easy to buy crack as it is to buy a carton of

ILLUSTRATION BY JESSE AUERSALO



BY FRANK OWEN



HIP-HOP PARTY PROMOTER Rian Thal was so well-known in Philadelphia that she was on first-name terms with the mayor. Here she is with (from top) Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, Eagles running back Brian Westbrook, actor Frankie Faison from *The Wire* and Carmen Electra.

milk. A party was going on. It must have seemed odd to see a young, attractive blonde woman amid the mass of black hip-hop hangers-on and drug kin. But then, everyone knew Rian Thal. She was Philly club-scene royalty, and she went where she pleased.

The idea seemed bulletproof. Thal knew a major drug dealer who was coming into town looking to buy a substantial amount of cocaine. He was driving a tractor trailer and intended to purchase the drugs and then transport them to Detroit, where there was an ongoing cocaine drought. Thal had persuaded the dealer to stay at her place in a trendy apartment complex called the Piazza at Schmidts in the gentrified neighborhood of Northern Liberties. All Thal had to do was lure him out of the apartment and Hook would sneak in and steal the money and the drugs.

It was what Hook liked to call a sweat

beat, an easy takedown, a simple rip-and-run. What could possibly go wrong?

•

There was nothing about the circumstances of Thal's upbringing that could predict what she would later become. She grew up in a leafy townhouse community called Lafayette Hill, only a 25-minute drive from the city but a world away from the gritty glamour of the Philly club scene. It's the sort of place where the loudest sounds you hear are dogs barking and children playing in the street. Her father worked as a butcher at a Pathmark supermarket. Her mother was a homemaker. She celebrated Yom Kippur and Passover at the local country club, though she was far from rich. Not that she wanted for anything. Her parents adored her and showered her with everything their limited means allowed.

While she was in high school Thal earned the pet name Joan Rivers because of her distinctive raspy voice that filled a room and didn't seem to fit her little body. She was so proud of the nickname she had it emblazoned on the back of a football jersey.

"She was a real yenta, loud and obnoxious," says Jade Connelly, who met Thal in fifth grade and later attended Plymouth Whitmarsh High School with her.

Thal's mother, Sandy, had another name for her—B.R., Bad Rian—because she stayed out late and often incurred her parents' displeasure.

"She was always a party girl who got herself into a shitload of trouble," says another friend, Jennifer George. "And she loved it."

Thal's high spirits made her unsuitable for academic pursuits. "She wasn't going to get into Harvard, that's for sure," quips Connelly. But she had other talents, namely her gregariousness, her ability to mix and mingle with all sorts of people without judging them. People liked Thal. She had an infectious personality. And Thal liked people, so a job in the hospitality industry seemed the perfect career choice. Growing up as she did in the 1980s and 1990s, when hip-hop crystallized into a moneyed subculture glorified incessantly on television and in magazines, the lure of Philadelphia's scene drew her in.

As a kid she saw local boys DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince rocket to stardom, but the real neighborhood hip-hop scene was a lot more rough. Philly's hip-hop world has intersected with the drug world going back to Schoolly D in the 1980s. There was the famous case of RAM Squad, a rap crew that grew up in the notorious Richard Allen housing projects; it produced a number of underground hits, including "Sex, Money and Drugs," before one of its members pleaded guilty (continued on page 111)

RIGHT, FROM TOP Will Hook, a.k.a. Pooh, the 40-year-old dealer who attempted to steal half a million dollars' worth of coke from the apartment of Rian Thal (blonde, far left); Kaboya Jones, who lived on the second floor in Thal's building; Donnell Murchison, who claims Thal was in on the job the whole time. BELOW Surveillance video shows (1) Murchison inside the building, waiting for his fellow gunmen to arrive, (2) the others entering, (3) Thal heading to her apartment, and (4) a quick exit following a heist gone very wrong.





"So tell me about these hallucinations you've been having, Mr. Prescott, and why you don't want to cure them."



PLAYBOY'S SEXIEST CELEBRITIES



The mob is coming for celebrities. With sharpened sticks and torches it's going after its idols. When the deed is done it will elevate new ones and, in turn, tear them down. Pop culture is now the same as tabloid culture. The world's greatest golfer shanks his marriage; the current longest-running late-night talk-show host cops on air to hanky-panky; TV's busiest reality-show dad wakes up to find he's the consensus douche bag of the year. But the beautiful ones are safe. We want them to be safe. We want them, and in 2010 it's better to be desired than admired. Admiration too quickly turns to jealousy—cue villagers with pitchforks—whereas desire feeds on itself. Look at one of our elder stateswomen, the dominant sex symbol of the Aughts, Angelina Jolie. She began the decade in a fatal-attraction-style marriage to an older man named Billy Bob. One could try to tar her as a husband stealer or a baby collector, but it wouldn't stick. In simple terms, we just don't care. As long as Angelina puts on the big bad mama act every couple of years (two *Tomb Raider* films, *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, *Beowulf*, *Wanted*—and *Wanted 2*, rumored to be coming in 2011), we're not giving her grief about her personal life. For a sexy woman at the top of her game there are no disqualifying events. The handsomest man alive, George Clooney, goes steady with an Italian fox, and hearts break around the world; yet Beyoncé,

HERE ARE
OUR FAVORITE
FANTASIES,
JUST WHEN
WE NEED
THEM THE
MOST

BY
**JOSH
ROBERTSON**



Clockwise from top left:
Camilla Belle, Aubrey
O'Day, Kim Kardashian,
Bar Refaelli.



Scarlett Johansson and Jessica Alba get married and we shrug it off. Scarlett has a smile that will slay you and a pout that will make you reach for your wallet. Admit it, tough guy: You do melt on occasion. If you met Scarlett, Jessica or Beyoncé, you'd melt like butter on toast. Either that or you're made of wood. Married? Not a problem. Spoken for? Even less so. Kim Kardashian (who was married before and who kick-started her career with a sex tape) is on again with

Clockwise from top: Scarlett Johansson, Christina Hendricks, Katy Perry, Tara Reid.





Reggie Bush. Megan Fox may still be with Brian Austin Green, better known as the luckiest man in Hollywood. The photos of lingerie model Alina Puscau in our November 2009 issue were shot by her boyfriend, Brett Ratner. Holly Madison was the boss's pajama partner, but two *Girls Next Door* cover pictorials proved the guy is a sharer through and through. He's proving just as generous with current housemates Crystal Harris and the Shannon twins. Vampire bait Anna Paquin plans to marry *True Blood* co-star Stephen Moyer—call us sanguine,

Clockwise from left: Beyoncé, Alina Puscau, Olivia Wilde, Nicole Scherzinger.





but we wish them well. And at the same time, we don't care. Their marriage could turn cold and loveless instantly and it would matter to us only if it meant fewer sex scenes for Sookie Stackhouse. When it comes to fantasy, the prevailing wisdom is that women desire story and men simply consume with their eyes. Really? Recall Rita Hayworth's remark about her on-screen alter ego: "Every man I knew went to bed with Gilda and woke up with me." Every man wants to be healed by Olivia Wilde's Dr. Hadley from *House*, and every man wants Christina Hendricks to wear a tight sweater and take his dictation. Aubrey O'Day is bisexual, and Katy Perry piqued our interest when she told us she'd kissed



Clockwise from top left: Holly Madison, Sasha Grey, Angelina Jolie, Joanna Krupa.





a girl—raise your hand if you'd like to see them duet or at least make a video. The starlet has always held our attention, but Americans are increasingly fond of beautiful women in it for the long haul. The Aughts were a glorious decade for young moms who bounced back from pregnancy like Jessica Alba and for such modern Mrs. Robinsons as Lisa Rinna, who was perfect as the 1960s seductress in our May 2009 issue. Come-back kid of the year Tara Reid shed the embarrassments of her past (you know, that stuff we said we didn't care about) along with her clothes in our January/February issue. And 37-year-old Carmen Electra simply will not go away—not that we want her to. Mystery has its charms, as does extreme openness. We don't care. Oh, we care about them; we care deeply how they look, talk and walk, what's in their lingerie collection, whether they've ever kissed another girl and what their tattoos mean in English. We

Clockwise from top left: the Shannon twins and Crystal Harris, Anna Paquin, Alicia Keys, Carmen Electra, Megan Fox.





care about the personae they present to the world and the characters they're paid to play. It's 2010, a post-privacy era of OMG TMI. Celebrity is cheap, and celebrities are more mortal than ever. But these aren't merely famous women. Martha Stewart is a famous woman. These are the dreams men dream.

See more sexy celebs now at playboy.com/celebs.

Clockwise from top left: Jessica Alba, Lisa Rinna, Ida Jungqvist.



The House of Horrors

by CHARLES BUKOWSKI

AS A POET OF THE STREETS, BUKOWSKI RAGED AND OUTRAGED, BUT HE ALWAYS TOLD THE TRUTH—ESPECIALLY ABOUT OTHER WRITERS

Talking about writing is like talking about love or love-making or love-living: Too much talk about it can kill it off. Without seeking them out, I have, unfortunately, met many writers, both successful and unsuccessful—I mean at their craft. As human beings they are a bad lot, a distasteful lot, bitchy, self-centered, vicious. One thing they almost all have in common: They each believe their work great, perhaps the greatest. If they become successful they accept it as their normal due. If they fail, they feel that the editors and the publishers and the gods are against them. And it's true that many bad writers are pushed and manipulated to the top, whatever the reason may be. It's also true that many great writers have starved to death, or almost starved to death, or killed themselves or gone mad and so forth, and were later discovered as fine (though dead) talents. This historical fact gives heart to the writer who is truly bad. He likes to imagine that his (her) failure is caused by any number of things besides simply being a poor talent. Well, so we have all that. Also, when I think of the writers I know, mostly poets, I notice that they are supported by others—wives, mostly mothers carry the economic load of those I know. And they are quite comfortable with TV sets, loaded refrigerators and apartments or houses by the sea—mostly in Venice and Santa Monica—and they sun themselves in the day, feeling tragic, these male

PHOTO COLLAGE BY JAMES IMBROGNO



TOP:
BUKOWSKI
LIFTING
WEIGHTS
IN HIS
HOLLYWOOD
APART-
MENT, 1976.
BOTTOM: THE
AUTHOR AND
HIS WIFE,
LINDA, IN
1996.

friends (?) of mine, and then at night, perhaps a bottle of wine and a watercress sandwich, followed by a wailing letter of their penury and greatness to somebody somewhere. Anything but writing, working, getting it done, getting the word down. Well, I guess it beats working a punch press. The wives and the mothers will work the punch press, don't worry about that. And the poets, having not lived in the outside world in reality, they will then really have nothing to write about, which they do with great ego and much dullness.

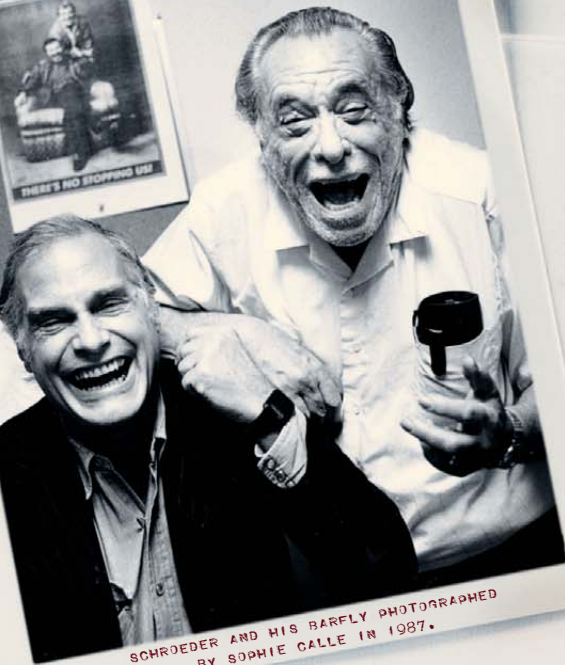
It is almost impossible to write about writing. I remember once after giving a poetry reading I asked the students, "Any questions?" One of them asked me, "Why do you write?" And I answered, "Why do you wear that red shirt?"

Being a writer is damning and difficult. If you have a talent it can leave you forever while you are sleeping one night. What keeps you going in the game is not easy to answer. Too much success is destructive; no success at all is destructive. A little rejection is good for the soul, but total rejection creates cranks and madmen, rapists, sadists, drunkards and wife-beaters. Just as too much success does.

I too have been misled by the Romantic concept of writing. As a youth I saw too many movies of the great Artist, and the writer was always some tragic and very interesting chap with a fine goatee, blazing eyes and inner truths springing to his tongue continually. What a way to be, I thought, ah. But it isn't so. The best writers I know talk very little, I mean those who are doing the good writing. In fact, there is nothing duller than a good writer. In a crowd or even with one other person, he is always busy (subconsciously) recording every goddamned thing. He is not interested in speech-making or being the Life of the Party. He is greedy; he saves his juices for the typewriter. You can talk away inspiration, you can destroy God-given genius with your mouth. Energy will only spread so far. I too am greedy. One must be. The only juices that can be given up, the only time that can simply be given away is the time for Love. Love gives strength; it breaks down inbred hatreds and prejudices. It makes the writing more full. But all other things must be saved for the work. A writer should do most of his reading while he is young; as he starts to form, reading becomes destructive—it takes the needle off the record.

A writer must keep performing, hitting the high mark or he is down on skid row. And there's no way back up. For after some years of writing, the soul, the person, the creature becomes useless to operate in any other capacity. He is unemployable. He is a bird in a land of cats. I'd never advise anybody to become a writer, only if writing is the only thing that keeps you from going insane. Then, perhaps, it's worth it.

FROM ABSENCE OF THE HERO: UNCOLLECTED STORIES AND ESSAYS, VOL. 2: 1946-1992 BY CHARLES BUKOWSKI, TO BE PUBLISHED BY CITY LIGHTS PUBLISHERS IN APRIL.



SCHROEDER AND HIS BARFLY PHOTOGRAPHED BY SOPHIE CALLE IN 1987.

BUKOWSKI: THE LEGEND AND THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS BY BARBET SCHROEDER

THE DIRECTOR OF *BARFLY* PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE MAN BEHIND THE MYTHS

Misunderstandings and opposing opinions about Charles Bukowski never cease. In Germany he is considered one of the great writers of our time, and his collected works have sold more there than those of any other

writer. The American East Coast literary establishment, however, has yet to take him seriously.

One common misconception about him is that he was one of the Beat poets. Nothing could be further from the truth. Los Angeles has produced very few great men; Charles Bukowski is one of them. A product and chronicler of the world of the workingman, he was far too shy and proud to have joined a bohemian movement—which he could not have afforded anyway. Instead, he submerged himself in the working/drinking class, all while reading authors who had written honestly about what he, himself, was also witnessing: Dostoyevsky, Céline, Hemingway, Knut Hamsun, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, etc.

He created a legend around him based on his weekly columns: "Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions and General Tales of Ordinary Madness" in the *L.A. Free Press* and "Notes of a Dirty Old Man" in *Open City*, which were based on his own "improved" reality. This legend-making is not uncommon for an artist, especially for a writer who avoided using third-person narration and wrote mostly about himself as a combative and often antic drunk. But in Bukowski's case it hides one of the most important elements of his personality: an extreme, almost feminine sensitivity, accompanied by a great

sense of decency and respect for the Other. He could often be cruel in his blunt comments about people, but otherwise, he would literally not have hurt a fly.

In my DVD *The Charles Bukowski Tapes* (50 of his improvised monologues filmed in 1983-84) there is a very revealing moment in the segment entitled "Nature":

"People are indifferent. They don't get themselves in with the spider and the fly. I got myself in. I am the fly," Bukowski confesses.

This is the Bukowski you discover when you read his most beautiful poems, for instance, the ones from the collection *Love Is a Dog From Hell* (one of his 25 books of poetry). His admirers are divided equally between those who prefer his poetry and those who prefer his prose. For many, he completely changed the nature of poetry in the United States. As for his prose, he was condemned to follow Hemingway but had a darker and funnier voice. One of the best of his six novels, *Women*, the prose complement to *Love Is a Dog From Hell*, starts like this: "I was 50 years old and hadn't been to bed with a woman for four years." In the next 300 pages, using his newfound celebrity, he catches up at a rapid, hilarious pace to end up in a durable relationship with the only woman who at first refused to sleep with him.

When I think of Bukowski, the title of a book by Sartre keeps popping into my head:

Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr. I also find myself thinking of the ancient Greek philosopher Diogenes and the images of his hundreds of followers who in repudiating Plato and his idealizations, in holding fast to Cynicism, nature and extreme asceticism flourished for over 500 years until the triumph of Christ. Using his madness, Bukowski was forever trying not to be seen as a Wise Man, although that impression often stayed with those who met him. A consistently dark and devastating humor was his armor

(concluded on page 117)



BUKOWSKI AT WORK, HOLLYWOOD, 1976.



"Why don't we just stay home and read a good book...?"



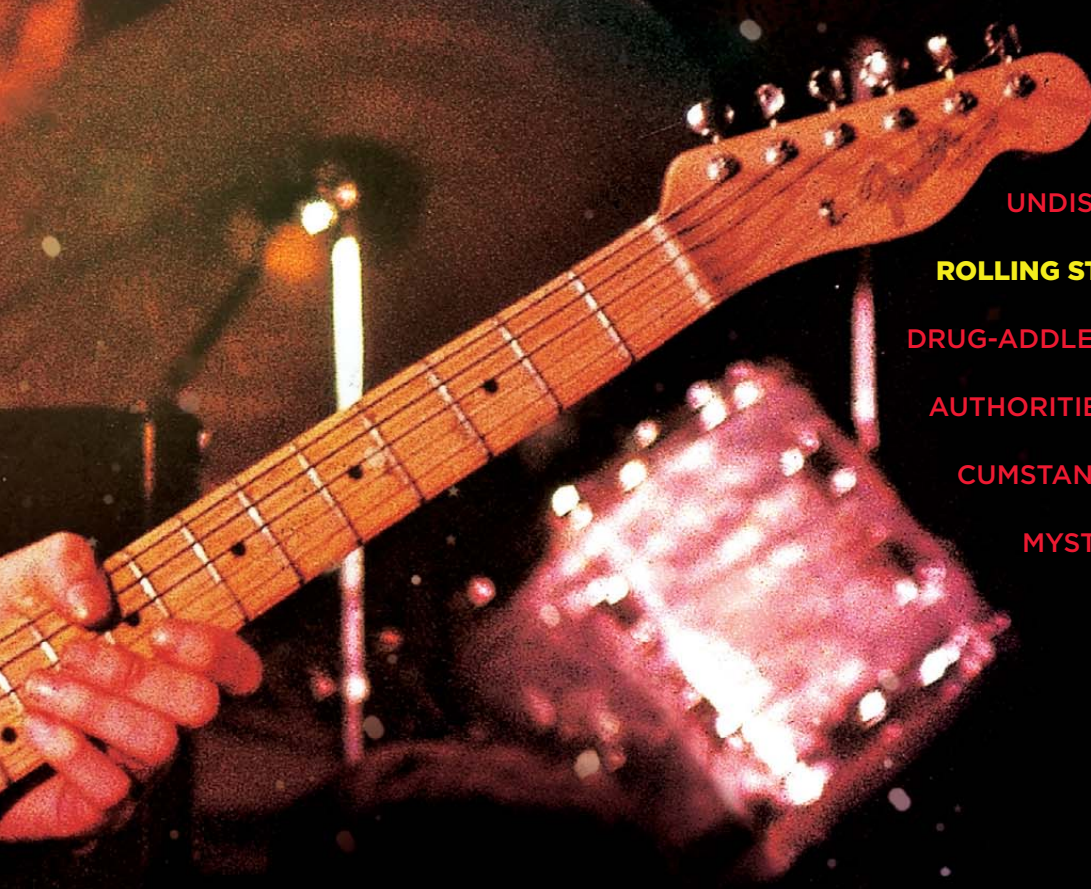
*"Oh, it's a normal day for Brian.
He died every day, you know."*

PETE TOWNSHEND, JULY 3, 1969

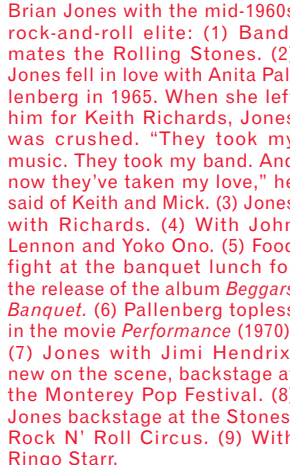
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FIRST ROCKSTAR

BY ROBERT GREENFIELD

BRIAN JONES WAS
FOUNDER AND
UNDISPUTED LEADER OF THE
ROLLING STONES. HE WAS ALSO A
DRUG-ADDLED SUICIDAL GENIUS. AS
AUTHORITIES REEXAMINE THE CIR-
CUMSTANCES SURROUNDING HIS
MYSTERIOUS DEATH IN 1969,
WE LOOK BACK AT THE
LIFE AND LEGACY OF
ROCK STARDOM'S
ORIGINAL ARCHETYPE



July 5, 1969. Mick Jagger is terrified. And for good reason. Although he often suffers from stage fright before a show, this is something else entirely. On a warm, muggy day in London more than a quarter of a million people have filled Hyde Park to watch the Rolling Stones, who have not performed live in more than two years, give their first free concert. Mick, who is also battling hay fever and laryngitis, has only to look over his right shoulder to see why so many have come here today.



Brian Jones with the mid-1960s rock-and-roll elite: (1) Band-mates the Rolling Stones. (2) Jones fell in love with Anita Pallenberg in 1965. When she left him for Keith Richards, Jones was crushed. "They took my music. They took my band. And now they've taken my love," he said of Keith and Mick. (3) Jones with Richards. (4) With John Lennon and Yoko Ono. (5) Food fight at the banquet lunch for the release of the album *Beggars Banquet*. (6) Pallenberg topless in the movie *Performance* (1970). (7) Jones with Jimi Hendrix, new on the scene, backstage at the Monterey Pop Festival. (8) Jones backstage at the Stones' Rock N' Roll Circus. (9) With Ringo Starr.

From a large photograph on the back wall of the stage, Brian Jones peers at the crowd with his perfectly pleated blond hair in his eyes and a tight smile on his fine-boned face. Just two nights ago the man who founded the Rolling Stones and always liked to refer to himself as "the undisputed leader" of the band was found dead in his swimming pool at the age of 27. And so this concert has become a memorial for him.

As the crowd cries out for the Stones to start playing, Mick steps to the microphone. Barefoot in a long white frock with billowing sleeves and a gold-studded leather collar around his neck, he looks like a troubadour from the days of old. In his hands he holds a book. He tries to quiet the crowd by telling them he wants to say something for Brian. Astonishingly, Mick begins to read from "Adonais," the poem Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote on hearing news of John Keats's death at the age of 25. "Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—/He hath awakened from the dream of life...."

As Mick reads, more than 3,000 butterflies that have been kept in cardboard boxes for hours at the side of the stage are set free. In a fitting analogy for the life Brian Jones led, many of the butterflies flutter briefly into the warm summer air only to then fall dead to the ground. With Mick Taylor—Brian's replacement—on guitar, the Stones go into their set.

Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, Brian Jones has somehow managed to make his way onstage today, which is just the way he would have wanted it. Insofar as the Rolling Stones and everything they have wrought upon this world are concerned, it all begins with him.

Forty-one years after his death, the ghost of Brian Jones is in the news again. In 2009, authorities in England began reviewing the evidence of his death, a prelude to possibly reopening their initial investigation. His body may soon be exhumed, and the cause of death listed on the coroner's report—"death by misadventure"—may be changed to homicide.

A musical genius who was tormented by demons, Brian created the doomed rock-star persona that has now become a media cliché. While Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry had the attitude before him and too many great musicians who died before they got old followed in his wake, Brian Jones was the prototype. No one ever did it all with his kind of style, grace

and madness. Along the way, he also created the Rolling Stones, “the world’s greatest rock-and-roll band.”



Saturday night, April 7, 1962. A dank basement club near the Ealing Broadway tube station in west London. The crowd is mostly male and distinctly weird. Blues purists in hooded parkas have come to see Alexis Korner and Blues Incorporated, featuring Cyril Davies, a hard-drinking auto-body repairman who can bend notes on his harmonica like he was using a pair of pliers.

In the crowd are Keith Richards—an unhealthy-looking, rail-thin 18-year-old working-class kid who will soon drop out of art school—and his new best friend, Mick Jagger, whom some people still call Mike. Also 18, and a student at the prestigious London School of Economics, Mick comes from a far more prosperous background than Keith and has borrowed his father’s car for the 90-minute drive here tonight.

Although Mick and Keith have known each other on and off for years, they became inseparable a few months ago when they ran into each other on a train platform on their way to school. Mick was carrying a copy of a Chuck Berry record Keith had never seen before, and the two began to talk. They then started playing music together and are now so close that some people have trouble telling them apart.

Before Blues Incorporated ends its set, the band customarily invites guest artists onstage to jam. Alexis Korner introduces a person no one in the crowd has heard of. “This is Elmo Lewis,” he says. “He’s come from Cheltenham to play for you.”

And there he sits—20-year-old Brian Jones with a stage name he made up for this gig, hunched over his guitar on a stool with a piece of pipe he

“I’M GOING TO KILL YOU,” JONES SAID TO MICK JAGGER. “YOU DON’T DESERVE TO LIVE!”

found in a garage and cut to fit his finger as a slide. Launching into “Dust My Broom” by Mississippi bluesman Elmore James, Brian starts playing like he just came out of some cotton field in the Delta rather than from Cheltenham, a genteel spa town where little old ladies still sip tea at four each afternoon with their pinkies curled properly in the air. As far as Keith and Mick are concerned, this guy *is* Elmore James.

After the show, Mick and Keith introduce themselves to Brian. Right from the start a weird chemistry develops among them that even they will never really understand. The bond becomes stronger when Mick and Keith turn Brian on to Chuck Berry. “Look,” Keith tells Brian, “it’s all the same shit, man, and you can do it.”

Brian is soon forced to make a choice. He can either play the real blues with musicians who are actually working for a living or he can waste his time with two skinny wannabe rock-and-rollers. “Fuck off, you bastards,” he tells those who want him to stay with Blues Incorporated. “You’re a load of shit, and I’m going to get it together with these cats.”

And there it is. The life-changing
(continued on page 118)



Jones with the Stones on TV in 1965. His heavy drug use had already begun.

Singer Brian Jones Dies In Pool; Asthma Blamed

LONDON — (AP)—Brian Jones, 27, died of a heart attack after a night of drinking and dancing at a London club, police said. The cause of death was asthma, which had been aggravated by the drinking and dancing. Jones was found dead in his swimming pool at his home in Ealing, London, on July 3, 1969. He was the lead singer of the Rolling Stones. The police said Jones had been drinking and dancing at a club in London on the night he died. He was found dead in his swimming pool at his home in Ealing, London, on July 3, 1969. He was the lead singer of the Rolling Stones.

July 3, 1969



Clockwise from top left: Jones's obituary, dated July 3, 1969; his funeral; Mick Jagger onstage reading a Shelley poem for his dead bandmate; Jones's estate, where he was found dead in his pool.

WHO KILLED BRIAN JONES?

AFTER 41 YEARS, POLICE REEXAMINE THE CASE

Since his death in 1969, the cause of Rolling Stones guitarist Brian Jones's demise has stood as one of rock's great mysteries. Now it may finally be put to rest: Police in Sussex, England confirmed they were reviewing the case, and sources say that Jones's corpse may be exhumed in hopes a modern forensic analysis will solve the mystery. Jones was pronounced dead after he was found at the bottom of his pool. He was 27. Police ruled the incident “death by misadventure,” claiming he had drowned after a night of ingesting drugs and alcohol. The coroner's report, however, shows that he hadn't taken any illegal drugs that night and that he had about three drinks' worth of alcohol in his blood. The police interviewed only a handful of those present the night he died. “The original police investigation was laughable,” Sam Cutler, the Stones' tour manager at the time, blogged recently. “Brian Jones was murdered. Of this there is little doubt.” Through the years a number of fingers have been pointed, mostly at a construction worker named Frank Thorogood, the last to see Jones alive. Another mentioned is Tom Keylock, the band's security guard. Both men are dead. Trevor Hobley, who manages the Brian Jones fan club, spent seven years looking into the case. “Brian Jones is the silent witness to what happened,” says Hobley. “And distasteful as it is to some to have him exhumed, I think it's the only way we'll ever be able to answer the question of what happened.” —David Critchell

PLAYBOY'S MUSIC AWARDS

OUR READERS SELECT THEIR FAVORITES FROM 2009

OKAY, which one of you jokers voted for Lil Wayne as best country singer? In our lifetime we've seen how democracy can sometimes go haywire, putting bodybuilders and wrestlers in office. Yet PLAYBOY readers are evidently more discerning than the electorate at large. For proof, look at the results of our annual music poll—every artist you endorsed is memorable, accomplished and deserving. And hey, if Lil Wayne ever did make a country album, it'd probably be pretty hot.



Lily Allen

BEST **AL**TERNATIVE ALBUM

IT'S NOT ME,
IT'S YOU

THE AWARD
GOES TO:

ALLEN
TOUSSAINT

BEST JAZZ ALBUM

THE BRIGHT
MISSISSIPPI

U2



HALL OF FAME

BEST **R&B** ALBUM

*I Am...
Sasha Fierce*

Beyonce





"This is what I love about fertility rites—everybody gets laid!"

Discography: Drums, timbales, organ, percussion, lead & background vocals
 Billy [X] Piano, Hammond organ, Fender Rhodes piano, BMJ electric piano, clavinet,
 ARP Galaxy, ARP string ensemble, percussion, lead & background vocals
 Mary [X] Trumpets & Flugelhorn
 Jerry [X] Electric bass
 Roger [X] Drums, lead & background vocals
 Pee Wee [X] Trumpets
 Seth [X] Tenor sax, baritone sax, flute
 All selections written by J. Williams, C. Farwell, L. Banner, M. Jones
 & Middlebrooks, M. Pinner, W. Buck
 All selections published by Ohio Players Music Co./Unichappell Music Inc. (BMI)
 PRODUCED BY OHIO PLAYERS
 Recorded and mixed at Persagen Recording Studios, Chicago
 Barry Moss — Engineer
 Marty Link, Steve Kossel, Bob Kinsland,
 Paul Johnson — Tape operators
 Mastered at Masterdisk, New York City
 Gilbert King — Engineer

Side A
 HONEY
 TOPP
 LET'S LOVE
 AIN'T GIVIN' UP NO GROUND

Side B
 SWEET STICKY THING
 LOVE ROLLERCOASTER
 ALONE

Photography: Richard Frayre
 Art Direction: Jim Lauderbach
 Design: Joe Korfman
 Our special thanks to Robin McBride & Ely White
 If you stop and think of it
 It's real easy to get along
 What I said you should have done
 And what you think of when I'm doing...
 "It's that"
 But again, that's what it takes for us to be better
 And it's nice to "belong"
 — Sam
 P.S. In the bedroom of the world



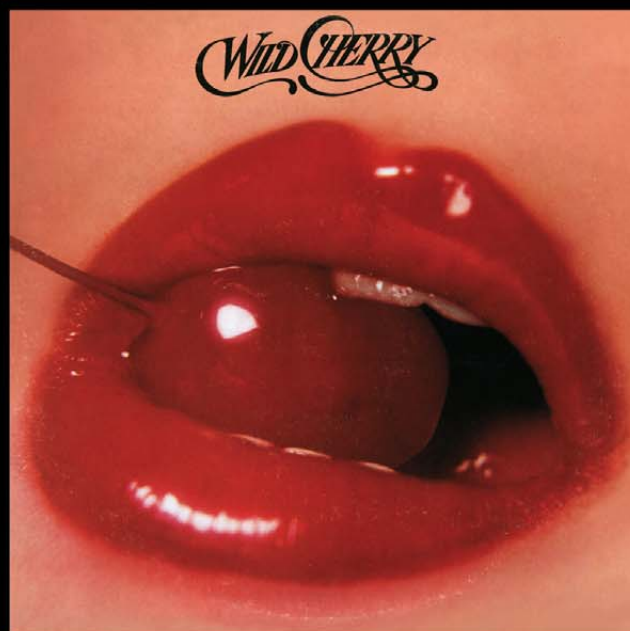
Fros Vinyl

FOR FANTASY-INDUCING, STARE-AT-IT-ALL-DAY R-RATED MUSIC PACKAGING, THE CD JEWEL BOX CAN'T COMPETE WITH CLASSIC LARGE-FORMAT VINYL ALBUM COVERS

Whether it's a photo of October 1974 Playmate Ester Cordet slathered in sticky stuff for the Ohio Players' *Honey* or a pair of luscious lips shining for *Wild Cherry*, musicians have long used the appeal of erotic imagery to sell their songs of love, sex and killer hips. True, the height of risqué album art was decades ago, and things don't bode well for the form in an era of digital downloads. But bands like the Black Crowes will often defy Walmart with alternate covers in small-press CD and vinyl runs—and who doesn't like that? Electric ladyland still exists; you just have to know where to look.



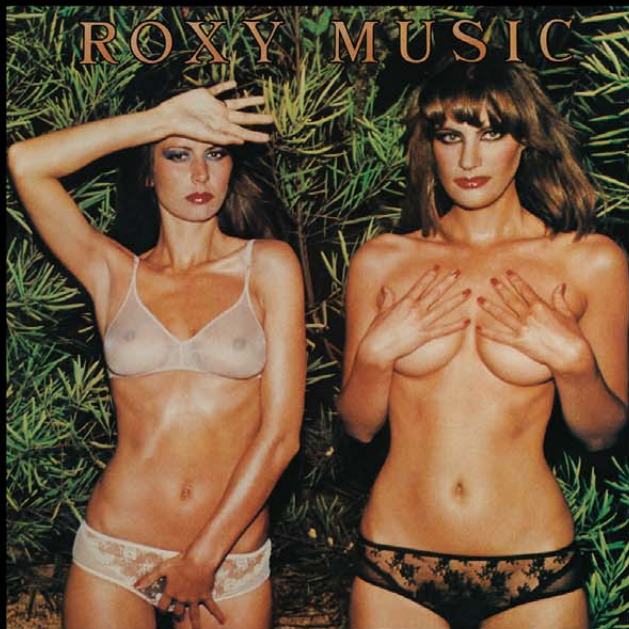
OHIO PLAYERS—*HONEY*, 1975



WILD CHERRY—*WILD CHERRY*, 1976



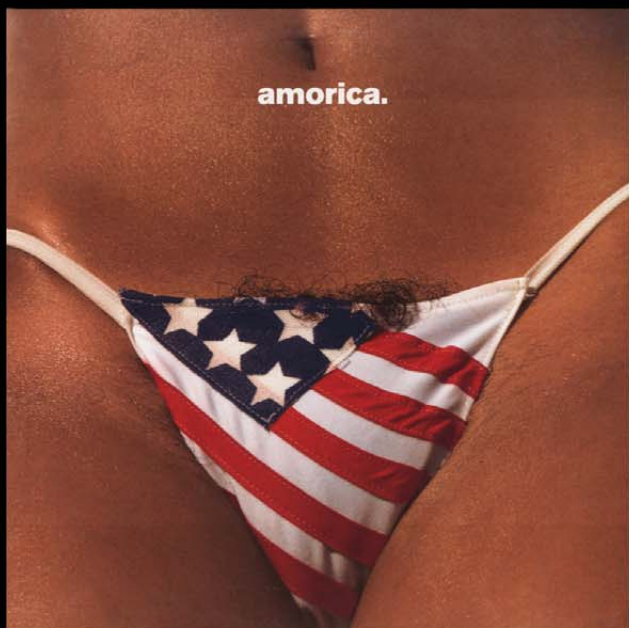
NASHVILLE PUSSY—*LET THEM EAT PUSSY*, 1998



ROXY MUSIC—*COUNTRY LIFE*, 1974



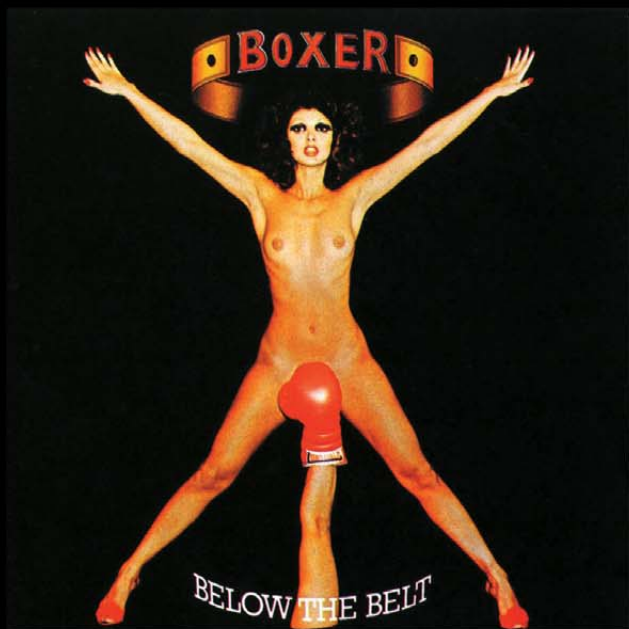
SUGAR RAY—*LEMONADE AND BROWNIES*, 1995



THE BLACK CROWES—*AMERICA*, 1994



GRACE JONES—*ISLAND LIFE*, 1985



BOXER—*BELOW THE BELT*, 1976



THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE—*ELECTRIC LADYLAND*, 1968

Tommy

My friend Tommy died in 1969.
Tommy was a hippie. He had leukemia.
They can do more with it these days.
After the funeral, there was a reception at Newman Center.

That's what his folks called it: a reception.
My friend Phil said, "Isn't that what you have after a fucking *wedding*?"
(His folks were nice people. So bummed.)
We all went to the reception.
There were sandwiches to eat and grape stuff to drink.
My friend Phil said, "What is this shit?"
I said it was ZaRex. I recognized it, I said, from MYF.
"What's *that* shit?" asked Phil.
"Methodist Youth Fellowship," I said.
"I went for ten years and once did
a flannel board of Noah and the Ark."

After the sandwiches and the ZaRex, Tommy's parents went home.
I imagine they cried and cried.
In those days I couldn't understand what it must be like to lose a kid.
Now I guess I know better. Although mine have lived (at least so far).
After Tommy's parents went home, we all went to 110 North Main.
We cranked up the stereo. I found some Grateful Dead records.
I hated the Dead, of Jerry Garcia I used to say, "I'll be grateful when
he's dead"
(turned out I wasn't),
but Tommy liked them.
(Of course he also liked Kenny Rogers.)
We smoked dope. We smoked Winstons and Pall Malls. We drank beer.
We rapped about Tommy.
It was pretty nice.
And when the Wilde-Stein Society showed up—all eight of them—we let
them in.
Tommy had leukemia and Tommy was gay but it was the leukemia that
killed him.
(That was before AIDS.)

We all agreed his folks had done him righteous.
He wrote what he wanted, and they pretty much gave him what he wrote.
He was dressed in his best as he lay in his new narrow apartment.
He wore his bellbottom blue jeans and his favorite tie-dyed shirt.
(Melissa the Big Girl Freck made that shirt.
I don't know what happened to her.
She was there one day, then she wasn't.
I associate her with melting snow.
Main Street in Orono would gleam so wet and bright it hurt your eyes.
That was the winter the Lemon Pipers sang "Green Tambourine.")
His hair was shampooed. It went to his shoulders.
Man, it was clean! I bet the mortician washed it.
Or maybe in those days they had a beautician on call who specialized in
hippies.
In any case, he was wearing his headband.
Tommy's headband had a peace sign on it. It was stitched in white silk.
I don't know if Melissa the Big Girl Freck made it or not.
I forget a lot about those days, now that my hair is gray.
"He looked like a dude," said Phil. He was getting drunk.
Jerry Garcia was singing "Truckin'." It's a pretty stupid song.
"Fuckin Tommy!" said Phil. "Drink to the motherfucker!"
We drank to the motherfucker.
"He wasn't wearing his button," said Indian Scontras.

Indian was in the Wilde-Stein Society. He's not an Indian, but he is gay.
These days he sells insurance in Brewer.
"He told his mother he wanted to be buried wearing that button.
That is so bogus."

"It's there," I said. "His mom just moved it under his vest. I looked."
It was a leather vest with silver buttons. He bought it at the Free Fair.
I was with him that day. There was a rainbow and
from a loudspeaker Canned Heat sang "Let's Work Together."
The button his mother moved beneath the vest said I'M HERE AND I'M QUEER.
"She should have left it alone," said Indian Scontras.
"Tommy was very proud. He was a proud queer."
Indian Scontras was crying. Now he sells estate policies and has three
daughters.
Turned out not to be so gay after all, but
selling insurance is *very* queer, in my opinion.
"Yes, but she was his mother," I said. "She kissed his scrapes when he
was young."
"What does that have to do with fuck-all?" asked Indian Scontras.

He stalked away.
"Fuckin Tommy!" said Phil and raised his beer high. "Let's toast that
motherfucker!"
We toasted the motherfucker.

That was forty years ago.
Tonight I wonder how many hippies died in those few sunshine years.

Statistics say it must have been quite a few. There always are.
I'm not talking about !!THE WAR!! either.
Car accidents.

Drug overdoses.
Alcohol.
Bar fights.
Suicides.
Disease.

All the usual suspects, in other words.
How many were buried in their hippie duds?
This question occurs to me in the whispers of the night.
Statistics say it must have been quite a few.
It was fleeting, the time of the hippies.
Their Free Fair now is underground.
There they still wear their bellbottoms and
there is mold on the full sleeves of their psychedelic shirts.
The hair in those narrow rooms is brittle but still long.
The Man's barber has not touched it in forty years.
No gray has frosted it.
How many hippies in headbands?
What about the ones clasping signs that say HELL NO WE WON'T GO?
What about the one buried with a McCarthy sticker on the coffin lid?
What about the girl with the stars on her forehead?
(They have fallen now, I imagine, from her parched parchment skin.)

Girls with Cher bangs.
Boys with Sonny bowls.
These are the silent soldiers of love who never sold out
or sold insurance.
These are the fashion-dudes who never went out of fashion.
Sometimes, at night, I think of hippies asleep under the earth.
Here's to Tommy.

Stephen King's latest novel is *Under the Dome*.

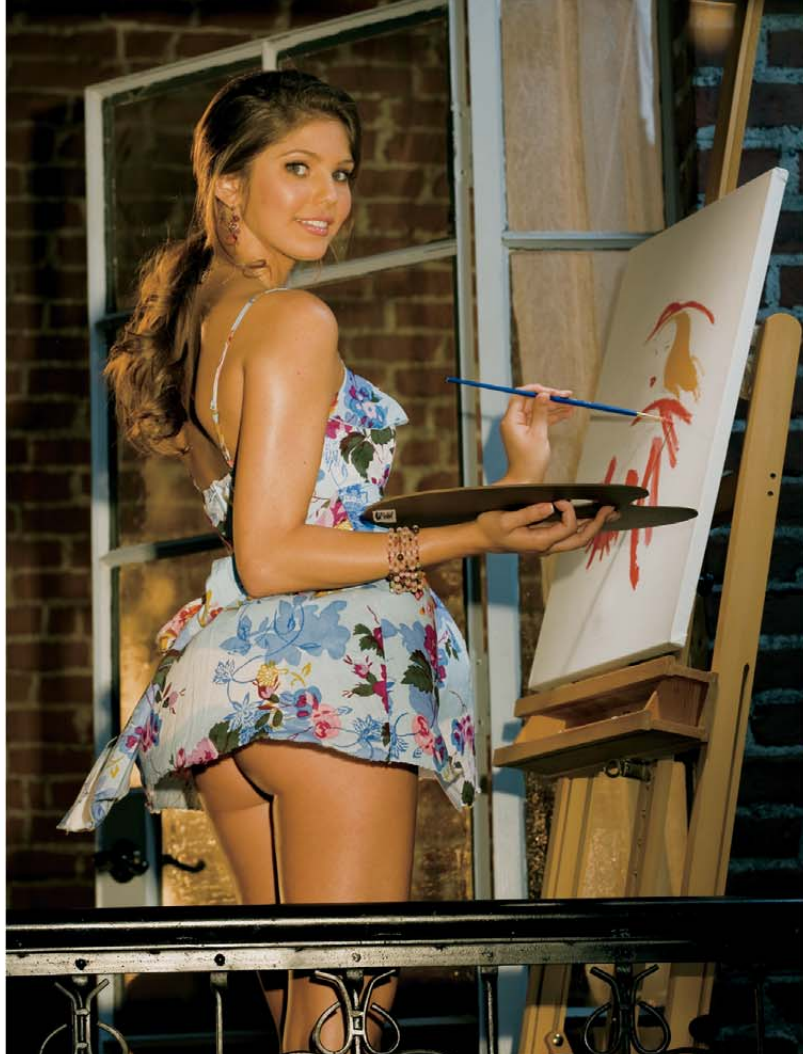
POETRY BY STEPHEN KING

ILLUSTRATION BY KENT WILLIAMS

www.storemags.com & www.fantamag.com



With her lofty dreams and artistic ambitions, Miss March Kyra Milan is a thing of true beauty



WORK OF ART



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ARNY FREYTAG

Kyra Milan describes herself as an art freak, citing no less than master surrealist Salvador Dalí as her “all-time inspiration.” While becoming an artist is one of her ambitions, she has also had a life-long dream not just to be a Playmate but—amazingly—to be a Miss March. “It started,” says the nascent model and actress, “when I was a little girl and saw the movie *Adventures in Babysitting*. One of the biggest hypes in the movie was that the kids Elisabeth Shue was babysitting thought she was the March Centerfold. I was

like, ‘Mom! Dad! I’m gonna be Miss March one day!’” After a *PLAYBOY* scout spotted Kyra in Tampa years later, things happened quickly. Let’s face it: The 20-year-old is perfect for the job. “I’m a ‘good girl,’ and I believe in monogamy, but I love talking about sex. I love having sex. And what I love about *PLAYBOY* is that it has taught people there’s nothing wrong with that. The magazine has always said that sex is about passion and love and fun, and that’s what I believe too. I’m so happy to be part of the Playmate family.”







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



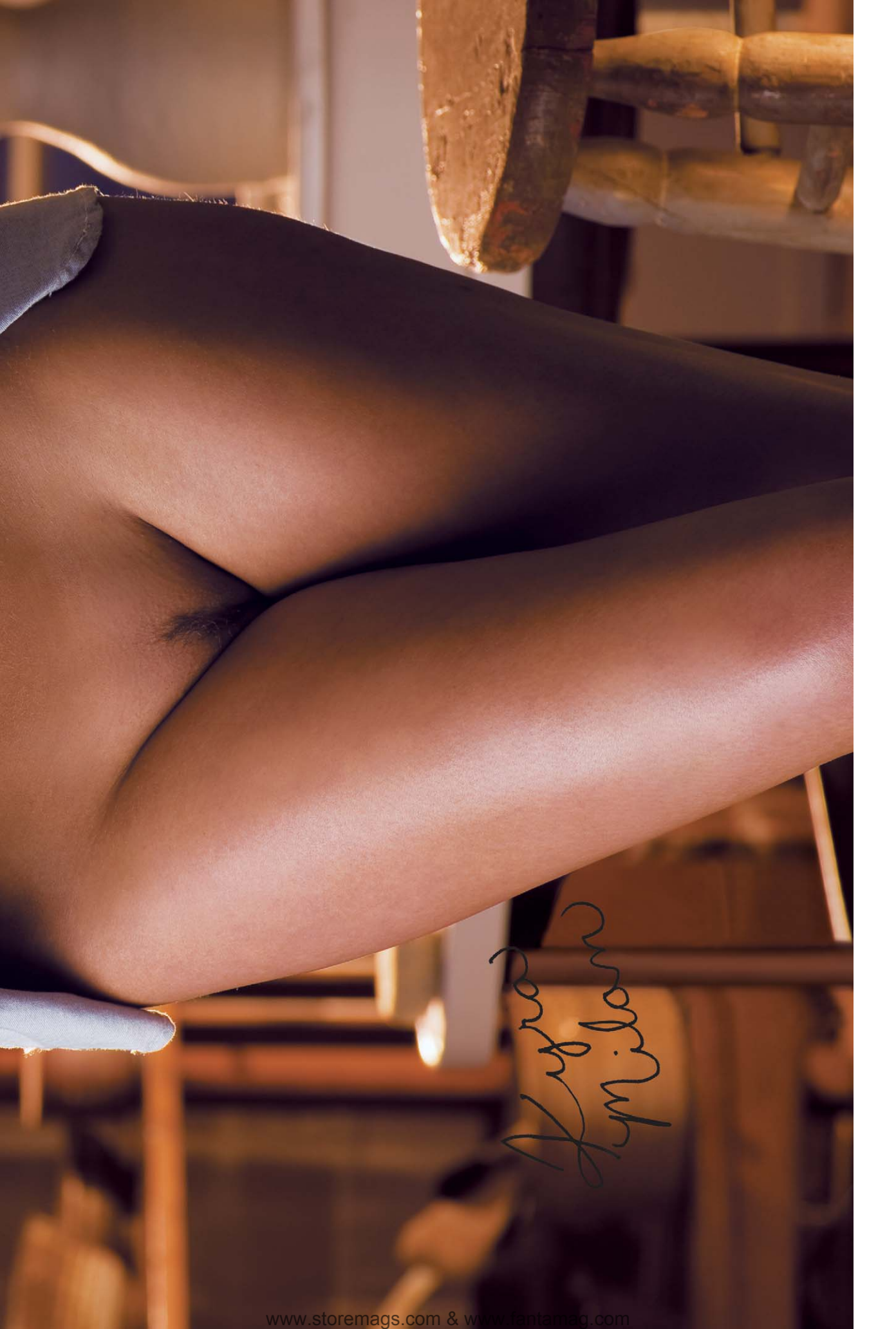


MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH

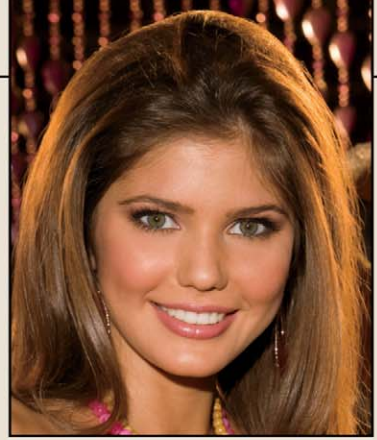






Kimberly Ryan

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Kyra Milan

BUST: 32B WAIST: 24" HIPS: 33"

HEIGHT: 5' 7" WEIGHT: 120

BIRTH DATE: 11/02/89 BIRTHPLACE: Lake City, FL

AMBITIONS: To become a successful actress and model, not only for Playboy but also high fashion.

TURN-ONS: A great smile, confidence, a good sense of humor, a nice body, consideration and sincerity.

TURNOFFS: I do not like cockiness, bad manners, bad teeth or shyness. I need a guy who is outgoing and can keep up with me !!!

AN EXAMPLE OF THE ABOVE: I like - and am not the least bit ashamed of - having sex in random places. 😊

FAVORITE BANDS: Sublime, because it's a great combo of reggae and rock. And then there is always Led Zeppelin - they are great to have sex to!

CELEBRITY CRUSH: Leonardo DiCaprio. One day I will marry him. Don't laugh - I am THAT ambitious!



Five years old.



Sophomore year, striking a pose.



Prom night after-party, senior year.



Kyra
Milan

MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

What's the difference between Tiger Woods's golf ball and his SUV?

He can drive his golf ball 300 yards without hitting a tree.

On the subject of professional golfers having extramarital affairs, it appears as though 18 holes just aren't enough.

What's the difference between Tiger Woods and Santa Claus?

Santa stops after his third ho.

Surprise sex is the best thing to wake up to, unless you're in prison.



Hooters' new review process for prospective waitresses: Each applicant is handed a bra and told, "Here, fill this out."

If size really doesn't matter, then why don't they sell three-inch dildos?

I was home last night by a quarter of 12," the husband said to his irate wife.

"You're a liar!" she cried. "I heard you come in when the clock struck three."

The husband shrugged and said, "Isn't three a quarter of 12?"

A guy asked his new college roommate, "Can I have 20 bucks for a blow job?"

"I don't know," the roommate answered. "Are you any good?"

Why do bagpipers walk as they play?
To get away from the sound.

An attractive young woman and her grandmother walked into a general practitioner's office. "We've come for an examination," the young woman said to the doctor.

"All right," the doctor said. "Go behind the curtain and disrobe."

"No, my grandmother is the one who is sick," said the girl.

"Very well," the doctor said. "Madam, stick out your tongue."

How does a redneck tenderize meat?
He puts his vehicle in reverse.

The owner of a small farm was being investigated for allegedly not paying his workers proper wages.

"I need a list of your employees and how much you pay them," demanded the interviewing agent.

"Well," replied the farmer, "there's my farmhand, who has been with me for three years. I pay him \$200 a week plus free room and board. The cook has been here for 18 months, and I pay her \$150 a week plus free room and board. Then there's the half-wit who works about 18 hours every day and does 90 percent of all the work around here. He makes about \$10 a week and pays his own room and board, and I buy him a bottle of bourbon every Saturday night. He also sleeps with my wife occasionally."

"That's the guy I want to talk to, the half-wit," said the agent.

The farmer replied, "That would be me."

What is the punishment for bigamy?
Two mothers-in-law.



What did the sadist do to the masochist?
Nothing.

One day a man came home from work, saw his wife bending down to clean under the sofa and started making love to her from behind. After he finished, he gave her a hard smack on the ass.

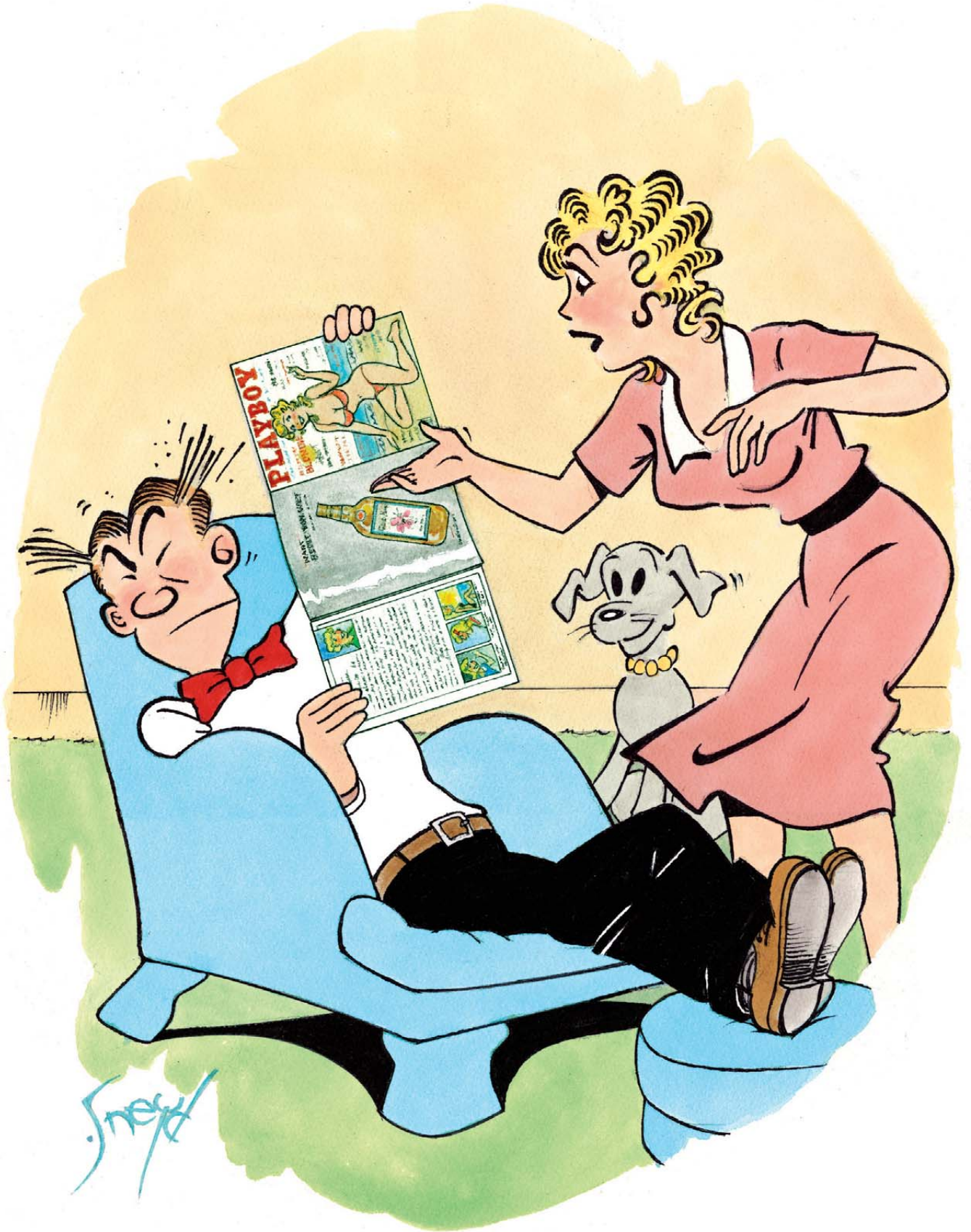
"What was that for?" his wife demanded.

The husband replied, "That's for not checking to see who it was."

Why does Illinois have the best-run, cleanest prisons in the U.S.?

Because Illinois politicians are afraid they may end up in one of them.

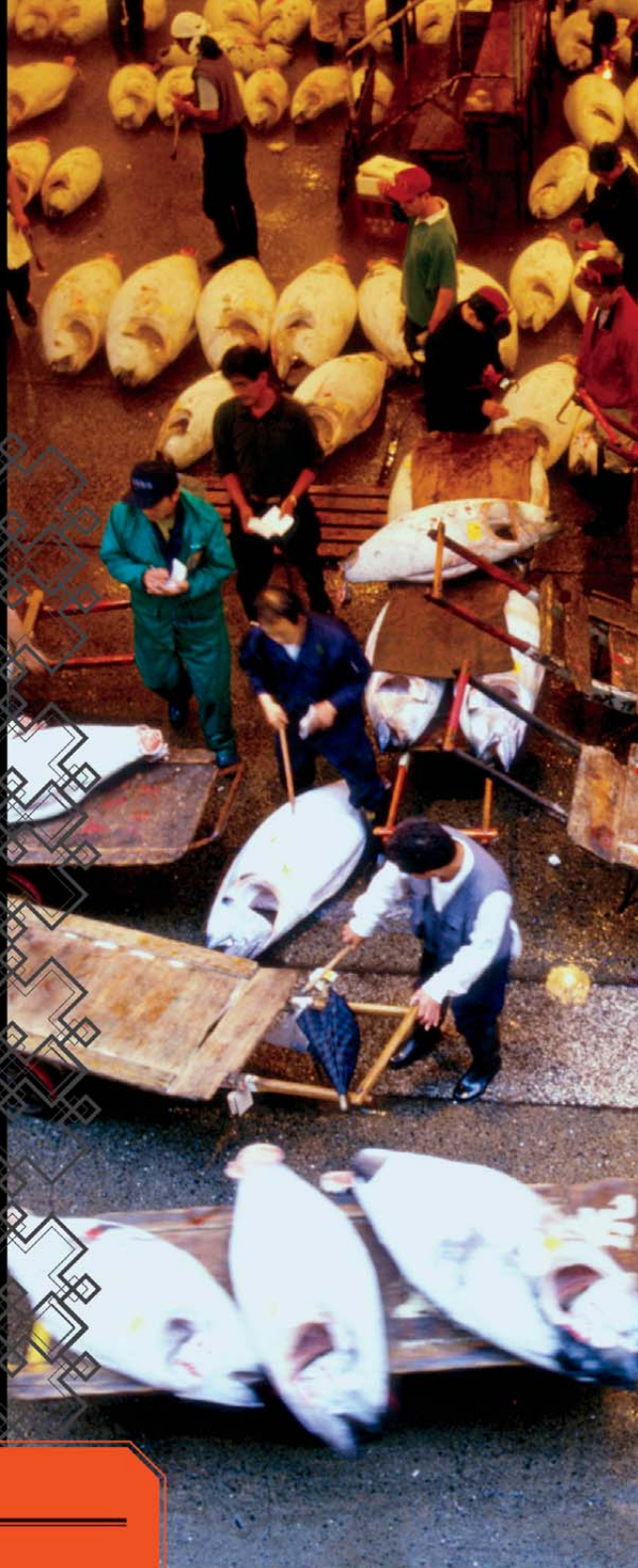
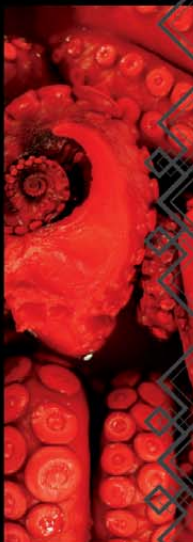
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"Well, you didn't seem to mind when Marge Simpson did it!"

SCHOOL OF FISH

BY • SEAN MCCUSKER



STUDYING THE JAPANESE ART
OF SEAFOOD AT TSUKIJI IN
TOKYO, THE LARGEST FISH
MARKET IN THE WORLD

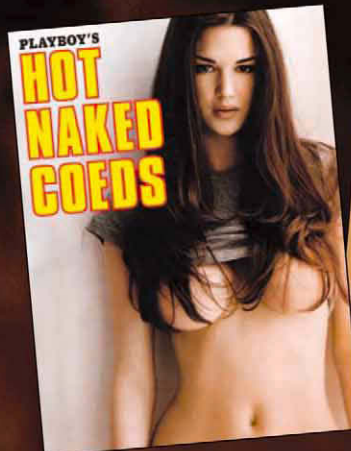




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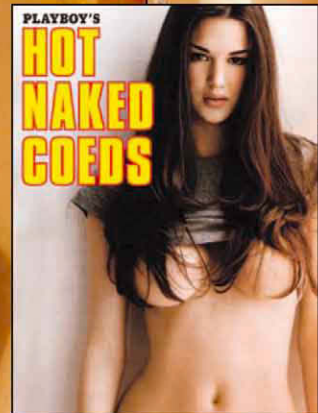
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THE TSUKIJI MARKET IN DOWNTOWN TOKYO. ON SALE: EEL, CLAM, SQUID, SEA CUCUMBER, SEA PINEAPPLE, SEA URCHIN, ETC.



It's 5:15 A.M. in central Tokyo, still dark outside, and I'm standing at the gates of Tsukiji. I've traveled thousands of miles to get here.

Tsukiji is the largest fish market in the world. It's also a veritable Sorbonne of seafood, a foodie mecca where the ocean's secrets reveal themselves. Every day about 2,200 tons of sea creatures, plucked from depths all over the globe, are sold here—\$5 billion worth over the course of a year. If it comes from the sea and can be eaten, you will find it in Tsukiji. The only place to get it fresher is on the boat when the fishermen pull it in.

My guide is Lloyd Nakano. Lloyd runs the swanky Seiyo Ginza hotel a few blocks away and is an expert on and a regular customer of Tsukiji. He's about 50, and he's constantly smiling. He has the gait of a man who could drink you under the table before he goes out drinking. With Lloyd leading the way, we head into the *jonai shijo*—the “inner market.”

“Get your ass moving!” he yells in English. “Don't give me any shit about being jet-lagged. There's a mean old bastard

with a sword waiting for you.”

Inside, the market looks like a series of airplane hangars. Some 65,000 people work here. Men are carving fish with samurai swords, stopping to light another Marlboro or knock back

a shot of sake. Hundreds of forklifts are moving at top speed. Eels jump out of barrels. Snapping turtles hiss. I see clams and oysters so large they look as if they've been created in a secret laboratory by the Willy Wonka of seafood. Dozens of the deadly fugu fish, whose liver can paralyze or kill an eater if not perfectly prepared by a chef, swim inside a tank, eyeing me insidiously. Animals so bizarre they require comparison to other foods (sea cucumber, sea pineapple) await the cleaver. A few stalls down a chain-smoking teenager tends to a pile of blood-red whale meat.

We walk through a room the size of a high school gymnasium where bluefin tuna lie arranged in rows. The size of each is staggering; most are four to five feet in length, and some are as large as eight. Their tails have been severed and shoved into their mouths. Another cut six inches above the tail reveals the meat, which is examined for color, texture, fat and oil content. From this incision the men who will bid

FISH SAUCE

Some refer to sake as rice wine, but it's actually closer to beer because it's brewed from grain. Hot sake is always made with the cheap stuff, while finer bottles are served chilled or at room temperature. Here are four categories every swiller should know about. —Scott Alexander



JUNMAI SAKÉ

Junmai tends to be earthy and rustic. Think of it as a ram-bunctious red wine, and pair it with rich, flavorful, even spicy dishes and grilled food. When drinking *junmai*, we're fans of Tentaka Kuni (Hawk in the Heavens) with its strong backbone and hints of cherry and strawberry.

JUNMAI GINJO

Junmai ginjo is more floral, even tropical at times. With its subtle flavors it tends to work best with lighter foods such as fish and salad. Try Yuki No Boshu for its earthy, mushroom flavor up front backed by a mellow, well-rounded finish with a playful sweetness and notes of honeydew.

NIGORI SAKÉ

Nigori is a different animal from the other types of sake listed here. It's unfiltered, which gives it a cloudy appearance and a far sweeter flavor. It complements spicy foods such as curries and also works after dessert. Ohyama (Big Mountain) is on the dry side for a *nigori* and has a cool hint of effervescence.

JUNMAI DAIGINJO

Junmai daiginjo is the most refined and delicate of the sake family. It's made from rice with 50 percent of its mass polished away; just the heart of the grain is used. Masumi Yumedono (Mansion of Dreams) is almost supernaturally well-balanced, with accents of acidity that perfectly cut and define its ethereal sweetness.



ABOVE LEFT: AT THE TSUKIJI MARKET MONGERS USE LONG SAMURAI-LIKE SWORDS TO CARVE WHOLE TUNAS, WHICH HAVE SOLD FOR AS MUCH AS \$170,000 FOR A SINGLE FISH. ABOVE RIGHT: ANOTHER MONGER TENDS TO BOXES OF FRESHLY STEAMED OCTOPUS. SOME 2,200 TONS OF SEAFOOD IS SOLD AT THE MARKET EVERY DAY.



money for these fish determine what they're worth.

Lloyd pulls me into a stall where a bluefin tuna that just sold for \$8,000 is lying on a wooden table. Over the fish stands a man with a sword straight out of *Kill Bill*. Here is the mean old bastard Lloyd was talking about. He is bitching to Lloyd in Japanese and shooting me dirty looks. Three others hold the fish steady while the ornery man lays the blade down the back, slicing clear to the center. "The best!" he shouts, handing me a piece. It's hard to argue with an angry man holding a sword. But no need: The tuna is the freshest, most delicate fish I have ever tasted, disappearing on my tongue as it reaches my body temperature.

workers for breakfast. No bacon and eggs here. Six large bottles of Sapporo land on our table, as well as two bottles of premium sake. Just as fast, the sushi master is delivering piece after piece directly onto the counter. Three types of tuna start us off, all patted with a dab of fresh wasabi root ground on a piece of sharkskin. Scallops, shrimp, mackerel, eel, octopus and giant clams come in waves, all of it straight from the market.

In Japan people eat sushi with their hands (it was originally a street food) and sashimi with chopsticks. They don't add wasabi to sushi (the chef will have already layered it in), nor do they use as much soy sauce as Americans do. They will add wasabi to sashimi but only freshly

Tokyo's fish market has been thriving since the 16th century, the age of the shoguns, when Tokyo was called Edo. Only in the past half-century, however, with the ease of airplane travel, has Tsukiji grown into the epicenter of the global fish trade. Go to any fish market in America and there's a good chance much of what you see has come through Tsukiji. And as surely as you can get the freshest fish in the world here, you can find master chefs who know how to dress it up.

We end up in the stalls along the outskirts of the market, where crowds are gathered outside a series of tiny sushi bars, waiting for breakfast.

"Lonely Planet places," Lloyd says, pointing with disdain. "They are bullshit. We go to see Shina."

When we walk into Shina's 12-seat sushi bar, called Ryuzushi, the first thing she says is "You want beer!" It's not yet eight A.M. The old woman hosts the hardest of the hard-core market

ground wasabi, not the paste you get in America, which is a powder mixed with water.

After breakfast I step outside for air and am nearly run over by a fork-lift making its final nine A.M. delivery. The market will soon close so it can be cleaned.

"You had enough for today?" Lloyd asks with a firm slap on the back. "There's a great ramen stand around the corner."

"I think that'll do."

"Fine," he says. "But tomorrow we eat turtle-blood soup."

On our walk back to the hotel Lloyd describes a scene of a large snapping turtle being provoked with a stick. When the turtle snaps its jaws onto the wood, its throat is slit and the draining blood is gathered to make a soup that provides those who drink it with numerous powers, among them the sexual stamina of a young lion. You better believe I'll be back for soup.

TUNA AND AVOCADO CUBES

Recipe courtesy of Izakaya: The Japanese Pub Cookbook.
(Serves four.)



- 1 ripe avocado
- ¼ tsp. lemon juice
- 8 oz. sushi-grade tuna loin
- 2 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. sake
- Minced garlic to taste
- 1 tsp. dark sesame oil
- Chopped scallions for garnish

Cut avocado into half-inch cubes and dress with lemon juice. Cut tuna into half-inch cubes. Mix all the dressing ingredients together, then gently toss the tuna and avocado in the dressing so they retain their form. Top with chopped scallions and serve. Note: How to pick out your tuna? For starters, find a fish shop you trust, and get to know the owner. If he wants you to come back, he'll give you the good stuff. "Look for fillets that are shiny and firm," says chef Tadashi Ono of New York's Matsuri. "If you are buying tuna, it has to be a bright ruby color—no gray, no darkness. If it's old it acquires a kind of rainbow-like look on the cut surface."

MISO BLACK COD AND SPINACH GOMA-AE

Classic Japanese recipes
courtesy of Tadashi Ono of
Matsuri restaurant in New
York City. (Serves four.)

MISO BLACK COD

- 4 eight oz. pieces of black cod
- 2 tsp. salt
- 4 tbsp. white miso paste
- 1 tbsp. mirin
- Serving of rice of your choice

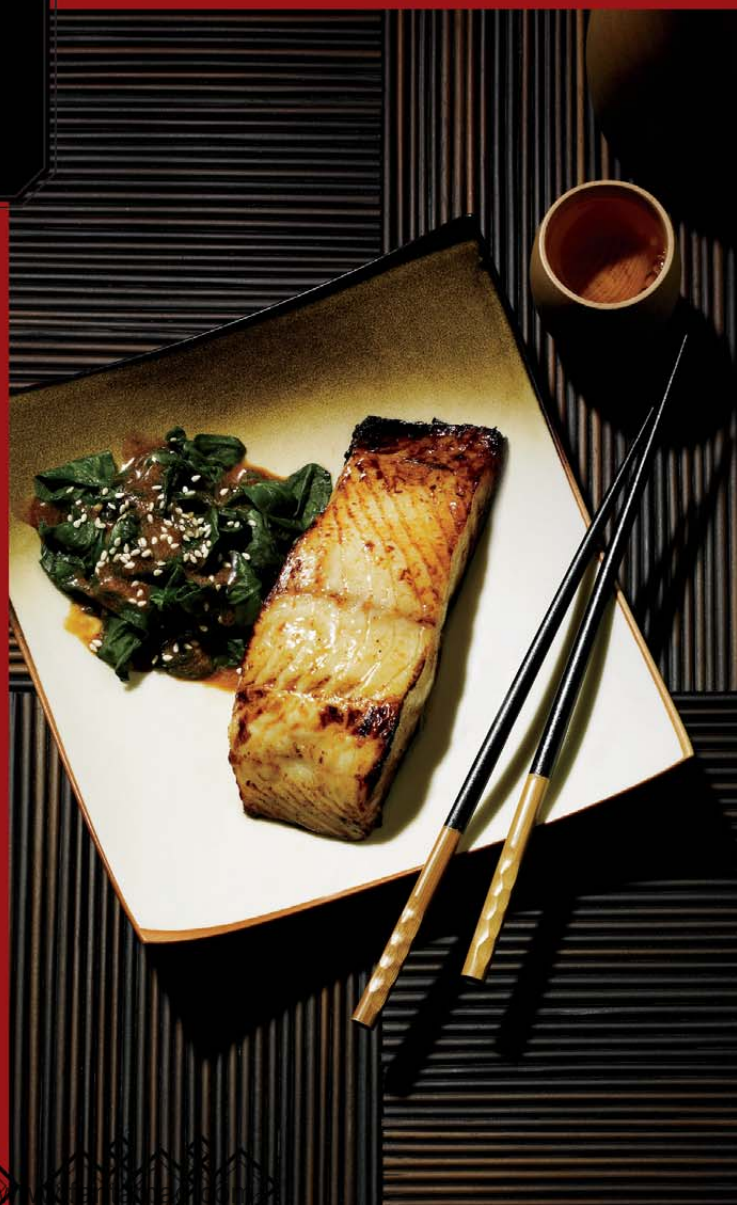
Sprinkle black cod with salt and let sit in refrigerator overnight. Dry fish with a paper towel. Mix miso paste and mirin. Put miso mixture all over black cod and cover with plastic wrap. Let sit for one more night. Scrape miso off black cod. Under a preheated broiler at 500 degrees Fahrenheit, cook black cod until it's brown, about eight minutes.

SPINACH GOMA-AE

- 2 quarts water
- 1 tbsp. salt
- 8 cups raw spinach, cleaned, drained and tightly packed
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. toasted ground white sesame seeds

Bring water and salt to a boil over high heat. Add spinach and boil for about one minute. Transfer spinach to a colander and rinse in cold running water to stop leaves from cooking. Once it's cool, gently squeeze spinach to expel excess water. Set aside. Combine sugar, soy sauce and ground sesame in a large bowl, mixing well. Add spinach and toss to combine with dressing.

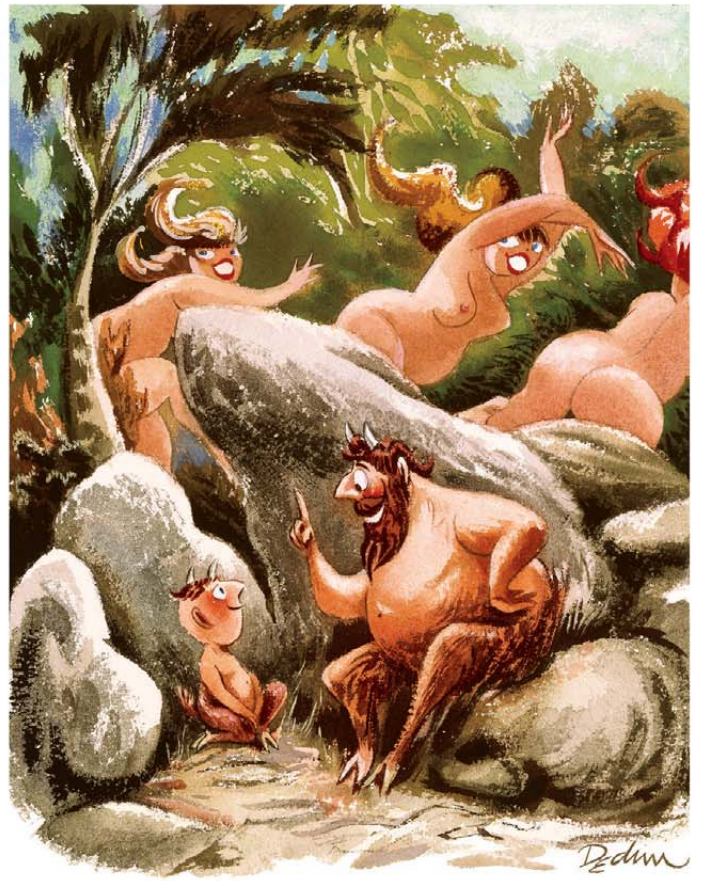
For a full guide to ethical seafood choices, video of the Tsukiji market and more, go to playboy.com/fishmarket.



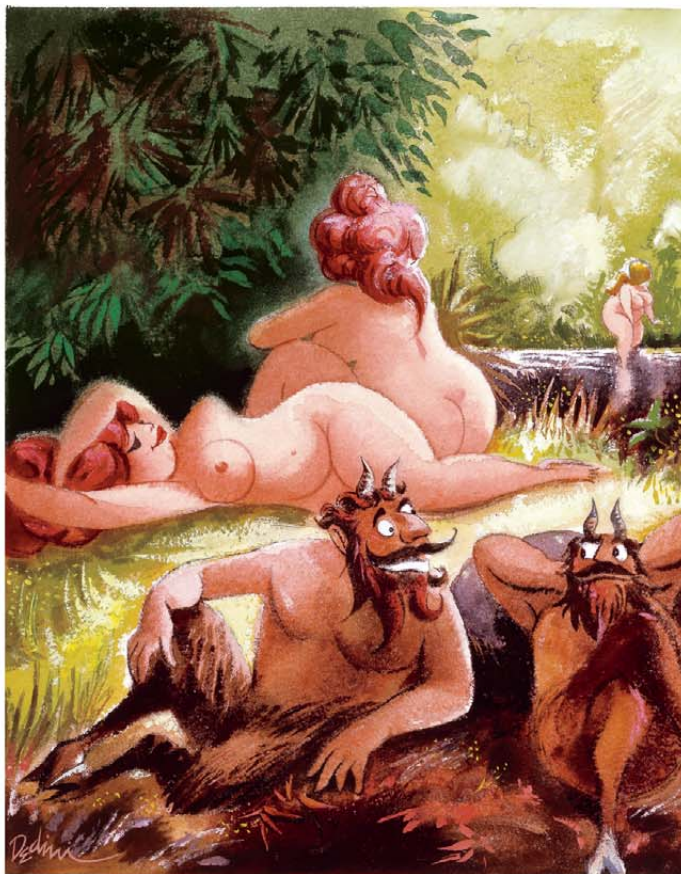
Satyrs & Nymphs by Dedini



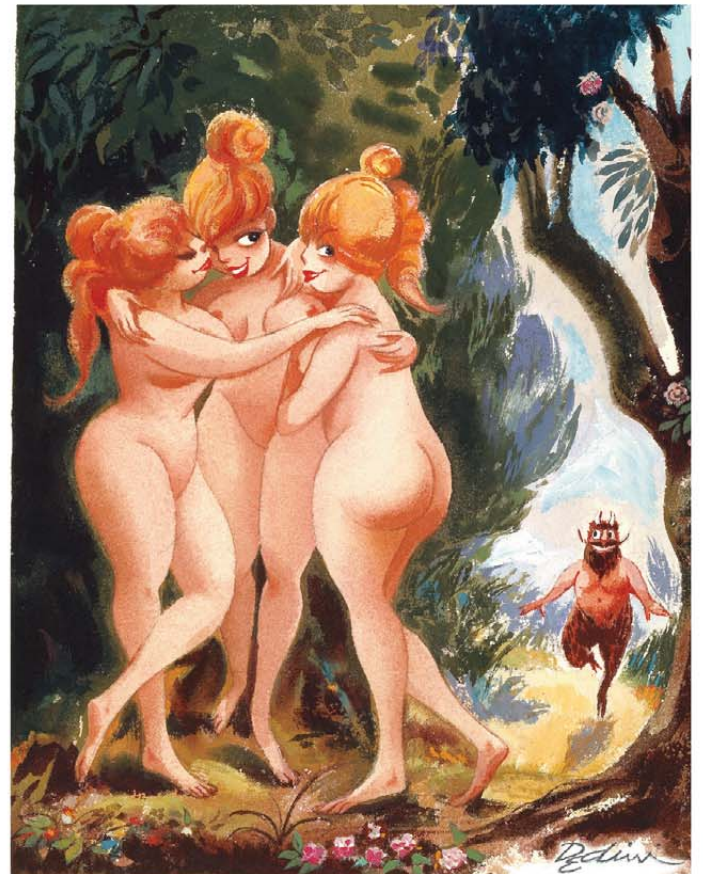
"Of course there's someone else!"



"First of all, you must learn to be preoccupied with sex."



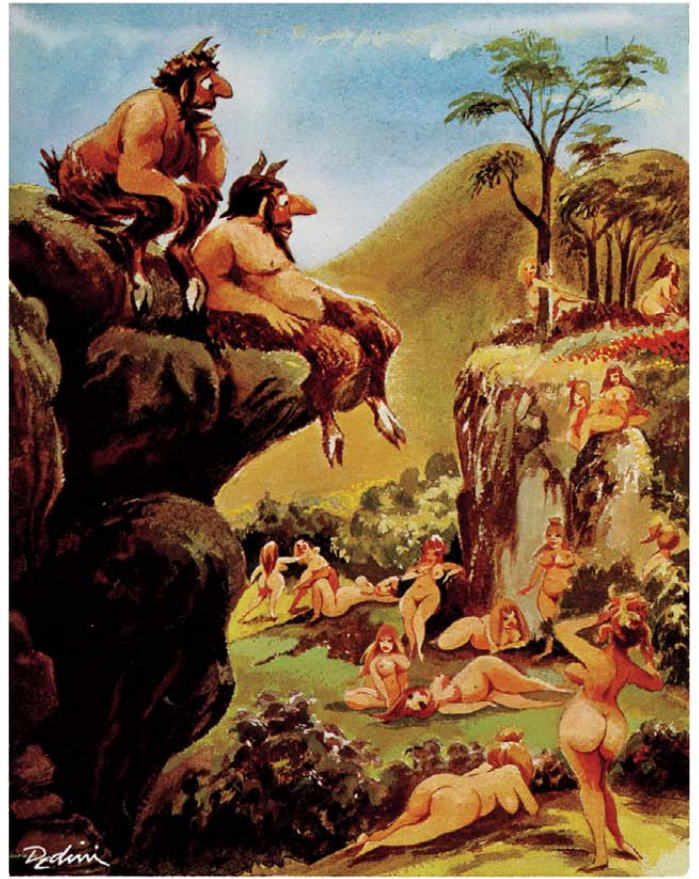
"Is it just me, or have you sensed a pagan revival in this country recently?"



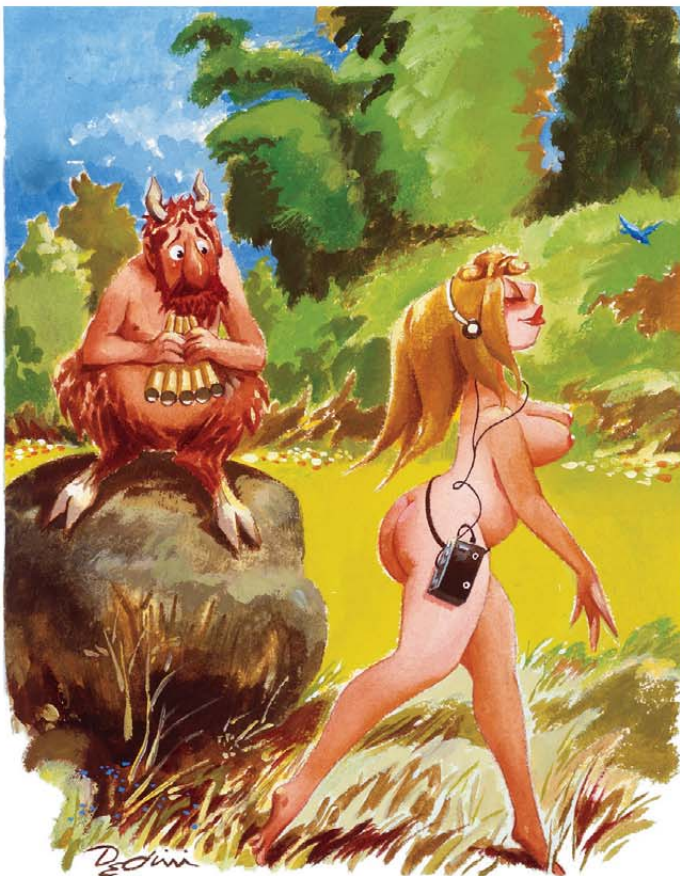
"Here comes old 'Two's company, three's a ball!'"



"G'wan, scram!"



"So many—and so little time."



"That's what I like about women. They're never satisfied!"



ROCK

THE

Rabbit

OLD-SCHOOL COOL
AND MODERN LINES
HEADLINE OUR
MULTISTAGE FESTIVAL
OF STYLE ICONS

► **MICHAEL BUBLÉ** "I dress in a timeless style. I wear suits onstage because it shows respect for my audience. Offstage, I'm casual. I went to a radio interview and the DJ said, 'We expected James Bond, and instead we got a teenage landscaper.'"


► **SHARKSKIN SUIT**
BY HICKEY.

SHIRT
BY HICKEY.

SHOES AND TIE
BY SALVATORE FERRAGAMO.

PLAYBOY  FASHION

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A full-page photograph of Snoop Dogg wearing a western-themed costume. He is wearing a red velvet hat with a tan leather band and a black feather. He has a large, dark afro. He is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt with a white floral pattern on the shoulders and a red neckerchief. He is smiling and looking down at his hands, which are clasped together. He is wearing a ring on his finger. The background is a textured, orange and red pattern. There are musical notes floating in the air around his head.

► **SNOOP DOGG** "When I was a kid I sold candy so I could buy my own little outfits at the Compton Swap Meet. I bought Girbaud jeans, overalls, Fahrenheit cologne, Guess watches—and argyle socks, bitch. I was fresh as a motherfucker even then. Now my idea of a well-dressed man is Max Julien, star of *The Mack*, released back in 1973. It's the first real pimp movie ever made. Bona fide, you dig?"

► **WESTERN SHIRT, HAT AND SCARF**
FROM PALACE COSTUME COMPANY.

FASHION BY jennifer ryan jones PHOTOGRAPHY BY mick rock

▶
PETE
PEACOCK
 BY WESC.
DENIM SHIRT
 BY DIESEL.


▶
SNOOP
SHIRT AND TURTLENECK
 FROM PALACE COSTUME COMPANY.
HAT
 BY EUGENIA KIM.
GLASSES
 BY LOUIS VUITTON.
BRACELETS
 FROM TRAFFIC MEN.



▲
MICHAEL
TUXEDO AND SHIRT
 BY ISAIA.

▶
MAXWELL
SUIT
 BY PRADA.
SHIRT
 BY MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA.
TIE
 BY YVES SAINT LAURENT.
SHOES
 BY CO-OP BARNEYS NEW YORK.



A man with short dark hair, wearing dark sunglasses, a white dress shirt, a dark grey vest, and a patterned tie. He is looking down and to his left. The background is dark with some colorful light flares. In the bottom left corner, there are white musical notes on a staff.

► **MAXWELL** "Classic is the way to go. A suit that fits well lasts forever, like trees and mountains and sunrises. Sam Cooke represented such a strong image of class. It stands the test of time. I'm upholding the tradition."

► **VEST**
BY HOMME DEUX BY COMME
DES GARÇONS.

SHIRT
BY MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA.

SUNGLASSES
BY GUCCI.

TIE
BY YVES SAINT LAURENT.



► **PETE YORN** "My dad tried to get me to dress preppy when I was growing up, and that's what I rebelled against. People say, 'Oh, your jeans are shredded in just the right way.' No, I'm just kind of a slob."

► **COAT**
BY SHADES OF GREIGE.

SHIRT
BY SISLEY.

TROUSERS
BY LUIGI BIANCHI MANTOVA.

GLASSES
BY RAY-BAN.

BOOTS
BY JOHN VARVATOS.

▶ **HALL + OATES** "The idea of wearing long hair goes back to the American Revolution," says Daryl. "Americans decided to stop wearing wigs and wear their own hair long. Rebellion is tradition, so I dress in a traditional rebel style."



▲
**DARYL HALL
LEATHER JACKET**

BY SCHOTT NYC.

T-SHIRT

BY J. CREW.

JEANS

BY SEP.

SUNGLASSES

BY RAY-BAN.

DARYL'S OWN CUSTOM BOOTS

BY KIMMEL BOOT COMPANY.



▲
**JOHN OATES
LEATHER JACKET**

BY ROGUE.

SHIRT AND JEANS

BY 7 FOR ALL MANKIND.



THE MULTI- ORGASMIC WOMAN

REFERENCING
ANCIENT
TAOIST SEXUAL
PHILOSOPHY, AN
ADVENTUROUS
FEMALE WRITER
DISCUSSES THE
INTENSITY AND
VARIETY OF HER
ORGASMS



For a man, a woman's orgasm is as mysterious as anything he may be so lucky to encounter in his life. The more he is exposed to it, the more he wants to experience it himself, but he never will. What makes it even more inscrutable to men is its elusive nature. For decades the scientific community has failed to agree on what happens when a woman comes. Are there different kinds of female orgasms? Does the G-spot exist? What about eargasms? Today, humans have brainstormed supercomputers and rockets that can fly to Mars. But the female orgasm remains a mystery.

For more than 5,000 years Chinese philosophers have documented the depth and variety of the female orgasm. The Hongshan period (4000 to 3000 B.C.) is responsible for many of the Chinese healing treatments we see today—acupuncture, herbalism and qigong. In the Taoist system sex was considered medicine and a powerful way of building energy in the body. Expert courtesans advised emperors of the day on how to harness sexual energy to strengthen their power and charisma. Physicians prescribed different sexual positions to heal specific ailments. For example, you ought to fuck your woman from behind if she's experiencing low energy and feeling gloomy. It will stimulate her liver, the reflexology point to recharge her mood. A woman with an ailment linked to weak kidneys would be advised to incorporate reverse cowgirl into her routine several times a day for a number of weeks.

We've carried on with some of these ancient Chinese traditions in modern times. Open the yellow pages and see how *(continued on page 116)*

BY
KIM
ANAMI





Shaun White

SNOWBOARDING'S GOOFY HERO TALKS ABOUT THE WINTER OLYMPICS, GROWING UP WITH TONY HAWK, THE DOWNSIDE OF SUPERCOMPETITIVENESS AND HIS WANDERING GOLD MEDAL

Q1

PLAYBOY: Clear this up for us: When you won the gold in the 2006 winter Olympics, were you crying on the podium during the medal ceremony?

WHITE: [Laughs] It was debatable, man.

Q2

PLAYBOY: It's a yes-or-no question.

WHITE: Seriously, I was starting to get choked up and I was at the point of crying—almost. I mean, my parents were there; the entire world was watching. And I remember Danny Kass made a joke. I swear. So it was a mix of a cry and a humorous thing that pulled me right out of it.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Where is your medal now?

WHITE: It's funny, because I've misplaced it a couple of times. I called my agent randomly and said, "Hey, you

have my medal, right?" He gasped—he said his heart just dropped. But he found it. It was in a dresser under a book in his house. And then one day I was in my mom's car, and I went to put something in the back pocket of the front seat. I reached in and pulled out my medal. It was in a plastic bag. I was like, What? The ribbon had gotten dirty, so my mom took it to the dry cleaner. She gave them the whole deal, and they gave it back on a hanger. She said, "I can't believe that cost \$5 to clean. It was only this much fabric." So I'm stoked to have it again. It's now in a safe place in my house in California.

Q4

PLAYBOY: Your father named you after Shaun Tomson, his favorite surfer. How come you didn't end up a professional surfer?

WHITE: I was probably on a boogie board when I was four or five. I was

small enough that I could actually stand on it. I was always at the beach, and my dad just decided one day, "Well, you've been running the boogie board. You could surf." I was seven or eight, maybe. He went out and bought a hardboard and took me out to the water on a huge day. Big waves, and it's California, so it gets really cold. He was dragging me out over these huge waves. I was like, "I'm not ready!" He said, "Here comes one." I went under, getting just swirled and swirled. I came up [gasps], swirled more, and then I came up to get air again. I was freaking out, and the board smashed me in the face. I was bleeding. I said, "I hate you, and I never wanna do this again." So I shied away until I was about 13.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Did you feel as though he was pushing you out there?

WHITE: If (continued on page 114)



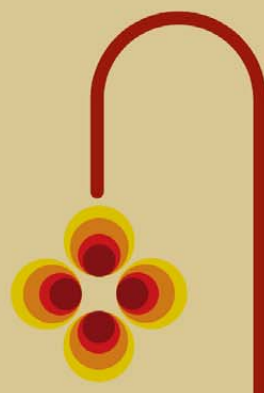




SCHEHERAZADE IS TALL,
LEAN AND BUSTY. LILY IS
BLONDE, INTENSE
AND AVAILABLE. AND
KEITH IS HOLED UP WITH
THEM IN A PICTURESQUE
ITALIAN CASTLE FOR THE
SUMMER OF 1970. WHAT'S
A RANDY YOUNG
ENGLISHMAN TO DO?

A NOT-SO-SENTIMENTAL
EDUCATION FROM
THE INTERNATIONALLY
RENOWNED NOVELIST
AND MAN OF LETTERS

BY
MARTIN
AMIS



THE DAWN OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

It was the summer of 1970, and time had not
yet trampled them flat, these lines:

Sexual intercourse began
In nineteen sixty-three
(which was rather late for me)—
Between the end of the *Chatterley* ban
And the Beatles' first LP.

Philip Larkin, "Annus Mirabilis" (formerly
"History"), *Cover* magazine, February 1968

But now it was the summer of 1970, and
sexual intercourse was well advanced. Sexual
intercourse had come a long way, and was
much on everyone's mind.

Sexual intercourse, I should point out, has two
unique characteristics. It is indescribable. And it
peoples the world. We shouldn't find it surpris-
ing, then, that it is much on everyone's mind.

•

Keith would be staying, for the duration of this
hot, endless and erotically decisive summer,

ILLUSTRATION BY LISEL ASHLOCK

**WHY SHOULD BOYS
HAVE ALL THE FUN?
SAID LILY. WE'RE
TOO YOUNG FOR
MONOGAMY. OR
EVEN FOR LOVE.**



in a castle on a mountainside above a village in Campania, in Italy. And now he walked the backstreets of Montale, from car to bar, at dusk, flanked by two 20-year-old blondes, Lily and Scheherazade.... Lily: 5'5", 34-25-34. Scheherazade: 5'10", 37-23-33. And Keith? Well, he was the same age, and slender (and dark, with a very misleading chin, stubbled, stubborn-looking), and he occupied that much-disputed territory between five-foot-six and five-foot-seven.

Vital statistics. The phrase originally referred, in studies of society, to births and marriages and deaths; now it meant bust, waist, hips. In the long days and nights of his early adolescence, Keith showed an abnormal interest in vital statistics, and he used to dream them up for his solitary amusement. Although he could never draw (he was all thumbs with a crayon), he could commit figures to paper, women in outline, rendered numerically.

34-25-34 (Lily), 37-23-33 (Scheherazade)—and Keith. They were all at the University of London, these three, Law, Mathematics, English Literature. Intelligentsia, nobility, proletariat. Lily, Scheherazade, Keith Nearing.

SOCIAL REALISM (OR SLAG FOR LOVE)

Keith and Lily had been together for over a year—with a recent, term-long hiatus, variously known as the Interregnum, the Intermission or simply Spring Break. And now, after the trial separation, the trial reunion. Keith owed her a great debt of gratitude. She was his first love, in this particular sense: He had loved many girls, but Lily was the first who loved him back.

Lily and Keith broke up because Lily wanted to act like a boy. That was the heart of the matter, really: Girls acting like boys was in the air, and Lily wanted to try it out. So they had their first big row (its theme, ridiculously, was religion), and Lily announced a *trial separation*. The words came at him like a jolt of compressed air: Such trials, he knew, were almost always a complete success. After two days of earnest misery, in his terrible room in the terrible flat in Earls Court, after two days of *desolation*, he phoned her and they met up, and tears were shed—on both sides of the café table. She told him to be evolved about it.

Why should boys have all the fun? said Lily, and blew her nose into the paper napkin. *We're anachronisms, you and me. We're like childhood sweethearts. We should've met 10 years from now. We're too young for monogamy. Or even for love.*

He listened to Lily—and of course he knew it already. Something was churning in the world of men and women, a revolution or a sea change, a realignment having to do with carnal knowledge and emotion. Keith did not want to be an anachronism. And I think I can say that this was his first attempt at character management: He decided to get better at not falling in love.

If we don't like it, we can always.... I want to act like a boy for a while. And you can just go on as you are.

Thus Lily had her hair restyled, and bought lots of miniskirts and cutoff culottes and halter tops and see-through blouses and knee-length patent-leather boots and hoop earrings and kohl eyeliner and all the other things you needed before you could act like a boy. And Keith just stayed the same.

He was better placed than her, in a way: He had some experience of acting like a boy. Now he took it up again. Pre-Lily, before Lily, he often encountered a difficulty more associated with acting like a girl: his emotions. And he didn't always see things clearly. He got it completely wrong, for instance, about what everyone was calling *free love*—as a succession of horrified hippies could quietly attest. He thought it meant what it said, but it wasn't love that was on offer from the mushroom-pale flower daughters of the capital, with their charts, tarot cards and Ouija boards. Some girls were still saving themselves for marriage; some were still religious—and even the hippies were only very slowly going secular....

After Lily, post-Lily, the new rules of engagement seemed more firmly emplaced. The year was 1970, and he was 20: To this historic opportunity he brought his minimal handsomeness, his plausible tongue, his sincere enthusiasm and a certain willed but invigorating coldness. There were disappointments, near things, there were some miraculous acquiescences (which still felt like *liberties*, in the shame-and-honor sense: involving impudence, overfamiliarity, taking advantage). Any-

way, the free-love business certainly worked best with girls who were acting like boys. New rules—and new and sinister ways of getting everything wrong. He acted like a boy, and so did Lily. But she was a girl, and could do more of it than he could.

Come with me, said Lily, three months later on the phone, *come with me to Italy for the summer. Come with me to a castle in Italy with Scheherazade. Please. Let's have a holiday from it. You know, there are people out there who don't even try to be kind.*

Keith said he would call her back. But almost at once he felt his head give a sudden nod. He had just spent a night of almost artistic desolation with an ex-girlfriend (her name was Pansy). He was frightened and bruised and, for the first time, obscurely but intensely guilty.

How much will it cost?

She told him. *And you'll need spending money for when we go out. The thing is, I'm no good at being a boy.*

All right. And I'm glad. I'll start borrowing and saving up.

His ridiculous row with Lily. She blamed him, basically, for confusing and therefore corrupting his younger sister Violet with Christianity when she was a little girl. Which was true enough as far as it went. *I tried to de-convert when she was nine*, he explained. *I said, God is just like Bellgrow: your imaginary friend. And yet she stuck with it.* Lily said, *And you'd think religion would make her behave. And it's had the opposite effect. She's sure she'll be forgiven for everything because she believes in a fool in the sky. And it's all your fault.*

Lily was of course an atheist—an open-and-shut atheist. Keith argued that this position wasn't quite rational, but then Lily's rationalism wasn't rational in the first place. She hated astrology, naturally, but she hated astronomy too: She hated the fact that light bent, that gravity slowed down time. She was particularly exasperated by the behavior of subatomic particles. She wanted the universe to behave sensibly. Even Lily's dreams were quotidian. In her dreams (this was rather shyly disclosed), she went down to the shops, or washed her hair. Openly suspicious of poetry, she had no patience with any work of fiction that strayed from the sternest social realism. The only novel she unreservedly (continued on page 98)



*"Except for 5F there, all the folks in this building are just
as nice as they can be!"*



BY
MIKE
GUY

KELLY BENSIMON

BRAINS? MEET BEAUTY.

THIS REAL HOUSEWIFE OF NEW YORK CITY
HAS IT ALL

Kelly Bensimon doesn't just walk into a café. She glides in wearing three-inch heels and black leather pants that coat her long, slim stems. A film crew trails her to a table already wired for sound so the cameras pick up every word she says. She wears her Kelly-ness on the sleeves of her flowing pirate-sleeve white blouse.

Café Select in Manhattan's SoHo is in the midst of a rush. The murmuring lunch crowd turns and watches her enter, tracking her glowing smile. Word moves quickly among

the patrons that there's a Real Housewife from *The Real Housewives of New York City* on the premises. Though many wouldn't admit it, when Bensimon enters, they all know who she is.

"Hi there," Bensimon says by way of introduction. She smiles, the cameras rolling. "I have to warn you," she says. "I'm a little bit shy."

Shy? Hard to believe, considering the character she plays (ostensibly herself) on *Real Housewives*. The TV version

of Kelly is brash, hotheaded, ambitious, self-promoting, opinionated and unapologetic. But



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GILLES BENSIMON





the truth is, though the real Bensimon has many of those attributes, her non-TV persona (which she seems to be offering up even though the cameras are rolling) is a lot classier, smarter, kinder and warmer than you might have imagined. Basically, she loves leather pants and the spectacle of sex on parade, but she's also a dedicated equestrian, a successful author and a doting mother. She's 41 years old and she's hot. Like, very hot. Read about her in the tabloids and you think, Trashy. In person? Not so much.

"I don't pay attention to those negative stories people tell about me," she says. "Everybody has a story to tell, and they have nothing to do with me. I don't respond because I don't need to. I'm not 14. I graduated from high school, I graduated from college, I have two kids. I leave the bitching to other people."

Bensimon was raised on a Rockford, Illinois farm. Like so many willowy, beguiling Midwestern girls before her, she set out for New York City as a teenager to pursue a modeling career. She landed in the pages of *Elle*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Bazaar* and various other fragrant glossies. She met famed fashion photographer Gilles Bensimon on a shoot and later married him. (He's the one who shot these photographs.) Remarkably, she managed to exit the modeling industry gracefully, unburdened by eating disorders or drug problems, and became for a time the editor of *Elle Accessories*, as well as the mother of two happy daughters. She enrolled in Columbia University and earned a degree in literature and creative writing. Then she wrote three books, including a photo history of the Hamptons and (surprise!) a book about the history of bikinis, called *The Bikini Book*.

Now a couple of years past a successfully amicable divorce from Gilles, she has tried playing the field for the first time in more than a decade. (Not as successfully: A month after these pictures were shot, she allegedly punched her 31-year-old boyfriend, Nick Stefanov, in the face, leaving a nasty gash. Dating, it turns out, isn't like riding a bike.)

"Regardless of the tough parts, I'm having a great time, and my kids are having fun seeing their mother on television," she says, her hazel eyes so bright they seem to glow. "They go into their dad's studio and Beyoncé is there, so they aren't fazed by their mom being on a TV show. I'm still their mom. I still pick them up from school."

On the sidewalk after lunch she hitches her perfect Dior purse on her shoulder and checks her phone. "So," Bensimon then says, "what kind of story are you going to tell?" How about a story about the two Kellys—the one on TV and the one with her clothes off.





“I HAVE TO
WARN YOU. I’M
A LITTLE
BIT SHY.”



See Kelly at playboy.com/bensimon.

www.storemags.com & www.fantamag.com

THE DAWN

(continued from page 90)

praised was *Middlemarch*. Because Lily was a creature of the middleworld.

Come with me to a castle in Italy with Scheherazade. It should be said that the Scheherazade section of Lily's proposal, so far as Keith was concerned, was neither here nor there. Scheherazade, when he last saw her, around Christmas, was as usual the frowning philanthropist in flatties and spectacles; she did community service and drove a van for Meals on Wheels, and she had a loose-limbed boyfriend called Timmy who liked killing animals and playing the cello and going to church. But then Scheherazade awoke from troubled dreams to find herself changed in her bed into a.... According to the famous story, of course, Gregor Samsa (pron. *Zamza*) was transformed into an enormous insect, or alternatively a giant bug, or alternatively—and this was the best translation, Keith felt sure—a monstrous vermin. In Scheherazade's case, the metamorphosis was a radical ascension. But Keith couldn't fix on the right animal. A doe, a dolphin, a snow leopard, a winged mare, a bird of paradise.

Keith was assuming that social realism would hold, here in Italy. And yet Italy itself seemed partly fabulous, and the citadel they occupied seemed partly fabulous, and the transformation of Scheherazade seemed partly fabulous. Where was social realism? The upper classes themselves, he kept thinking, were not social realists. Their *modus operandi*, their way of operating, obeyed

looser rules. He was, ominously, a K. in a castle. But he was still assuming that social realism would hold.

POSSIBILITY

We are trapped by the truth, and the truth was that it all built *very slowly*....

"There's one boring thing," Scheherazade said on the first afternoon as she led him up the tower.

But it wasn't boring yet. For some 15th-century reason, the steps were bracingly steep, and on the half landings, when she swiveled, Keith could see up her skirt.

"What's that?"

"I'll show you when we get to the top.

We've got a while to go. It's endless."

High-mindedly Keith averted his gaze. Then he looked. Then he looked away (and beheld, through the slit in the stone wall, a pale horse with its flanks shuddering). He looked, and looked away—until, with an audible click of the neck, he locked into position and went ahead and *looked*. How was it that he had never taken due note of this—the beauty, power, wisdom and justice of women's thighs?

Scheherazade said over her shoulder, "Are you a great seer of sights?"

"I'm on for anything."

"What, mad keen?"

He already seemed to be in a film—a salacious thriller, perhaps—in which every line of intersexual dialogue was an irresistibly smutty pun. They kept climbing. Now he searched for a single *entendre*. "Keen

enough. I've got all this reading to do," he said. "Catching up. *Clarissa*. *Tom Jones*."

"Poor you."

For the record, Scheherazade's lower undergarment was workaday and pale brown. As against that, its hem was loosely neglectful of the right buttock, providing a slice of white in the crux of all that churning bronze. She said,

"There's talk of the Passo del Diavolo."

"What's that?"

"The Devil's Pass. Very twisty and scary. So I'm told. Right. Now you and Lily are in this turret. And I'm in that turret." She gestured on down the passage. "And we share the bathroom in between. That's the boring thing."

"...Why's it boring?"

"Lily refuses to share a bathroom with me. We've tried it. I'm just too messy. So she'll have to go halfway down the tower and turn right. But I don't see why *you* should. Unless you've got a thing about messiness too."

"I don't have a thing about messiness."

"Look."

The skylit bathroom was long and narrow and L-shaped, its left-hand turn presided over by a burnished towel rack and two wall-sized mirrors. They moved through it. Scheherazade said,

"We share. So here's the drill. When you come in from your room, you lock the door to my room. And when you leave you unlock it. And I do the same.... This is me. God I'm a slob."

He took it in, the white nightdress aslant the tousled bed, the heaps of shoes, the pair of starched jeans, trampled out of, all agape but still on its knees and still cupping the form of her waist and hips.

"It's very easy," she said, as they came back through the already significant bathroom, "to forget to unlock. Everyone does it all the time. There's even a little bell—see? If I'm locked out, I ring it." She rang it: a soft but determined purr. "You've got one too. I always forget. Which is boring of me."

Scheherazade gazed his way with her peculiar directness, the golden, idealistic eyes, the very level brows. When that look fell on Keith, he had the feeling that she had already dealt with every matter concerning him—birth, background, appearance, even stature. Important, too (he disconnectedly thought), was the fact that she called her mother Mum, and not Mummy (like all the other female members of her class). This spoke to Keith of her essentially egalitarian soul. But the strangest thing about Scheherazade was her smile, which was not the smile of a beautiful girl. There was too much collusion in the softly rippled lids—collusion in the human comedy. The smile of a beautiful girl was a sequestered smile. *It hasn't sunk in yet*, said Lily. *She doesn't know*. And could that really be?



"Well, Chadwick, we've taken your advice to streamline the organization. And I want you to know that we're all going to miss you very much."

So here was the castle, its battlements kept aloft on the shoulders of the four fat-girthed giants, the four towers, the four terraces, the circular ballroom (with its orbital staircase), the domed pentagonal library, the salon with its six sets of windows, the baronial banqueting hall at the far end of the implausibly and impractically long corridor



"It's a real bargain. If you buy my painting, you can spend the weekend with my model."

from the barnyard-sized kitchen, all the antechambers that receded, like facing mirrors, into a repetitive infinity. Above was the apartment; below was the dungeon floor, half submerged in the foundational soil and giving off the thinnest mist of what smelled to Keith like cold sweat.

"There's an old word for the way she regards you, Scheherazade," he said to Lily in the pentagonal library. He was up on a ladder, almost at dome level. "You'll think it just means being patronizing. But it's a term of praise. And humble gratitude. *Condescension*, Lily." From eccles. L., from *con-* "together" + *descendere* "come down" ("together" was the important part). "Her being a Lady and all."

"She's not a Lady. She's an Honorable. Her dad was a viscount. You mean she treats you," said Lily, "for all the world as if you aren't a berk."

"Yeah." He was talking about the class system. But he was thinking about the looks system—the beauty system. Would there ever be a revolution in looks, where those who were last would now be first? "I suppose that's about the size of it."

He returned to the leather-decked davenport, where he was reading *Clarissa* and taking notes. Lily was on a chaise longue and had before her something called *Interdiction: On Our Law and Its Study*. He said, "...Does Scheherazade act like a boy? Is she promiscuous?"

"No. I'm far more promiscuous than she is. Numerically," said Lily. "You know. She did the usual amount of necking and getting felt up. Then she took pity on a couple of dopes who wrote her poems. And regretted it. Then nothing for a while. Then Timmy."

"And that's it?"

"That's it. But now she's blooming and restless and it's given her ideas."

"What sort of ideas?"

"Oh, you know. Ideas. But she still doesn't know she's beautiful."

"Does she know about her figure?"

"Not really. She thinks it's going to go away. As quickly as it came. How come you've never read one?"

As well as a sexual trauma, Keith also had a suitcaseful of remedial reading ahead of him. "Never read what?"

"An English novel. You've read the Russians and the Americans. But you've never read an English novel."

"I've read an English novel. *The Power and the Glory*. *Vile Bodies*. I've just never read *Peregrine Pickle* or *Phineas Finn*. I mean, why would you? And *Clarissa's* killing me."

"You should've thought of that before you changed subjects."

"Mm. Well I was always more of a poetry man."

Keith took to going up to the tower, around noon, to read an English novel—and to get a little peace. This visit to the bedroom he shared with Lily tended to coincide with the shower that Scheherazade tended to take before lunch. He heard it, her shower. The heavy beads of water sounded like car tires on gravel. He sat there, with the morbidly obese paperback on his lap. Then he waited for five pages before going in to wash his face.

On the third day he unlatched and pushed on the bathroom door and it didn't give. He listened. After a moment he reached for the bell with a ponderous hand (why did this feel so significant?). More silence, the click of a distant latch, a shuffling tread.

Scheherazade's warmed face now emanated out at him from the folds of a thick white towel.

"See?" she said. "I told you."

The lips: the upper as full as the nether. Her brown eyes and the balance of their gaze, her level brows.

"It won't be the last time either," she said.

"I promise."

She swiveled, he followed. She turned left

and he watched the three of them retreat, the real Scheherazade and the simulacra that slid across the glass.

Keith remained in the L of mirrors.

As a child, he had more or less resigned himself to ugliness (and he stoically answered to *Beak* in the schoolyard). Then this changed. The necessary event came to pass, and this changed. His face changed. The jaw and especially the chin asserted themselves, the upper lip lost its niblike rigidity, the eyes brightened and widened. Later he came up with a theory that would disquiet him for the rest of his life: Looks depended on happiness. A disinclined, a hurt-looking little boy, he suddenly started to be happy. And now here was his face in the rippled and speckly mirror in Italy, pleasantly unexceptionable, firm, dry. Young. He was happy enough. Was he happy enough to survive—to live with—the ecstasy of being Scheherazade? He also believed that beauty was mildly infectious, given close and prolonged contact. It was a universal presumption, and he shared it: He wanted to experience beauty—to be legitimized by beauty.

Chill, moist clouds swirled above them and all around them—and even beneath them. Slivers of gray vapor detached themselves from the mountaintop and slid lolling down the slopes. They seemed to lie on their backs, resting, in the grooves and culverts, like exhausted genies.

A week went by, and they had yet to avail themselves of the Olympian swimming pool in its grotto setting. Keith decided that it would do his heart good to see the girls enjoying themselves down there—particularly Scheherazade. Meanwhile, *Clarissa* was boring. But nothing else was.

Lily approached him as he sat at the circular stone table on the upmost shelf of the east garden. It was warmer now, but still overcast, with the bilious, low-pressure light that augurs thunder. Scents were detectable in the sallow air: *il gelsomino* (jasmine), *il giacino* (hyacinth), *l'ibisco* (hibiscus) and narcissus, narcissus...

"You're going from one to the other," Lily noted.

"Well it's the only way of getting through it. Not *Tom Jones*. *Tom Jones* is great. And Tom's my kind of guy."

"In what way?"

"He's a bastard. But *Clarissa's* a nightmare. You won't believe this, Lily," he said (and he had, incidentally, decided to swear more), "but it's taking him 2,000 pages to fuck her."

"Christ."

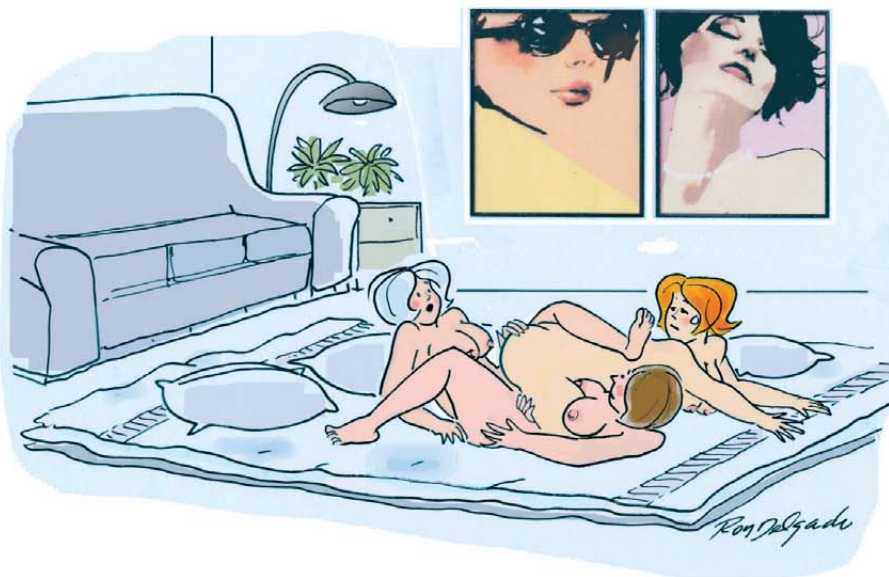
"I know."

"But honestly, listen to you. Usually, when you read a novel, you go on about things like, I don't know, the level of perception. Or the depth of the moral order. Now it's just fucks."

"It's not *just* fucks, Lily. One fuck in 2,000 pages. That's not *just* fucks."

"No, but it's all you go on about."

There weren't any serpents in this garden, but there were flies: in the middle distance, vague flecks of death—and then, up close, armored survivalists with gas-mask faces.



"Shouldn't one of us be wearing a dildo?"

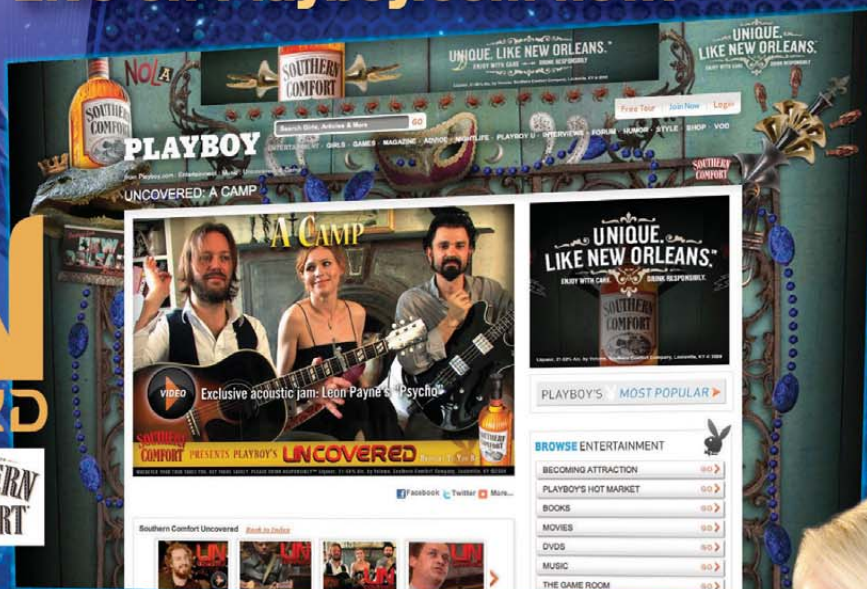
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And there were silky white butterflies. And great drunken bees, throbbing orbs that seemed to carry their own electrical resonance; when they collided with something solid—tree bole, statuary, flowerpot—they twanged back and away, the positive charge repelled by the positive. Lily said,

"Two thousand pages was probably how long it took. When?"

"Uh—1750. Even then he has to get her stupefied on drugs. Guess what she does afterward. Dies of shame."

"And it's meant to be sad."

"Not really. She goes out babbling about how happy she is. I'll be uh, *rejoicing in the blessed fruits of His forgiveness... in the eternal mansions*. She's very literal about it. Her heavenly reward."

"Her reward for getting fucked on drugs."

"Lily, it was rape. Actually it's pretty clear she fancied him something rotten from the start. They're all in a fever about violation." She was looking at him receptively now, so he continued, saying, "Girls can fuck in *Tom Jones*—if they're yobs or nobbs. A milkmaid. Or a decadent hostess. But Clarissa's bourgeois, so she has to get fucked on drugs."

"Because then it's not her fault."

"Yeah. And she can go on claiming she didn't want to. Anyway, she did hold out for 2,000 pages. That's a million words, Lily. Did you hold out for a million words? When you were acting like a boy?"

Lily sighed and said, "Scheherazade's just been telling me how frustrated she is."

"...Frustrated how?"

"Sexually. Obviously."

"She has my sympathy. Still. Timmy'll be along in a chapter or two."

"Maybe. She just got a letter. He can't tear himself away from Jerusalem. She's cross

with him now all right. And she has high hopes of Adriano."

"Who's Adriano?"

Lily said, "You're not expressing yourself very clearly. Don't you mean, Who the fuck is Adriano?"

"No, I don't. You're following a false lead, Lily. Who's Adriano?... All right. Who the fuck is Adriano?"

"There. It goes better with your scowl." Lily laughed sharply and briefly. "He's a notorious playboy. And a count. Or one day will be."

"All Italians are counts."

"All Italians are poor counts. He's a rich count. He and his dad have a castle *each*."

"Big deal. I didn't realize until yesterday. There are castles everywhere in Italy. I mean there's one every few hundred yards. Did they have uh, did they have a long brawling-baron period?"

"Not particularly," said Lily, who was reading a book called *A Concise History of Italy*. "They kept getting invaded by barbarians. Hang on." Methodical Lily consulted her notes. "The Huns, the Franks, the Vandals, the Visigoths and the Goths. Then the Keiths. The Keiths were the worst."

"Were they. And when do we meet Adriano?"

"That's what she needs. Someone of her own station. And did you thrill," said Lily, "to the Devil's Pass?"

In the backseat of the Fiat he was placed between a family friend visiting from the U.S., Prentiss, and Scheherazade—while Lily rode in what was called the *cabriolet* (a smart red convertible) with Scheherazade's mum, Oona. In the backseat Prentiss stayed exactly where she was, but Scheherazade swayed into him, swooned into him, on every tight

turn. It was raining hard, and all they did, in the Passo del Diavolo, was steer through it and stare out at it. Keith, anyway, was attending to a riot of sense impressions.

"It was good," he said. "Very twisty and scary."

"Mm. Scary. I bet."

"And always on the side of the precipice—thanks very much."

"God. You must've been terrified."

In the car Keith was telling himself that Scheherazade was simply half asleep. And for a couple of minutes, just before they turned back, she did go under—with her head resting trustfully on his shoulder. Then she snapped to, coughed and glanced up at him through her lashes with her unreadably generous smile.... And it all began again, her arm against his arm, her thigh against his thigh. *What d'you think, Lily? Gaw, you should have seen her in the bathroom the other day. Another lapse with the lock, Lily, and there she was in blue jeans and bra. Is she trying to tell me something? Or maybe her habits of thought had not quite drawn level with the facts of her transformation. In the full-length mirror she still sometimes saw the mousy philanthropist in sensible shoes and spectacles. And not a winged horse in blue jeans, and a white brassiere with the narrowest trim of blue.*

WHERE WERE THE POLICE?

Under the burning axle of the parent star he sat topless, poolside, his face inclined over the pages of *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*. Peregrine had just attempted (and failed) to drug (and ravish) Emily Gauntlet, his wealthy fiancée.... Keith kept looking at his watch.

"You keep looking at your watch," said Lily.

"No I don't."

"Yes you do. And you've been down here since seven."

"Eight-thirty, Lily. Beautiful morning."

He stood up and strolled to the water's edge. He wondered at it, this gray new world of glass and opacity, and not the wobbly, slippery, ribbony blue of the pools of his youth.

"Here she comes," Lily said.

Scheherazade was decanting herself downward through the three tiers of the terraced gradient, and now moved through a bower-and-hothouse setting as she neared the water, barefoot but in tennis wear—a quilted skirt of pale green and a yellow Fred Perry. She twirled off the lower half of it (he thought of an apple being pared) and tugged herself out of the upper; and then she made wings of her long arms and unclipped the upper half of her bikini (and it was gone—with the merest shrug it was gone), saying,

"Here's another boring thing."

Of course, this wasn't boring either. On the other hand, it would have been disgracefully callow and bourgeois (and uncool) to take the slightest notice of what was now on view; so Keith had the difficult task of looking at Lily (in housecoat and flip-flops and still in the shade) while simultaneously communing with an image that was fated, for



"Sorry, Joey! I gave that up for Lent."

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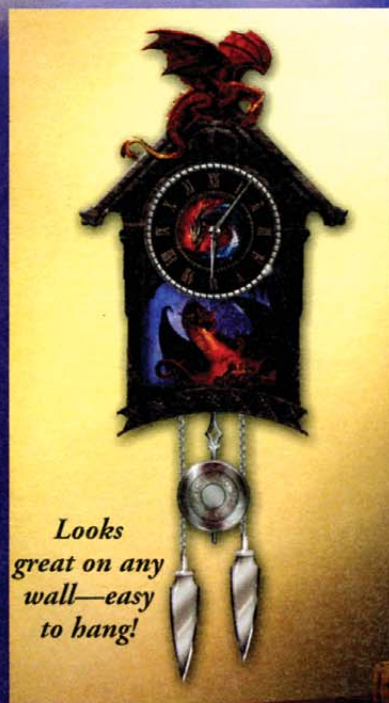
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great on any
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now, to remain in the loneliest wilderness of his peripheral vision. After 30 seconds or so, to ease the trapped nerves in his trapped neck, Keith stared up and out—at the gold slopes of the massif, echoing in the pale blue. Lily yawned, saying,

"What's the other boring thing?"

"Well, I have just been informed——"

"No, what was the *other* boring thing?"

Lily was looking at Scheherazade. So Keith did too ... And this was the thought, this was the question, they awakened in him, Scheherazade's breasts (the twinned circumferences, interproximal, interchangeable): *Where were the police?* Where on earth were the police? It was a question he was often asking himself, in these uncertain times. Where were they, the police? Scheherazade said,

"Sorry, I'm not with you."

"I mean, what was the *first* boring thing?"

"The bathroom," said Keith. "You know. Sharing it. The bell."

"Ah. Now what's the *second* boring thing?"

"Let me just get wet."

Scheherazade stepped forward and kept going and dived.... She surfaced and climbed out with tensed tendons and came forward again, covered in bright beads of water. And it was all laid before you. Topless as nature intended. And yet to Keith the spectacle seemed antinatural—seemed

unsound, like a slippage of genre. The cicas turned their volume up, and the sun glared. She said,

"Just cold enough. I hate it when it's soupy. You know. Blood heat."

Lily said, "Is the second boring thing more boring than the first boring thing?"

"About the same—no, more boring. We're being *joined*. Oh well. These things are sent to try us. Gloria," said Scheherazade, lying back with her hands behind her head. "Gloria. Jorquil's great throb. She's in disgrace and she's being packed off to purdah—here. With us. Gloria Beautyman. She's older than us. Twenty-two. Or twenty-three. Oh well, what can we do? It's Jorq's castle."

Keith had encountered Jorquil, or been in his presence for a minute or two—Jorquil, Scheherazade's 30-year-old uncle (it was that kind of family). Now Keith said, "Good name. Gloria Beautyman."

"Yes it is," said Lily cautiously. "But does she live up to it? Does she carry it off?"

"Sort of. I don't know. I think she's an acquired taste. Rather peculiar figure. Jorq's besotted. I don't quite get it. Jorq's normal girls look like film stars."

"Jorq?"

"Yes I know. He's no Adonis, Jorq, but he is very rich. And very keen. And Gloria.... She must have hidden depths. Still. Poor Gloria. After two weeks at death's door from

a single glass of champagne, she can almost sit up in bed."

"What's she in disgrace for? What kind of disgrace? Do we know?"

"Sexual disgrace," said Scheherazade with a greedy look as her teeth caught the light. "And I was *there*."

"Oh do tell."

"Well I did vow not to. I really oughtn't. No, I can't."

"Scheherazade!" said Lily.

"No. I really can't."

"Scheherazade!"

"Oh all right. But we mustn't.... God, I've never seen anything like it. And it was so out of character. She comes across as a bit prim. She's from Edinburgh. Catholic. Ladylike. And she almost died of shame. The thing was, she did these paintings for a sex tycoon. And we——"

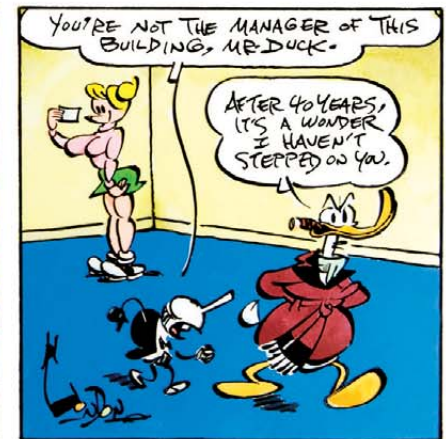
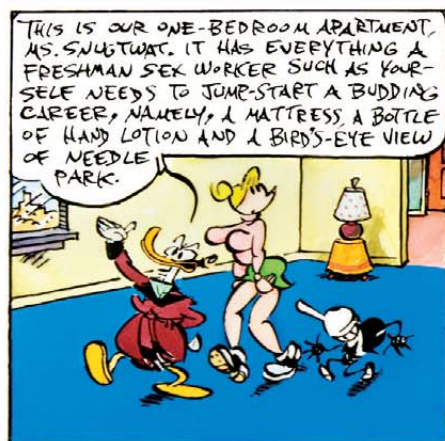
"No, wait," said Lily. "How do you mean, a sex tycoon?"

"The one who does sex revues but not *Oh! Calcutta!*.... You see, Gloria's mainly a dancer. Royal Ballet. But she's also a painter. And she did these little paintings for the sex tycoon. Ballet dancers at it in midair."

"In midair?" said Lily, with some impatience. "In midair?"

"Ballet dancers at it in midair. And the sex tycoon had a big lunch party in Wiltshire, and Gloria was asked, and we were only 60

Dirty Duck by Bobby London



miles away, so we went. And she disgraced herself. I've never seen anything like it."

Keith sank back. The sun, the cicadas, the breasts, the butterflies, the caustic taste of coffee in his mouth, the fiery treat of his French cigarette, the narrative of sexual disgrace.... He said,

"Spin this out, Scheherazade, if you wouldn't mind. Any chance details. Don't stint us."

"Well. The first thing she did was almost drown in the indoor pool. Wait. Jorquill dropped us off. He said, *You be chaperone. And for God's sake don't let her drink anything.* Because she doesn't. She can't. But she seemed very flustered. And so of course I went to the loo, and when I came back she was finishing a huge flute of champagne. I've never seen anything like it. She was unrecognizable."

"Is she little?" said Keith. "That can sometimes happen when they're little."

"She's *quite* little. She's not *that* little. Afterward she was violently sick for days and then completely bedridden. We really did think poor Gloria was going to die of shame."

"And I suppose the whole place anyway," said Lily, "was crawling with slags."

"Not really. I mean, there were a good few hunks and pinups round the pool. You know. People who look like they're made of pale chocolate. But there were rules. No toplessness. No sex. And Gloria wasn't topless. Not topless. Oh no. She was bottomless. She lost her bikini bottoms just before she nearly drowned. She said they got sucked off by the Jacuzzi. So the chap, the polo pro, when he fished her out, he had to hold her upside down by the ankles and give her a good shake. That was a sight. Then the minute we got her clothes back on she was off upstairs. And on the dance floor they were swinging her from man to man and feeling her up. And she looked like someone in a dream. And they were feeling her up. I mean *really* feeling her up."

Keith said, "Really feeling her up how?"

"Well. When I went back in she had her dress round her waist. Not just that—it was tucked into her garter belt. To keep it there. And guess what. The man with his tongue in her ear was stroking her arse with both his hands *inside her pants*."

"*In vino veritas*," said Lily.

"No," said Keith. But he said nothing more. Truth in wine? Truth in Special Brew and Southern Comfort, truth in Pink Ladies? So Clarissa Harlowe and Emily Gauntlet, when drugged, were behaving *truthfully*? No. But when the girl raised the potion to her own lips, then you could claim that it was *veritas*. He said uneasily, "You'd think she'd know that about herself. Gloria Beautyman."

"You would. There's more. The bathroom upstairs with the polo pro."

Over the poolside a pensive silence formed.

They waited.

"Well they were only in there for a couple of minutes. The polo pro said it was all perfectly innocent. You know, a bit of cocaine. I think they just had a snog. She cried her eyes out in the car. And she's been suicidal ever since."

Scheherazade rubbed her eyes with her

knuckles, childishly.... According to an English novel he had read, men understood why they liked women's breasts—but they didn't understand why they liked them *so much*. Keith, who liked them so much, didn't even know why he liked them. Why? Come on, he told himself: Soberly enumerate their strengths and virtues. And yet somehow they directed you toward the ideal. It must have to do with the universe, Keith thought, with planets, with suns and moons.

LOOK HOW HE LIT HER

That afternoon they went down the steep little lane toward the village, to stroll and hold hands and be a couple together: Lily and Keith. The deep streets, the crushed cobbles, the fig-dark shadows, all silent in the siesta hour, which was given over to the faint trickles of digestion. The graffito, daubed in white: MUSSOLINI HA SEMPRE RAGIONE! Mussolini is always right! Above their heads, visible from almost any vantage, stood the arthritic neck of Santa Maria. It was five o'clock, and the bells wagged and swung. A chance to stroll and hold hands and be a couple, while there was still time.

Lily said suddenly, "They're playing on the court at his castle. He's meant to be

*When he first got wind
of Adriano, Keith imagined
a grand seducer, a
purple genius of the
chamber and the boudoir—
glutinously virile.*

a great athlete. She says if she likes him even the tiniest bit she's definitely going to consider it."

Keith heard himself say, "No. Is this fair to Timmy?"

"Well it's Timmy's fault in a way. He ought to be here. I told you how frustrated she is. She's desperate."

"Desperate?"

They had started along the lane that scrambled up the slope (and ducked under the road and scrambled clear on the other side) when they saw Scheherazade, who was in the process of alighting from a cream Rolls-Royce. She briefly bent herself over the window frame, with her green skirt out-thrust; then she stood there waving at it as the machine surged onward. Keith thought for a moment that the car was driverless, but now a bronzed forearm appeared, and was lazily brandished, and then withdrew.

"So?" said Lily as they joined Scheherazade at the gates.

"He told me he loved me."

"No. At what stage?"

"In the first game of the first set. It was 15 all. He's coming to lunch tomorrow. And he's full of plans."

"And?"

"He'd be absolutely perfect," said Scheherazade, with a crybaby face. "Except for just this one little thing."

"Come on. What's wrong with Adriano?" he asked Lily, that evening, in the salon.

"I'm not telling you. You'll have to wait and see. All I'm saying is that he's very handsome. With an exquisitely chiseled body. And very cultured."

Keith's eyes moved sideways in thought. "I know. He's got a terrible laugh or a very high voice." Solemnly Lily shook her head. He thought on, and said, "I know. He's nuts."

"No. You're nuts. And you're not even warm."

Keith went to the kitchen. "What's the thing that's wrong with Adriano?" he asked Scheherazade.

"I promised Lily I wouldn't tell."

"Is it uh, insurmountable? The thing that's wrong with him?"

"I'm not really sure. I suppose we'll see."

"Is it because he's—"

"No more questions. Don't tempt me. Or I'll crack. I've done it once before today already. Blabbed."

At dinner that night he conducted a thought experiment, or a feel experiment: He looked at Scheherazade, for the first time, with eyes of love. As if he loved her and she loved him back. While he made himself agreeable to Lily and Oona, as often as he dared he looked at Scheherazade with eyes of love. And what do they see, those eyes? They see the equivalent of a work of art, they see wit and talent and gripping complication; for minutes on end he believed himself to be in a private screening room, bearing witness to a first performance of unforgettable spontaneity. Behind the scenes of this motion picture, the director would be wisely sleeping with his great discovery. Of course he was. Look how he lit her. You could tell.

Keith dropped his head and gazed at the grainy murk in the bottom of his coffee cup. There was something in him that wasn't there before. It was born when Lily said the word *desperate*.

It was hope.

"Ah," said Adriano, addressing Scheherazade with an elegant undulation of his open palm, "—bring me the sunflower mad with light!"

The open palm withdrew, and closed on the bunny-eared bow of the silk cord that secured the waist of his creamy trousers (the creamy color, perhaps, was meant to match his car). Keith sat on a metal chair and watched—as *il conte* showily disrobed.

When he first got wind of Adriano, Keith imagined a grand seducer, a purple genius of the chamber and the boudoir—glutinously virile, with heavy lids, plump lips and sebum visibly pooling in every pore.

He disrobed, Adriano: Off came the snowy slacks, the bobbled loafers, the shantung shirt, all the way down to the curious ribbing of his sky-blue swimsuit, which, nonetheless, bulged eventually.... Adriano was equipped with perfect English, or near-perfect English: He sometimes said *as* instead of *like*.

Adriano would inherit an ancient title and a limitless fortune. Adriano was densely muscular and classically handsome, with something coinlike, something silvery and Caesary, in his noble brow.

On he came, to the sun bed of Scheherazade. Adriano sat, and with formidable insouciance he slid his hand between her moistened calves.

"Ah," he resumed. "I know how Tereus felt when he first spied Philomela. As a forest when a drought wind turns it into a firestorm."

It was not the voice of a small man, which was remarkable in its way. Because guess what. Adriano was four foot 10 inches tall.

So far, the new rhythm of the weather was answering quite accurately to Keith's inner state. For four or five days the air would steadily thicken and congeal. And the storms—the storms, with their African vociferousness, were timed for his insomnias. He was making friends with hours he barely knew, the one called three, the one called four. They racked him, these storms, but he was left with a cleaner morning. Then the days began again to thicken, building to another war in heaven.

I don't know what you're complaining about, Lily was on record as saying. You still sit up half the night playing cards with her. I saw you that once—down on your knees together. I thought you were getting married. Plighting your troth.

When we kneel, we're the same height. Why's that?

Because her legs are a foot longer than yours from the knee down. What d'you play anyway? said Lily, who hated all games (and all sports). *Old Maid?*

No, they played Pope Joan, they played Black Maria and Fan-Tan and stud poker. And now (better, much better), on the rug in the gun room (the rug was a sprawled tiger), kneeling opposite one another, they played Racing Demon.... Racing Demon was a kind of interactive Patience. As card games went, it was almost a contact sport. There was a lot of snatching and taunting and laughing and, almost always, a shimmer of hysteria toward the end. He wanted to play the games called Skin and Cheat. Is that what he wanted? He wanted to play Hearts. Hearts: That, perhaps, was the trouble.

Did they mean anything, those smiles and glances? Did they mean anything, those exhibitions in the shared bathroom, those exhibitions of riveting disarray? Keith read, and sighed, and wished he was a yellow bird. Because it would have horrified him beyond computation—to take her undesigning friendliness and smear it with his hands, his lips.

Keith grew up in cities, in small coastal cities—Cornwall, Wales. The only birds he knew well were city pigeons. When they took to the air at all (and it was invariably a last resort), they flew for fear.

Here in Italy the black *carnachi* flew for hunger, the high *magneti* flew for destiny, and the yellow *canarini* flew for joy. When the wind came, the dervish *tramontana*, the yellow birds neither rode the gusts nor fought them; they didn't fly, they didn't float, they just *hung*.

BODY PARTS

The neck of the loved one resembled those cylindrical shafts of light you saw in uncertain weather, when the rays of the sun began to find their way through the colander of the clouds. Like a tall lamp shade of white lace.... This style of thought, Keith knew, was of no help to him, and he turned his attention elsewhere.

"It's too big," said Lily. "Much too big."

"I feel as if I'm seeing it for the first time," said Scheherazade. "And it's absolutely enormous, isn't it?"

"Absolutely enormous."

"...And you wouldn't call it fat exactly."

"No. And it's—quite high up."

"There's just too much of it," said Scheherazade.

Lily said, "*Much* too much."

Keith listened. It was good, hanging around with girls: After a while, they thought you weren't there. What were they talking about, Lily and Scheherazade? They were talking about Gloria Beautyman's arse.... On the exercise frame, utterly unregarded, Adriano coiled, whirled and stretched, his legs outthrust and rigid to the very nails of his toes.

Gloria Beautyman, in a petaled bathing cap and a slightly furry dark-blue one-piece, was under the pool hut's external shower: 5'5", 33-22-37. She was a dark, pained and grimly self-

CAMEL SNUS
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sufficient figure, with a frown fixed above the bridge of her nose like an inverted V (lowercase and italicized). This one-piece of Gloria's continued on downward for an extra couple of inches, like a not very daring miniskirt, and its awkward modesty, hereabouts, made you think of bathing machines and dipping stools....

"She's turning round again," said Scheherazade. "Whew, it's a whopper, isn't it? She's lost weight and it really sticks out at you. Awful swimsuit. Virginal."

"No, spinsterish. What are her tits like?"

"There's nothing wrong with her tits. They're almost the prettiest tits I've ever seen."

"Oh are they now? Describe."

"You know, like the upper bit of those desert glasses. For um, *parfait*. Just full enough to have a touch of heaviness. I wish I had tits like that."

"Scheherazade!"

"Well I do. Hers'll last. And I don't know how long mine'll be able to keep this up."

"Scheherazade!"

"Well I don't. You'll see them when Jorquill comes. He'll be wanting to show them off. Poor Gloria. She's all atremble about Mum. Who doesn't know the half of it."

Adriano still twirled like a Catherine wheel or a propeller on the upper bar of the exercise frame. Keith thought, I'll wait till he comes down from there—then I'll go and tower over him for a while. And Lily, not quite prepared to leave things as they were, said conclusively,

"It's a *farical* arse."

At 5:30 Scheherazade drove in the cabriolet from castle to castle and returned after an hour, looking childishly contrite, with her shoulders raised and locked. Dinner unfolded, its surface tension, its meniscus. After Gloria had proudly taken her leave, Scheherazade told of Adriano, saying,

"He was very correct. Quiet. Rather angry, I think. I don't blame him. I asked him to keep coming over. I stressed that we're still good friends."

Keith watched as Lily went up to their room....

It was now just before midnight in the gun room. The moose, with its marble eyes, stared out inexorably. On the floor, on the tiger rug, Indian-fashion faced sidesaddle: Keith faced the forbidding approachability, the illegible openness of Scheherazade. What was this alphabet that he couldn't read? She wore a close dress of murky pink, with five white buttons down the front at six-inch intervals; she kept scratching at the little red swell on the paler side of her forearm where, the night before, a mosquito had inserted its syringe. Keith was in his usual state, which was this. Every other minute, he could hear heaven snickering at his forbearance, and every minute in between, he blushed white sweat at the thought of the sulfurous tar pit in his soul.

The night was probably about to end, and Keith was blithely (and ignorantly) saying something about the castle, about how the exterior sometimes struck him as more Transylvanian than Italianate (with a haunted slant to it), and he went on,

"The best bit in *Dracula* is when he climbs

down the rampart—headfirst. Coming down to feast on the girl."

"Headfirst?"

"Headfirst. He sticks to the wall like a fly. He's already done for Lucy Westenra. He savaged her—in the form of a wild animal. Now it's Wilhelmina's turn. He bites her three times. And he makes her drink his blood. And from then on she's under his control."

"I'm scared now." She lowered her voice.

"What if I'm attacked on my way up?"

And his blood—it altered thickly. "But I'll protect you," he said.

They stood. They climbed the staircase that wound its way round the ballroom. On the recessed half landing she said,

"I suppose this is far enough."

"Wait," he said, and placed the three-branched candelabrum on the floor, and straightened slowly. "You stand betrayed. I'm the undead. I'm the prince of darkness."

So he was pretending to be Dracula (his hands were vampirically raised and tensed), and she was pretending to be his victim (her hands were clasped in obeisance or prayer), and he was moving in on her, and she was backing off and even half sat herself on the curved lid of a wooden trunk, and their faces were level, eye to eye and breath to breath.

And now they were given a ticket of entry to another genre...the world of the heaving bosom and the drooling canine, of bats and screech owls, of fluids and straight razors and blinded mirrors, where everything was allowed. He looked down the length of her: The stretched gaps between her buttons were mouths of smiling flesh. From throat to thigh it was all before him.

She raised a palm halfway toward his chest—and, as if pushed, he staggered sideways, and something clattered, and there were three rolling tubes of tallow with flickering wicks, and they laughed, fatally, and suddenly it was over.

Then Scheherazade went on up and Keith went on down. He crossed the courtyard under the ridiculous innocence of the moon. He climbed the tower.

And entered the insanity of night.

Oh, I know *now* what I should have said and done. *Count Dracula would want your throat, your neck. But I—I want your mouth, your lips.* Then onward, and all would have followed and flowed. Wouldn't it?

L'esprit de l'escalier: spirit of the staircase, wishing you'd said, wishing you'd done. Yet how much more indelible it was when the staircase was the staircase that led to the bedroom....

Gathering, shadowing, boding, closing over Scheherazade, he felt a near-irresistible force. And an immovable object. What was the nature of the impediment, what was its shape and mass? He turned to the sleeping form at his side and whispered,

How could you do this to me?

For weeks Keith had known that his chosen project was something like the opposite of self-improvement. But he honestly never dreamt that he had so far to go.

From The Pregnant Widow by Martin Amis, to be published by Alfred A. Knopf in May.



JOHN MAYER

(continued from page 32)

show you" instinct is still alive and well. Now, instead of "We don't think you can do it," it's "We think you're a douche bag."

PLAYBOY: Do you still have a chip on your shoulder?

MAYER: Yep. I have an extremely tall antenna that reaches high into the sky and brings in a lot of cool stuff but also a lot of unnecessary stuff. If I hadn't had my upbringing, I would have probably been like, "Yeah, this is fun. Cool." But right now I still have "See? See, motherfucker?"

PLAYBOY: You put in a lot of hours playing the guitar, but it also seems you were quick to pick up music theory, harmony, composition.

MAYER: I'm wired for it. I'm lucky I found a thing I was wired for, and I found it at 13. I've already won one of the biggest gambles of all time, which was to forgo an education so I could pursue a real all-or-none scenario. I look pretty fucking smart for having done that, though it doesn't change the fact that it was crazy.

PLAYBOY: You have a level of self-consciousness that seems like it could be exhausting.

MAYER: Maybe that's the douche bag part of it. Maybe I'm so meta-aware that it's off-putting to people. But I'm old enough to know I need to change. I'm getting tired of the illusion of control. I think I've made my best record now, at my lowest point of confidence.

PLAYBOY: You wanted to become a rock star, and now that you are one, it's ruined your confidence? That's odd.

MAYER: Lately I've realized it's okay to enjoy being a rock star. Like, it might actually be fun to wear sunglasses in the airport and sit in the first-class lounge as a fucking rock star who's about to go on a world tour. I had related it to something so painful, so frustrating, so confusing, that it would give me a tension headache. Being a famous musician seemed to have brought misunderstanding and strife and a fist in the back of the head when I read something about myself. I wrote this line yesterday: "Someday soon these will just be things we used to do." I'm sort of making a list of all the things I know I'm going to laugh at myself for taking so seriously.

PLAYBOY: So you can already imagine your future?

MAYER: This is going to sound odd, but sometimes I meet the 40-year-old me and say, "What do I do?" And 40-year-old me says, "Don't do every scheduled interview. Go to the zoo instead. You're going to be fine, you knucklehead. Stop overthinking what people say." I'm trying to fold over time, to see it as a random-access hard disk where I can move to any point in time and change the way I see today.

PLAYBOY: What you describe sounds like a conversation between a father and a son. Can you talk like that with your dad?

MAYER: My dad is 82. I love him so much, but the way I communicate with him is by fixing his printer or the closed-captioning on his TV. These are the bonding moments we have.

PLAYBOY: Did kids make fun of the fact that your dad is almost 20 years older than your mom?

MAYER: No, they'd just say, "Your grandfather's here."

PLAYBOY: Is your heritage Jewish?

MAYER: I'm half Jewish. People say, "Well, which side of your family is Jewish?" I say, "My dad's." And they always say it doesn't count. But I will say I keep my pool at 92 degrees, so you do the math. I find myself relating to Judaism. One of my best friends is Jewish beyond all Jews—I went to my first Passover seder at his house—and I train in Krav Maga with a lot of Israelis.

PLAYBOY: You said there are still things you don't have. What are those things?

MAYER: I could make anybody understand that my life is not all rainbows and unicorns, but why would I want to? I'm sort of selling them the idea that it's rainbows and unicorns. I could explain that, in fact, I'm not a douche bag, but that would be at the expense of believing in magic. I don't want to tear down the facade. People want to imagine that if they get a record deal, they can buy a Ferrari. People need that. I don't want to take that away from people. Anything I don't have is a direct descendant of the things I do have. I mean, let's say there's a 12 percent chance I'll never marry and have kids

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WE ALL START OUT THE SAME THEN SOME OF US GET MORE INTERESTING

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because the music career fucked me in some way. If that's the case, I still know it's my calling. I hold out hope that there's a way to be a supernatural being onstage and an extremely natural being at home.

PLAYBOY: Why are you so anxious about never getting married?

MAYER: What if I meet a woman and it's love at first sight, and this woman has the greatest night of her life by telling me to fuck off because she knows my reputation? I always say, "Turning me down is the new sleeping with me." What is a guy supposed to say to a girl who says "You do this all the time"? Girls always say that. Sometimes they say "I've been warned about you." But I can undo that in a couple of days. I have a line for that: "Keep your warning for a while; let's take it slow."

PLAYBOY: Were you one of those people who thought fame would be rainbows and unicorns?

MAYER: I had a conversation about fame with Jen [Aniston] before we ever really stepped out in public. She said, "Do you understand what this entails?" Two weeks later I had people outside my house. I was smart enough to know it would probably make me a salable item for the paparazzi. I knew I'd have to move to a home that had a gate. But that pearl of possibility that lives in your heart when you meet somebody you want to know more about has such a different molecular density than everything else that you have to pursue it. And I wouldn't undo it, man. Because if it had worked out, I would have reaped the benefits. I would be sitting here saying, "What I have when I go home is the thing I've always wanted."

PLAYBOY: Has Jen heard *Battle Studies*?

MAYER: Yes. I played it for her as the record was being made.

PLAYBOY: What did she say?

MAYER: Look, there's a level of honesty in that record that probably made her uncomfortable, but I couldn't let that change the way I wrote songs. There were moments when she said, "What's that line?" Like, "That's not about me, is it?" While I was going out with her she was on the cover of *GQ* wearing nothing but a tie. These are occupational hazards. When she heard *Battle Studies* she just wanted to be able to say "I want to know that you hold me correctly in your heart."

PLAYBOY: What percentage of the album is about Aniston?

MAYER: I don't want to say. I feel bad because people think "Heartbreak Warfare" is about her. I want to go on record saying it's not. That woman would never use heartbreak warfare. That woman was the most communicative, sweetest, kindest person. When people hear the record, I hope the songs make them think about their lives, not my life. Like, when you listen to Coldplay, do you think about Gwyneth Paltrow? I don't write songs in order to stick it to my exes. I don't release underground dis tracks. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: You've rarely talked about Aniston. She has rarely talked about you.

MAYER: We just have a regard for each other's feelings that is pretty intense. It's been a deep relationship, and it's no longer taking place at all. Have you ever loved somebody, loved her completely, but had to end the relationship for life reasons?

PLAYBOY: Did you send Aniston a copy of the CD after it was done?

MAYER: No.

PLAYBOY: Maybe she'll download it from BitTorrent.

MAYER: If Jennifer Aniston knows how to use BitTorrent I'll eat my fucking shoe. One of the most significant differences between us was that I was tweeting. There was a rumor that I had been dumped because I was tweeting too much. That wasn't it, but that was a big difference. The brunt of her success came before TMZ and Twitter. I think she's still hoping it goes back to 1998. She saw my involvement in technology as courting distraction. And I always said, "These are the new rules."

PLAYBOY: You mean the rules of celebrity have changed since *Friends* made her a star?

MAYER: I said, "Tom Cruise put on a fat suit." That pretty much sums up the past decade: Tom Cruise with a comb-over, dancing to Flo Rida in *Tropic Thunder*.

*I hear about man-whores
more than I hear about
whores. When women are
whorish, they're owning their
sexuality. When men are
whorish, they're disgusting.*

And the world went, "Welcome back, Tom Cruise."

PLAYBOY: What's the moral there?

MAYER: You have to show that you don't take yourself seriously. Once you do that, people will say you're cool: "You know what? I gotta say I never liked him until he made fun of himself, and now I like him."

PLAYBOY: If you didn't know you, would you think you're a douche bag?

MAYER: It depends on what I picked up. My two biggest hits are "Your Body Is a Wonderland" and "Daughters." If you think those songs are pandering, then you'll think I'm a douche bag. It's like I come on very strong. I am a very...I'm just very. V-E-R-Y. And if you can't handle very, then I'm a douche bag. But I think the world needs a little very. That's why black people love me.

PLAYBOY: Because you're very?

MAYER: Someone asked me the other day, "What does it feel like now to have a hood pass?" And by the way, it's sort of a contradiction in terms, because if you really had a hood pass, you could call it a nigger pass. Why are you pulling a punch and calling it a hood pass if you really have a hood pass? But I said, "I can't really have a hood pass. I've never walked into

a restaurant, asked for a table and been told, 'We're full.'"

PLAYBOY: It is true; a lot of rappers love you. You recorded with Common and Kanye West, played live with Jay-Z.

MAYER: What is being black? It's making the most of your life, not taking a single moment for granted. Taking something that's seen as a struggle and making it work for you, or you'll die inside. Not to say that my struggle is like the collective struggle of black America. But maybe my struggle is similar to one black dude's.

PLAYBOY: Do black women throw themselves at you?

MAYER: I don't think I open myself to it. My dick is sort of like a white supremacist. I've got a Benetton heart and a fuckin' David Duke cock. I'm going to start dating separately from my dick.

PLAYBOY: Let's put some names out there. Let's get specific.

MAYER: I always thought Holly Robinson Peete was gorgeous. Every white dude loved Hilary from *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. And Kerry Washington. She's super-hot, and she's also white-girl crazy. Kerry Washington would break your heart like a white girl. Just all of a sudden she'd be like, "Yeah, I sucked his dick. Whatever." And you'd be like, "What? We weren't talking about that." That's what "Heartbreak Warfare" is all about, when a girl uses jealousy as a tactic.

PLAYBOY: You said that song isn't about Aniston. Why is it important for people to know that?

MAYER: I'm very protective of Jen.

PLAYBOY: Do you still love her?

MAYER: Yes, always. I'll always be sorry that it didn't last. In some ways I wish I could be with her. But I can't change the fact that I need to be 32.

PLAYBOY: Last June she was given an award from Women in Film. In her acceptance speech she pointed out that the titles of her films closely parallel her private life. Then she asked if anyone in the audience had "a project titled *Everlasting Love With an Adult, Stable Male*." It seems as if she was referring to you.

MAYER: I imagine I've got something to do with that. Parts of me aren't 32. My ability to go deep with somebody is old soul. My ability to commit and be faithful is old soul. But 32 just comes roaring out of me at points when I don't see it coming. I want to dance. I want to get on an airplane and be like a ninja. I want to be an explorer. I want to be like *The Bourne Identity*. I don't want to pet dogs in the kitchen.

PLAYBOY: That's not so weird for a 32-year-old.

MAYER: Right. For a long time I was asking, "What's wrong with me?" I spent hundreds and hundreds of dollars on therapy for people to say, "Nothing is wrong." I had seen splitting up with her as akin to burning an American flag. Do you know what I mean? I considered myself a villain.

PLAYBOY: How did you feel like a villain?

MAYER: I felt as though I'd done something wrong and was going to be punished for it. When the media picked up

on it, it was the worst fucking week of my life. I found notes at my front desk: "I work for *Us Weekly*; I'd like to talk to you." I'm working out at the gym, and next to me on the elliptical trainer I see a woman I think already approached me and said she was with *In Touch*. But wouldn't that be paranoid to think? I'm going insane. I haven't slept. I'm about to go blind—you know the phrase *blind rage*? All I can remember is that I was about to lose my vision. My emotional tissue was about to tear. So after I left the gym I said "Come here" to all the reporters and paparazzi. I was on the verge of crying and also on the verge of punching someone.

PLAYBOY: This was August 2008, when you said you had ended the relationship "because I don't want to waste somebody's time if something's not right."

MAYER: It really, really upset her. I wanted to take responsibility for having ended it because I saw it as such an offense. But a lot of people felt I was saving face. This would serve to begin the period of my life I'm just exiting, when love made me feel guilty and people called me a rat, a womanizer and a cad.

PLAYBOY: You've also been called a man-whore.

MAYER: I feel like women are getting their comeuppance against men now. I hear about man-whores more than I hear about whores. When women are whorish, they're owning their sexuality. When men are whorish, they're disgusting beasts. I think they're paying us back for a double standard that's lasted for a hundred years.

PLAYBOY: What does the word *womanizer* mean to you?

MAYER: Well, wouldn't a womanizer have dated more than two girls in two years?

PLAYBOY: You and Aniston got back together and broke up again in 2009. How many women did you sleep with in the eight months after the breakup?

MAYER: I'm going to say four or five. No more.

PLAYBOY: That's a reasonable number.

MAYER: But even if I said 12, that's a reasonable number. So is 15. Here's the thing: I get less ass now than I did when I was in a local band. Because now I don't like jumping through hoops. It's been so long since I've taken a random girl home. I don't want to have to submit myself for approval. I don't want to audition. I'd rather come home and edge my shit out for 90 minutes. At this point, before I can have sex I need to know somebody. Unless she's a 14 out of 10.

PLAYBOY: You have been very up front about your fondness for masturbation.

MAYER: It's like a vacation—my brain gets to go free. It's a walk in the park for my brain. Pull the shades and let your mind go without having to answer for it.

PLAYBOY: The way you talk about being 32 sounds as though you were too immature for Aniston.

MAYER: No, the actual day-to-day was fantastic. I have to explain this so people don't say, "Sure, you're 32, and you want to fuck other chicks." If you say I'm not adult and stable, it sounds as though I'm someone who's watching football and playing Xbox. I have this bond with infinite possibility—when I go out to dinner, I bring another shirt, a flashlight, a knife, a hard drive, a camera. It's not like I wanted to be with somebody else. I want to be with myself, still, and lie in bed only with the infinite unknown. That's 32, man.

PLAYBOY: In 2006 you began dating Jessica Simpson, and the paparazzi started stalking you, turning you into a tabloid fixture. Certainly you knew that was going to happen.

MAYER: It wasn't as direct as me saying "I now make the choice to bring the paparazzi into my life." I really said, "I now make the choice to sleep with Jessica Simpson." That was stronger than my desire to stay out of the paparazzi's eye. That girl, for me, is a drug. And drugs aren't good for you if you do lots of them. Yeah, that girl is like crack cocaine to me.

PLAYBOY: You were addicted to Jessica Simpson?

MAYER: Sexually it was crazy. That's all I'll say. It was like napalm, sexual napalm.

PLAYBOY: But before you dated her you thought of yourself as the kind of guy who would never date Jessica Simpson.

MAYER: That's correct. There are people in the world who have the power to change our values. Have you ever been with a girl who made you want to quit the rest of your life? Did you

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ever say, "I want to quit my life and just fuckin' snort you? If you charged me \$10,000 to fuck you, I would start selling all my shit just to keep fucking you."

PLAYBOY: So at this point—

MAYER: Pardon me for interrupting. I love Jen so much that I'm now thinking about how bad I would feel if she read this and was like, "Why are you putting me in an article where you're talking about someone else? I don't want to be in your lineage of kiss-and-tells."

PLAYBOY: At this point, what's your ideal relationship?

MAYER: Here's what I really want to do at 32: fuck a girl and then, as she's sleeping in bed, make breakfast for her. So she's like, "What? You gave me five vaginal orgasms last night, and you're making me a spinach omelet? You are the shit!" So she says, "I love this guy." I say, "I love this girl loving me." And then we have a problem. Because that entails instant relationship. I'm already playing house. And when I lose interest she's going to say, "Why would you do that if you didn't want to stick with me?"

PLAYBOY: Why do you do it?

MAYER: Because I want to show her I'm not like every other guy. Because I hate other men. When I'm fucking you, I'm trying to fuck every man who's ever fucked you, but in his ass, so you'll say "No one's ever done that to me in bed."

PLAYBOY: Do you do something different in bed than other guys?

MAYER: It's all about geometry. I'm sort of a scientist; it's about being obtuse with an

angle. It's sort of this weird up-and-over thing. You gotta think "up and over."

PLAYBOY: Maybe that's easier at your height. You talked about listening to Miles Davis and Bill Evans in high school, but that's not the kind of music you make.

MAYER: I make mainstream music. I don't believe in guilty pleasures; I believe in pleasures. I know where I stand when I hear Miley Cyrus's "Party in the USA" or "The Climb"—which may be the best pop song of the past year.

PLAYBOY: It's a little surprising that you like Miley Cyrus so much.

MAYER: I took a friend and his kids to see Miley Cyrus in Vegas. After the show I said to her, "That was fantastic. Fantastic." I said, "Take \$100,000, put it in a shoe box and bury it in your backyard." I walked away thinking, That may be the strangest thing I've ever said. It just means put a little away. Have something nobody can ever take away from you.

PLAYBOY: Keep a secret fund in case you wake up at three A.M. thinking, Screw this, and you need to disappear?

MAYER: Exactly. That's what I do with my blackjack winnings—I keep them safe and sound.

PLAYBOY: Among the things we've read about you online is this: You're gay. Have you ever kissed a man?

MAYER: The only man I've kissed is Perez Hilton. It was New Year's Eve and I decided to go out and destroy myself. I was dating Jessica at the time, and I remember seeing Perez Hilton flitting about this club and acting as though he

had just invented homosexuality. All of a sudden I thought, I can outgay this guy right now. I grabbed him and gave him the dirtiest, tongue-iest kiss I have ever put on anybody—almost as if I hated fags. I don't think my mouth was even touching when I was tongue kissing him, that's how disgusting this kiss was. I'm a little ashamed. I think it lasted about half a minute. I really think it went on too long.

PLAYBOY: Perez describes you on his site as a womanizer, a word you don't like. Is it fair to say you have a love-hate relationship with him?

MAYER: I used to. Now I believe we're fully into fighting with breakaway chairs. I think he's pretty much inert at this point. Perez is to hating as Richard Simmons is to health and well-being. [laughs] You can print that. Perez is so authentically off his rocker he will not let you finish a sentence. I think he has some dark things in his past. I think he comes from a little bit of hurt, and I say that with an understated tone. At the end of the day I go to his site, but I don't see him as a threat. The impact of his tone is beginning to wane. I give a lot more credit to Harvey Levin at TMZ.

PLAYBOY: Would you kiss Harvey Levin?

MAYER: I would rim him, probably. I can't just repeat the kissing trick.

PLAYBOY: From following your Twitter feed we've learned about many of your interests. For instance, you love the Toto Washlet bidet.

MAYER: God, I want one.

PLAYBOY: But you already have platinum records and stardom.

MAYER: A platinum record is not going to wash your ass for you.

PLAYBOY: Good point. A Washlet isn't that expensive. Why don't you have one?

MAYER: It speaks to my level of transience. I'll get a Washlet when I finally find a shitter I'm going to be at for a good block of time in my life. [laughs] I'm really going to enjoy that. That's what is waiting for me on the other end of this crazy rocket ride—a warm seat and an adjustable bidet.

PLAYBOY: You said you were just exiting the phase of your life when relationships make you feel guilty. What's the next phase?

MAYER: People are lining up around the block right now to watch me play music tonight. If some kid called me a douche bag on his terrible blog, I don't really care. I'm letting myself out of my own prison. I'm not going to be a prisoner to a warden I can't see. From now on I'm just going to pretend that people really dig the shit out of me. I've been so afraid of rocking the boat that I'm not sailing anywhere. I've been trying to prove to people I'm not a douche bag by not dating, by keeping my name out of *Us Weekly*. That's fucked-up, man. I'm not dating. I'm not even fucking. So now I'm going to experiment with "fuck you." In 2010 my goal is to get more mentions in *Us Weekly* than ever.



"He went quietly, or so the guy who held the pillow over his face told me."



BLOWN AWAY

(continued from page 36)

to federal charges that he oversaw a sizable cocaine-distribution network. There was Alton Coles, a.k.a. Ace Capone, who before he was sentenced to life in prison in 2009 operated the Philly-based label Take Down Records. Coles enjoyed having his picture taken with the mayor and the police commissioner at antiviolence rallies while flooding the Philly streets with, by one estimate, two tons of cocaine and nearly half a ton of crack. Success, money and fame in the Philadelphia hip-hop world seemed inextricably linked to drugs and violence, and it was all glorified in song after song, video after video.

Like so many suburban kids of her generation, Thal found in the city exactly what was missing from the sedate streets where she lived: notoriety, excitement, glamour, danger. When she was 17 she lied about her age and got a job as a bartender. When her mother and older sister found she was working illegally in bars, they distributed fliers to bar owners with Thal's photograph, warning not to employ her, because she was underage. For a while a picture of Thal was posted in dozens of Philadelphia drinking establishments.

But Thal was undeterred. She got her big break in the late 1990s when she started throwing hip-hop parties at a place called Bluezette, a restaurant in Old City, which she quickly turned into a high-profile lounge that attracted professional football and basketball players. It also attracted some of the

city's top drug dealers, who were eager to show off their wealth.

"There was a point where Philly transitioned from big-room clubs to more intimate lounges," says DJ Excel, who met Thal almost a decade ago. "Once the whole bottle-service thing hit big, the big clubs died out. It wasn't about pulling large numbers of people anymore. It was about pulling in customers who were willing to spend hundreds of dollars on a bottle of champagne."

Soon Thal was a familiar presence in the clubs, the hyperactive white girl with the raspy voice and the gleaming teeth, carrying a Marlboro Red in one hand and a cell phone in the other, with a glass of Grey Goose (which she called water) waiting for her at the bar. She would direct the party, posing for pictures with celebrities and spouting her favorite catchphrases: "I got you, baby boy" (if she liked you) and "Fuck-out-of-here, you on my heels" (if she didn't).

Even as she was making good money promoting parties, the dark side of the scene began to draw her in. In 2000 she was arrested at Philadelphia International Airport returning from Amsterdam with 200 methamphetamine tablets in her suitcase. She didn't do jail time but was sentenced to home confinement. Once, in 2004, she was snatched off the street and held hostage over a drug debt. She was released unharmed after a few days and never told detectives who her captors were.

"She never used the word *kidnapped*. She would say 'I've been captured before,'" says

Jose Duran, who worked with Thal at the swank restaurant Ms. Tootsie's and who had planned to open a lounge with her. "She didn't like to talk about it. Obviously it scared her, so she tried to put it out of her mind."

It was around this time that Thal appears to have begun living a double life. Her name started to surface on police wiretaps during a number of major drug investigations, though she was never charged in any of the cases. "She was no small potatoes," one anonymous law-enforcement source told the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

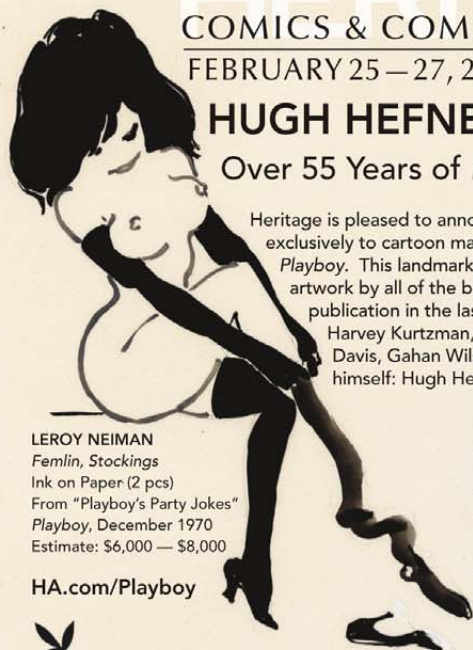
As one of Philadelphia's top party promoters, Thal was privy to powerful personalities in the entertainment industry and in the drug underworld. She stood at the nexus of a trickle-up economy, an intermingling of dirty and clean money. "You see those worlds intertwined all the time in Philadelphia, going back to the 1960s," says Sean Patrick Griffin, author of *Black Brothers, Inc.: The Violent Rise and Fall of Philadelphia's Black Mafia*, about the ruthless gang that ruled the local drug trade in the 1960s and 1970s. The figure from the past most reminiscent of Thal, says Griffin, is Major Benjamin Coxson, an outwardly respectable businessman and mayoral candidate who was even profiled in *Time* magazine before he was shot execution-style in 1973. Coxson was a financier for the Black Mafia and also rented out luxury apartments, some of which were used as stash houses, others as the site for sex- and drug-saturated after-hours parties for music and sporting celebrities.

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"It was only the real exclusive people who could get into these parties," says Griffin. "Very much like Rian Thal, Coxson brought together high society and low society. Thal was the hip-hop generation's version of Major Coxson."

Rather than being a disadvantage on the hip-hop scene, Thal's skin color proved to be a benefit. DJ Excel says, "Because she was a white girl from the suburbs, she was able to convince club owners who didn't want hip-hop because of its violent reputation to give it a try. Rian catered to a money scene, a crowd that knows how to act right. If a celebrity came into town and wanted to hear hip-hop, they'd go to one of Rian's parties because they knew they were safe."

Then, about a year ago, Thal made the decision—inexplicable to some of her pals—to work at Plush, a bare-bones nightclub overshadowed by the rusting hulk of an abandoned power station across the road. Plush, despite its name, is anything but. A gray brick building housed in a vacant garage, it attracts a hard-core street crowd, thugs such as one Will Hook.

While Rian Thal was growing up in the suburbs, Hook was making a name for himself on the streets of Strawberry Mansion. Amid the boarded-up buildings, broken sidewalks and trash-strewn alleyways, the familiar grim lunar landscape of decay and disinvestment hardly unique to Philadelphia, Hook carved out a multiblock mini-empire, police say, employing approximately 15 people to sling cocaine in the 1990s. Hook was a well-known figure in the neighborhood. Six-foot-three with a permanent scowl on his face, he strolled down the street wearing a bulletproof vest, always accompanied by a team of henchmen.

"He did so much dirt to people, he's scared to be by himself," one drug-world source told the *Philadelphia Daily News*.

During the 1990s Hook declared war on his onetime friend and mentor Jack "Fussy" Jarmon. Hook and Jarmon supposedly grew up together on the same block, but as often happens in the drug game the two had a falling-out over money. Jarmon was an infamous local cocaine dealer frequently seen driving a Bentley. He was married to local rapper Charli Baltimore, perhaps best known for her affair with the Notorious B.I.G. Hook coveted Jarmon's territory and lifestyle, and he is suspected of expanding his empire by pushing Jarmon out of the neighborhood altogether.

In 1998 police caught up with Hook, arresting him on drug trafficking charges. He was sentenced to a five-to-10-year stretch in prison. After he got out in 2006 he resumed his drug-dealing activities, but this time he was the target of a hostile takeover bid from a rival gang. In 2008, police say, Hook was shot in the Spring Garden section of Philadelphia but managed to survive the assassination attempt. Not so lucky was his alleged lieutenant, Brandon Edwards, who died in a hail of bullets a few months later as he left a nightclub.

Sometime around the night Thal was spotted at a party at Hook's home in June, Hook learned of a large shipment of cocaine that would soon arrive at her apartment at the Piazza at Schmidts. How would he know unless Thal told him? He began to plan a robbery. Though many of Thal's friends still maintain she had nothing to do with it, an associate of Hook's quotes him saying about the robbery, "Rian's cool. She's down with it." According to the source, Hook said they had to "break her off," meaning give Thal a cut of the proceeds from the crime. And Hook had an ace in the hole: a former girlfriend named Katoya Jones, 25, who had just moved onto the second floor of the same building where Thal lived, a \$150 million arts-entertainment-retail-apartment complex that had become a beacon of prosperity in the formerly run-down Northern Liberties neighborhood.

The Friday night before the robbery, Hook met with Jones. After she picked up Hook from a multilevel strip club called Delilah's Den, he recruited her as his inside woman. Her job was to let Hook into the building so he could steal the money and the coke.

Leaving the strip club around midnight, they drove to the Piazza at Schmidts, where Hook pointed out a tractor trailer that belonged to a man named Timothy Gilmore. Gilmore was a former Detroit firefighter who had joined the department in 1996 but retired in 2007 due to job-related injuries. He had moved to Canal Winchester, Ohio, where he set up a trucking business that police believe served as a front for drug running. Gilmore and his partner had arrived in town from Texas on Wednesday to buy drugs after dropping off a consignment of Budweiser in Maryland the previous day. Hook told Jones there was as much as half a million dollars in Thal's apartment just waiting to be snatched. While they never discussed the price for her cooperation, Jones expected \$50,000 to \$60,000 for her role.

Hook worried about the security cameras in the building, but Jones assured him, "The

cameras ain't about nothing as long as nobody gets killed." Jones went home that night, but a few hours later Hook phoned her and asked her to let him into the building. Jones gave him her keys and then left for work.

That afternoon Hook called again and said he had made a blunder. "He told me he went to the wrong apartment and was done with it," Jones said later.

But Hook appears to have changed his mind soon after, though he was unwilling to risk a second burglary attempt himself. When Jones was home from work, Hook called again and asked her to "let his man in."

The crowd of yuppie hipsters gathered outside Thal's building in the Piazza at Schmidts had no idea that a real-life crime drama was unfolding around them. Lurking at the edge of the Piazza, with its art galleries, outdoor cafés and chic boutiques, was a team of dim-witted but dangerous North Philly hoods.

The crew was on edge. A man working for Hook was driving around the neighborhood in a Pontiac and called to tell him he'd spotted a suspicious car. Hook suspected that a rival drug gang was moving in on his heist. Not only that, Gilmore was set to leave town for Detroit in the next couple of hours.

It was now or never. Around five in the afternoon, Katoya Jones let Donnell Murchison—a tall, lean, muscular man wearing tan trousers and a baseball cap pulled over his lugubrious face—into the building. Hook had briefly served time in the same prison as Murchison. He was a career criminal who had been released on parole in 2007 after serving 10 years of a 20-year sentence for the brutal armed robbery of a barbershop that netted him \$20, a gold chain and a gold ring. Hook promised Murchison \$100,000 and a kilo of coke if he helped with the robbery.

With Hook sitting in a white getaway van outside, Murchison jumped up on a radiator box in the lobby and waited. Not long after, two other men entered, one a thin guy in his mid-20s dressed in a red polo shirt and jeans, the other an overweight man in his 40s, 300 pounds or more, who wore a baggy white T-shirt that hung to his knees like a maternity gown. They walked toward the stairwell, eyes darting over their shoulders as they headed up to the seventh floor, where Thal lived. The trio made no effort to hide their faces from the building's security cameras, which were clearly visible.

The second and third men took position



in the stairwell, preparing for the ambush while Murchison strolled nonchalantly to the other end of the corridor to block off the only other line of escape. Meanwhile, a fourth member of the gang, a lookout, was positioned on the floor below, where he stared out the window, expecting the appearance of Thal at any moment.

Around 5:45 P.M. Thal, who was wearing a short khaki skirt with a glittery Ed Hardy-style tank top, strolled across the cobblestoned square escorted by a companion who towered over her petite frame. It was Timothy Gilmore, who had just driven the big rig into town from Texas. Presumably the lookout called on his cell phone to warn his associates on the floor above about Thal's impending arrival. As Thal and the trucker stepped out of the elevator and headed toward her apartment, the heavysset gunman and his partner silently glided through the stairwell door and rushed toward the couple with their guns drawn.

"Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me! I'll give you everything you want!" pleaded Thal as she fumbled for her keys while the fat guy held a nine-millimeter to her head.

But before she could open the apartment door, the trucker made a sudden move. He tried to fight back, grabbing for the younger guy's gun. When he failed he sprinted toward the elevators but was brought down by a fusillade of bullets.

In that moment of terror, with shots exploding everywhere, a bullet discharged from one of the hood's guns and drilled into the side of Thal's head, causing her to crumple to the floor, where she gurgled her last breath. The fat man lost his nerve and darted down the smoke-filled hallway, followed closely by the young guy in the red shirt. They both ran into a broom closet after mistaking it for the exit and then bumped into each other trying to get out.

Murchison was the cool one of the crew. He casually stepped over the trucker's body and, when he saw him moving, blasted one final bullet into his head. The other two had already left the building when he sauntered into the lobby as relaxed as could be, even politely waiting for a tenant carrying in an armchair to pass, before stepping into the getaway van parked outside.

As the van hurtled away from the crime scene, Hook was furious with the underlings in the backseat. Where was the coke? Where was the money?

Back on the seventh floor the scene resembled a horror movie. The door to Thal's apartment slowly creaked open and a giant of a man appeared, six feet six inches tall, maybe weighing 350 pounds. His name was Edward Emerson Jr. He was the trucker's petrified partner, who was inside the apartment and had taken refuge on a neighbor's balcony during the shooting. He gingerly walked around the two bodies in the hallway, took the elevator down and walked out of the building with a large duffel bag slung over his shoulder, stuffed with dirty clothing and, police suspect, drugs.

Later that night Hook and Katoya Jones met at the Champagne Restaurant in the Germantown neighborhood, where Hook explained what had gone wrong. "They were rookies," he said. "They panicked.

That's why you never tell niggas how much money is involved."

He added ominously, "I may have to get rid of some of the people involved."

The news of Rian Thal's death spread quickly through Philadelphia via text message, cell phone and Thal's Facebook and MySpace pages. The overwhelming emotions were disbelief and shock, not just at the method of Thal's dispatch but disbelief at what detectives found in her apartment: four kilograms of cocaine and more than \$100,000 in cash. As people gathered in front of the obligatory candlelit memorial hastily assembled outside Thal's building, now surrounded by cop cars, her friends tried to make sense of what had just happened: Where did all that cocaine and cash come from?

Drug killings happen all the time in Philadelphia, the nickname the city acquired a couple of years ago when it averaged one murder and four shootings a day. Most of them rate barely a mention in the local media, but this was a double stain on the city's reputation. It wasn't just that a white girl from the suburbs had been murdered in broad daylight by a gang of brazen black thugs. It was where and when it had taken place: less than two months after the much-ballyhooed opening of the Piazza at Schmidts, an important source of tax revenue for the city. It was bad timing for another reason, too. The reform-minded mayor, Michael Nutter, was about to announce a 30 percent decrease in murders over the past two years, a testament to the effectiveness of his crime-reduction program.

The arrests came in quick succession. Police apprehended the lead gunman, 33-year-old Donnell Murchison, after receiving a tip that he was holed up in a row house in northeast Philly. Murchison attempted to escape through a second-floor window, but U.S. marshals staking out the property gave chase and apprehended him—but not before one of the marshals was hit by a van and had to be hospitalized. With every cop in the city on the lookout, Will Hook turned himself in. On July 13, with his pastor and parents in tow, the hard-looking Hook arrived at police headquarters, where his lawyer proclaimed his innocence to the assembled press. Hook was taken into custody and charged straightaway with burglary, and a murder charge was added the next day.

To this day, one question remains unanswered: Who was Rian Thal? Was she the credulous suburban white girl who made a bad mistake and paid for it with her life? Or a natural-born hustler who leveraged her success as a party promoter into a second life as a significant player in the Philadelphia drug underworld?

"We were raised in the burbs, and everyone in the burbs was trustworthy," says publicist Jennifer George, who learned of her friend's death when local rapper Ms. Jade phoned her, crying hysterically. George insists that Thal had nothing to do with planning the robbery that got her killed. "Ms. Jade used to say to Rian, 'You're too Joe,' meaning too nice, too trusting. In the hood, they're raised not to trust anybody."

But others disputed this characterization



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of their friend. "Rian wasn't too Joe," says DJ Excel. "We're not talking about some stupid suburban white girl who got mixed up in some inner-city hip-hop shit. We're talking about a girl who knew fully 110 percent of what's going on, who she was involved with, what she was doing."

"You don't just wake up overnight and find four kilos of coke and \$100,000 in your apartment," says another source. "Rian was always a hustler, even in high school. She was as ruthless as the gangster dudes she hung around with. Rian led two separate lives. She had this ability to compartmentalize them."

The killer Murchison is the source connecting Thal to the planning of the robbery. To avoid the death penalty, he agreed to cooperate with authorities. According to Murchison, Hook told him Thal was in on the job, but police say they

have yet to corroborate those claims.

On Tuesday, June 30 Rian Thal was buried not in the city where she lived but in the suburbs where she grew up. It was a bright and sunny day. An overflowing crowd attended, some high school acquaintances, others colleagues from the club scene. The ritual was brief. At the end of the ceremony, the rabbi instructed the mourners not to return to the grave for seven days, in keeping with the Jewish tradition of shivah.

As the mourners left the burial ground with their heads bowed, a gaggle of reporters across the street shouted questions. "Did you know Rian? How'd you know her? What was she like?"

Nobody said a word.

Additional reporting by Lera Kuzema.



Shaun White

(continued from page 86)

you've ever met my dad, you'd see he's not that guy who tries to push something on you. He didn't say "You're gonna surf! Just sit in your room and think about what you did." Nah, it was cool. He was like, "Whatever. Screw it."

Q6

PLAYBOY: You were seven years old when Burton Snowboards sponsored you. Why did you gravitate toward snowboarding?

WHITE: I remember loving it. The first day on the board, I could kind of get down the mountain. I had been skateboarding at the time. I knew how to turn on skateboards, so it was the same motion as snowboarding. And it slowly just grew on me. The turning point was when I was seven and my parents took me to some events and I started winning contests. I thought, Wow, I am kind of decent at this.

Q7

PLAYBOY: You come from a blue-collar home, and taking a family of five snowboarding every weekend is expensive. How did you swing it?

WHITE: At first we'd take a really small van and drive up and stay at a Motel 6. We'd pile into a room and drop one mattress onto the floor and leave just the box spring for Dad. It was funny because I didn't know any better. I thought, That's cool—a slumber party. I was stoked. I had fun, and it made it possible for me to snowboard.

Q8

PLAYBOY: That's intense family togetherness. Was it ever too much?

WHITE: Man, I spent so much time with my family. We would make food in the motel and the alarm would go off. You were allowed to have only a certain number of people in the room, so those were the days of hiding in the bathroom while the manager came by to check. I'd hear my dad saying, "I'm sorry we set the alarm off. We're making burritos." Then we got savvy and bought a bigger van.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Was the van better than the Motel 6?

WHITE: It was cool. We would roll up to Canada and park the van at a spot and ride. It got weird only as we got a little older. My mom was so outgoing she'd go up to people and say, "Oh, Gabe, you don't have a room. Stay with us." I remember sleeping in this already-tight van next to so-and-so, and I was like, *Ahh*, this is so awkward.

Q10

PLAYBOY: How much was the first big check you won?

WHITE: Man, I was 15, and I won my second pro contest ever. I won \$50,000 and a car, and then they gave me cash for the car, so it was around \$65,000. It was all in cash. I understood. We're an open family. My mom said, "I make this much money. I'm a waitress." And my dad works for the city, digging ditches and stuff, and he makes this



Nut Libbra

"Amy and I are in a mixed marriage. I'm in favor of swapping and she's against it."

much money. It was simple math. I could add those up and figure it out.

Q11

PLAYBOY: You made money on the side doing stunt work for Disney.

WHITE: It's funny now because we were talking to Disney people about some stuff recently, and I told them, "I don't know if you guys know this, but there was a show called *The Jersey*, and I used to stunt double on the show for this one kid, Elliott." I did skateboard and BMX stuff and even Roll-erblading if they needed it. I mean, the kid couldn't even ride a bike.

Q12

PLAYBOY: You won silver and gold medals at the Winter X Games while you were still in high school. How did your classmates treat you?

WHITE: That's when it got weird. I was super-shy. I didn't know what to do in that scenario. I remember being at school and thinking, Wow, these kids are really digging what I'm doing. This is awesome, and I've got all these friends. Then I started to pick apart the friends I had, like, This guy keeps asking me for stuff; this is just getting weird. I realized I was over it.

Q13

PLAYBOY: You're sponsored by Tony Hawk's company, Birdhouse Skateboards. Has he ever given you any career advice?

WHITE: He's just a funny guy; he's a great person. He has never sat me down and said, "Hey, here's some great advice." It doesn't really work like that with him. He's just somebody who if you're savvy enough, you'll pick up stuff watching him. I was lucky to be introduced to the only guy I knew who could relate somewhat to what was going on with me. I remember hanging with him at airports, getting approached by tons of people and seeing how he dealt with it and how he was cool to every fan who came up. I'd see where he would draw the line and say, "Hey, give me a little space."

Q14

PLAYBOY: You missed making the 2002 Olympic snowboard team. How upset were you?

WHITE: Well, I was 15. I didn't really understand what the Olympics are all about. But everybody became aware of it in 2002 because the Americans swept the podium. All of a sudden it was this big deal. It was at that point I understood. I started seeing these guys everywhere, and I was getting phone calls about this guy being the best rider in the world. I was like, Yeah, I'm sure he's great at that, but he doesn't do everything. I pride myself as a snowboarder who can ride jumps, half-pipes, rails, whatever you put there. So I was more upset to go through five contests and not make the big party at the end, you know?

Q15

PLAYBOY: What was it like hanging in the Olympic village in 2006?

WHITE: It was tense. I was there when it was in the heat of things, because we were the first ones to go. I was just off the plane from Italy. I was dirty, my hair was huge [laughs], and I was nonchalant and fun. The other athletes were very high-strung, as they should have been; they had to do some wild stuff. I didn't get to experience the whole deal, though. I know there was a disco downstairs, but I never made my way there.

Q16

PLAYBOY: Have you ever smoked pot with Michael Phelps?

WHITE: With Phelps? Old Smoke on the Water? No. To be honest, I've never been into going there. My friends, I'll admit, most of them do. Because I'm not that into it, it puts me in a funny position with those guys. And now, because it's Olympics time and everybody's getting tested for drugs, you see them just sweating bullets, man. I'm like, Ah, whatever.

Q17

PLAYBOY: How hard do you take defeat?

WHITE: I'm the worst. It's hard to describe. I could win the Olympics and later that night you could be winning at cards, and I would be so upset. It takes me to a different place, because I know I'm better at cards than you

are, and I know I can do it. It's what's gotten me so far. It's the worst and best thing about me. It's crazy because I apply it to every scenario, which is not the best way to do things.

Q18

PLAYBOY: That's a tough way to live.

WHITE: Oh yeah. I started playing guitar when I was about 17, and I was hooked. I played three hours a day, mostly because I wanted to be better than my neighbor. I was a madman. That's why I describe guitar as my therapy, because you can't win at guitar.

Q19

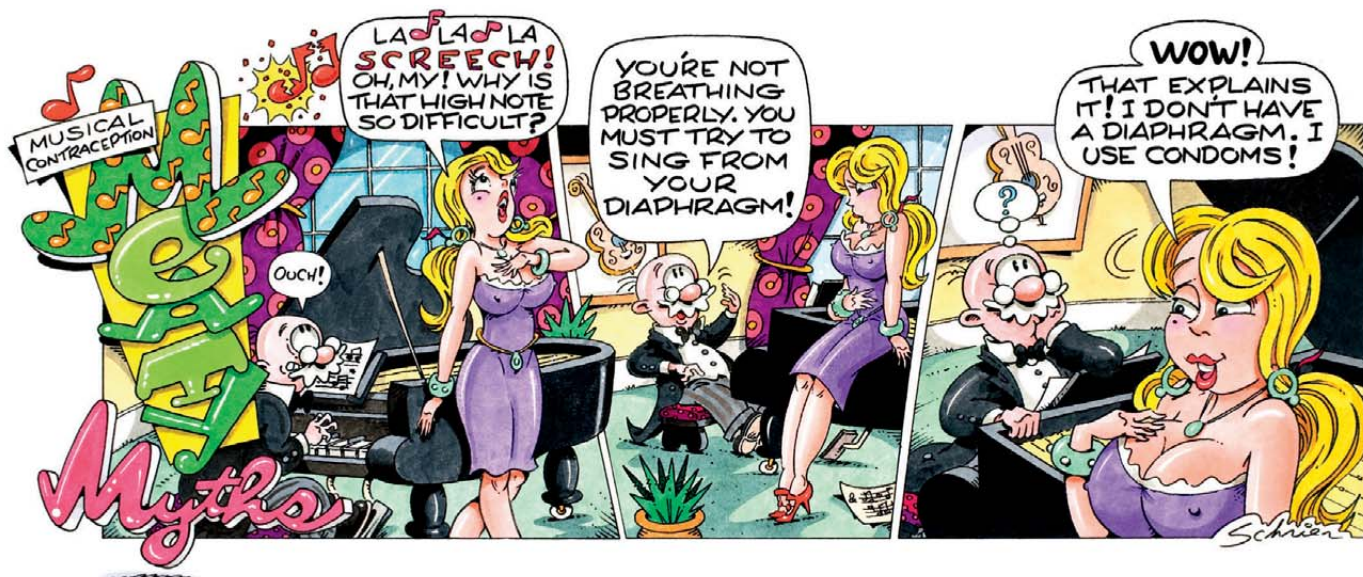
PLAYBOY: Does that make it tough during the Olympics, when you're part of a team?

WHITE: No, because you're still there to do what you're gonna do, and you still have your own voice within your sport. You're still the same person you were; you're just competing on a different scale and for something that's bigger than you. At the time I didn't understand that. I learned all that afterward. I had people at airports break into applause, which is such a humbling experience. It was like something out of a movie, dude. I was 19, and all of LAX had started clapping. It was wild, man.

Q20

PLAYBOY: How much pressure does that put on you to perform this time?

WHITE: Since I was 13 or so, I can't remember showing up to an event where I *wasn't* the guy to beat. I've always been that guy. Not that I was the best guy, but I was always the one who was counted on to perform at a certain level. And I like it, man. I think it's great. I can sit back and go, Wow, if everybody wants to talk to me about the Olympics, that means they think I have a really good shot at doing well. That's an amazing feeling—that all these people have my back, in a way. To a certain extent they believe in me. I use that. I had a friend who put money on me last time around. I was like [pumps fist], Yeah! [laughs]



MULTI-ORGASMIC

(continued from page 84)

many acupuncturists are listed in your area. Why wouldn't we continue with Taoist sexual philosophy as well?

I have. As a woman who has placed great emphasis on the importance of sex—studying it, having lots of it, figuring out how to make it better—I can say a well-fucked woman is a thing of beauty. I can always tell a woman who's well fucked. She is relaxed, confident and sensually ripe. For a man, the rewards will come back tenfold.

Taoists theorize that women have three types of orgasms: clitoral, G-spot and cervical. They liken them to three gates that need to be entered in progression to fully bring a woman to an ecstatic state of arousal. What are these orgasms all about, and how does a woman get there?

FIRST GATE: THE CLITORIS

Taoists consider the clitoris to be the meet-and-greet zone. They do not consider the clitoral orgasm the final destination but rather a tool in the box of pleasure inducers to excite a woman and prepare her for more profound bliss. The clitoral orgasm is the easiest for women to have and, for many, the only kind they know. Freud was on the same page as the Taoists with his belief that the clitoral orgasm is the more superficial orgasm and the good stuff takes place inside the vagina. The clitoris is also the reflexology point for the pineal and

pituitary glands, which initialize the production of endorphins.

"Most people think orgasm occurs between the hips, but it's actually between the ears," says Minke de Vos, a Vancouver-based senior Universal Tao instructor. "It starts in the glands of bliss—inside the brain. That triggers the whole thing."

The best way to stimulate the clitoris is to hold back its hooded covering, then start with rhythmic circular strokes, using a moistened fingertip or tongue. My lover often inserts a finger just at the mouth of my pussy and holds it there, poised, while he's licking me. Poised is a good place to be; you want to make her wait. It's far better to delay any penetration until a woman is begging for it, and even then it's good to wait a little more. The ejaculate she emits with her clitoral orgasm further lubricates the vagina, inviting her lover inside.

SECOND GATE: THE G-SPOT

The G-spot orgasm is a more aggressive animal, responding to strength and generally two strong and splayed fingers. Touch is all about confidence, G-spot touch even more so. A G-spot needs to feel your absolute, unbending and steady intention. For precision, fingers are optimal. All women vary, but my G-spot lives about an inch inside me, so it can be massaged with a two-fingered come-hither motion.

To differentiate from a physiological perspective, the nerve that goes to the clitoris, the pudendal nerve, is more localized and

external. The pelvic nerve in the vagina is situated deeper and spread out, creating a more generalized, internal sensation. The G-spot orgasm tends to be more elusive than the clitoral for two reasons: (1) It takes skill to find the spot and stroke it masterfully enough to make it swell and respond. (2) Since it's internal it needs more than just a talented hand. As a progressively deeper release, it has more of an emotional component to it.

"In my experience, very few women have deep pelvic or multiple orgasms, and the reason is they don't understand their sexual pleasure zones and are having trouble with trust and surrender," says Dr. Rachel Carlton Abrams, co-author of *The Multi-Orgasmic Couple*. "Particularly with the vaginal and cervical spots, surrender is absolutely critical." If she's going to surrender and fall, she needs someone to be able to catch her.

A man's confidence does this. If my lover is stimulating my G-spot with everything he's got and I sense he's prepared for the intensity of what might come out of me—he screams, tears or fluid—then I can let go. If I don't feel like he can take it, I'll have a much harder time getting there.

Another reason some women don't have these orgasms is because of weak pelvic muscles. The courtesans of the Yellow Emperor's court in ancient China practiced vaginal weight lifting to tone the internal muscles. A woman would insert a jade egg into her vagina and attach weights to the end of it. Once toned, she could exert such control over her lover's penis that she was

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not only able to prevent him from reaching orgasm too soon, but she could allow him to orgasm without ejaculating. (Some women still practice this form of weight lifting. Consider Tatiana Kozhevnikova from Novosibirsk, Russia, who won *The Guinness Book of World Records* title for strongest vagina this past July. Kozhevnikova set her second world record by lifting 31 pounds. With her vagina.)

G-spot orgasms further open the woman and initiate the release of yet another fluid. What follows? The golden zone, the mysterious and coveted cervical orgasm.

THIRD GATE: THE CERVIX

If the clitoral orgasm is more physical and the G-spot orgasm more emotional, then the cervical orgasm is the deepest and most transcendent of them all. Taoists consider it to be the ultimate peak of pleasure. In Taoist thinking, the cervix is the reflexology point for the heart. Stimulating it creates intense emotional release.

Some scientists claim this elusive orgasm does not exist. Some of the most pleasurable and profound experiences, such as love or spiritual ecstasy, are hard to document in a lab. Does this mean they don't exist? As a woman who has had some phenomenal cervical orgasms that eclipse all others, I'm saying they do.

When I try to describe what a cervical orgasm is like, I tell people it's like being on ecstasy. It's a whole-body shimmer, a high that spreads out so everything feels delicious and I radiate for days afterward. Every touch, every word, every interaction becomes exquisite. I recall once being at a dinner party with my man. Being in public while knowing we both wanted it—that alone was passionate foreplay. The moment we got in the door to his place, he propelled me into his room and pushed me onto his bed. I was on my stomach, wriggling out of my jeans, propping my ass in the air. He fucked me vigorously and relentlessly until I was screaming, wailing and crying, all the while continuing to let go. For two days afterward I was still shaking.

Some men may not be able to reach a woman's cervix. Positioning helps—try taking her from behind while she's on her knees. Women usually need some warming up before they can accept deep, intense cervical penetration. If she's resisting or tensing up, ease up until she opens more. You can usually tell when you've hit the cervix because a woman's noises will change. They'll become more guttural and raw, uncontrolled.

The more you practice, the easier it is for her to return to these places in her mind. "The human body is capable of almost anything," says Abrams. "Once you've had that sensation, you've activated it in your neuro-cognitive system. Now your body knows how to go to that experience, and you can access it through your imagination." The Taoist master Mantak Chia once said he could make love to his wife while she sat on the other side of the room.

There you go: eargasms, orgasms and more-gasms. Anytime, anywhere.



BUKOWSKI

(continued from page 46)

against anyone who chose to take him too seriously, and yet he was very serious and lucid about his talent.

Even in his drinking there was a form of wisdom that kept his writing fresh and allowed him to continue to sidestep his own destruction. Slowing down the drinking, for example, was done in a graceful way. I saw him in East Hollywood as he was starting to come down, at the age of 58, from hard liquor to white wine—albeit wine in very large quantities. During our early days working on the film *Barfly*, 12 empty bottles of cheap German white were often lying on the ground by three A.M. A year later, he never drank before sunset. Later still, he switched to red wine, and then, much later, drank only one bottle every other day.

He went back to hard liquor on rare evenings—once at a fancy dinner party for a music industry event at the Beverly

Hills Hotel. At a table behind us sat Arnold Schwarzenegger, whom Hank tried to provoke into a fight. "If you're really so tough," he said to him, "come outside and show us." In a panic, Schwarzenegger's press agents were discreetly signaling Arnold not to respond. Later, Hank stole a carving knife from the kitchen and "went after the rich" with it, spitting on arriving Rolls-Royces.

For his chemotherapy, of course, he had to stop drinking altogether, even the reduced form. First, though, the doctors checked his liver to see if it could withstand the chemo. The test revealed he had the liver of a young man. He was a force of nature. He used a short remission to finish his last novel, *Pulp*, and in the midst of his pain, kept on laughing until the end about the human comedy he was sharply observing in the hospital around him.

New York, 11/5/2009



"I would never do a nude scene unless it was done tastefully and was an integral part of the party."

BRIAN JONES

(continued from page 51)

moment that alters the history of rock, setting the stage for the creation of the band that becomes the Rolling Stones. Or as they were known back then, Brian Jones and the Rollin' Stones.

Winter 1962–1963. Because they are broke and have no other choice, Brian, Keith and Mick are forced to live together in an awful flat on Edith Grove in World's End, a disreputable working-class neighborhood in London. Surrounded by the stink of rot and mildew, with unwashed dishes piled in the sink and dirty laundry everywhere, Brian and Keith play together for hours in their freezing-cold flat, trying to get their guitars to blend as one as only the Everly Brothers have ever done before.

Brian and Keith have already been told they are losers headed directly for skid row. Living like punks long before the movement comes into existence, they regularly steal food to survive. Mick and Keith soon realize Brian is a musical genius who can play any instrument. One night Keith comes back to the flat to discover Brian blowing the blues on a mouth harp. Somehow he has taught himself how to do this in a single day. But even to Keith, Brian can sometimes seem distinctly weird. The life Brian has led to this point makes everything Mick and Keith have done appear tame by comparison.

After Brian's younger sister died of leukemia at the age of two, Brian's father, an aeronautical engineer, and his mother, a piano teacher, told him his sister had been sent away for being naughty. Brian, a strange child who once dyed their house cat blue with food coloring, suffered from the croup when he was four and later developed a severe case of asthma. Even as a child he had the sense he would never live to see 30.

When Brian was six years old, he began taking piano lessons from his mother. Unlike Mick and Keith, he learned to read music and was playing Bach and Chopin on piano before switching to the clarinet and alto sax as a teenager. By the time Brian met Mick and Keith, he had already fathered at least one illegitimate child (and would father as many as five more before his death) and had been disowned by his parents.

"Brian was so far ahead of them," singer Marianne Faithfull would later note. "Mick and Keith were still schoolboys. Brian was the one who did the hustling, getting people together and believing it, knowing it, unlike Mick, who couldn't make up his mind whether he wanted to be an accountant. Brian was the one saying, 'Look, it's going to happen!'"

At Edith Grove, Brian comes up with the name of the band. Down to pennies, with the water and gas in the flat cut off, Brian calls *Jazz News* to place an advertisement for the band's first show. Asked for the name of his group, a clueless Brian sees a Muddy Waters album lying nearby with a track on

it entitled "Rollin' Stone" and blurts out, "The Rollin' Stones."

With Charlie Watts (formerly with Blues Incorporated) on drums, Bill Wyman on bass and Ian Stewart playing barrelhouse piano, the Rollin' Stones begin appearing regularly at the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond. Playing songs by Muddy Waters and Chuck Berry, as well as 20-minute versions of "Doing the Crawdaddy" and "Pretty Thing" by Bo Diddley, the Stones mesmerize the art-student crowd. Soon 400 people stand in line to see the hottest new band in London.

1963–1964. In May, Brian signs a disastrous three-year management and recording deal with Eric Easton and Andrew Oldham—whom Keith will later call "a sharp fucker and a right little gangster"—giving them 25 percent of all the money the group will earn. At a nearby tea shop where Mick and Keith are waiting, Brian delivers the news, neglecting to tell them that as the leader of the band he has negotiated an extra five pounds a week for himself. He also informs Ian Stewart that he is no longer an official member of the band but can still play with them onstage if he continues driving them to gigs.

When the Stones go into the studio to record for the first time, Brian tells the engineer exactly what he wants and how everything should sound. The Stones cut "Come On" by Chuck Berry with "I Want to Be Loved" by Muddy Waters on the B-side. The single stays on the charts for four months.

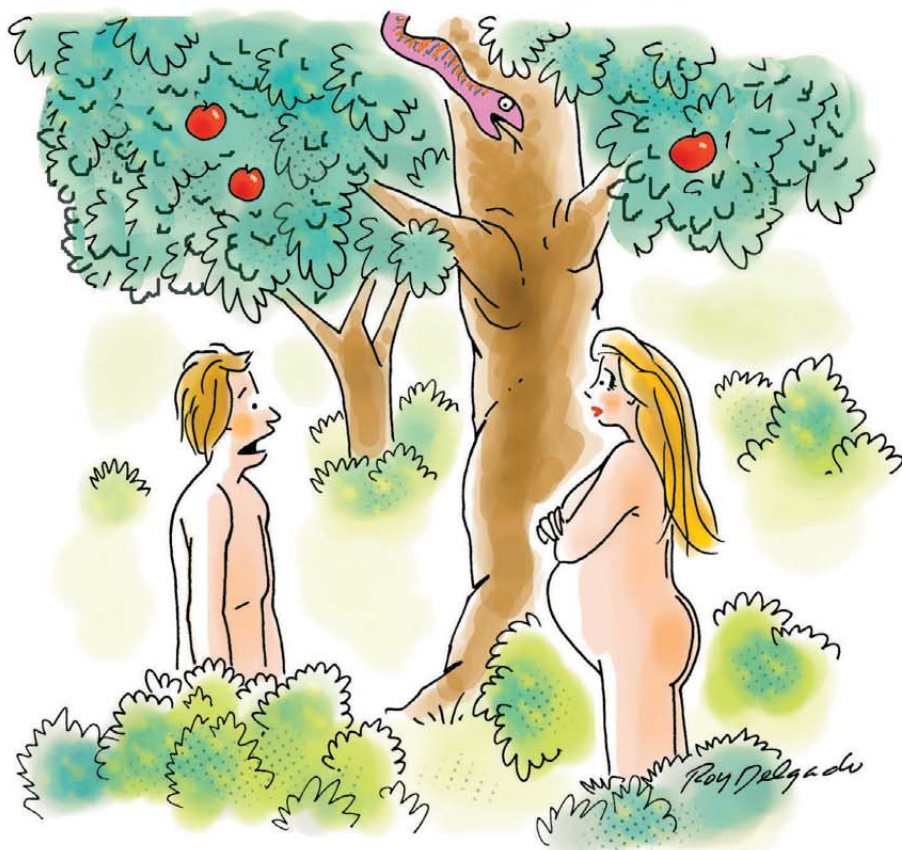
Working nonstop, the Stones begin playing church halls all over England. During the fall of 1963 they spend six weeks on the road with Little Richard, Bo Diddley and the Everly Brothers. Demonstrating an attitude Johnny Rotten and Pete Doherty will later do their best to emulate, Brian picks fights with drunken male fans. When the Stones learn Brian is being paid five pounds more a week, Keith goes mad.

"We don't need a bloody leader," he tells Brian. "We need to take that extra five quid a week and use it to fix our bloody amps, Brian, and you're a cunt for taking the money and never telling us about it." By then, the struggle for power within the band is already in full sway.

As the Stones begin their rise to bad-boy stardom in England as the dark counterpart to the cute and cuddly Beatles, Mick and Keith begin writing together and come up with one hit song after another. No matter how hard Brian tries, he cannot do the same. As Keith will later say, "Brian would become uptight about that because he couldn't write. He couldn't even ask us if he could come and try to write something with us."

To increase his hold over the band, Andrew Oldham pushes Keith to replace Brian as Mick's backup singer. In the studio, Oldham sometimes turns off Brian's microphone when the Stones are recording and then fades Brian's instrument during playback. Despite it all, Brian remains a consummate musician. "When he wanted to play," Keith will later say, "he could play his ass off, that cat." Getting him to do so, however, becomes more and more difficult with each passing day.

In May 1964, Brian goes to see a friend in the English countryside. Complaining



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that no one in the band listens to him anymore, he says, "I'm fed up—this will show them." Grabbing a knife, he slashes his wrist. The cut is just a scratch, but Brian then throws himself out a window in a futile attempt to commit suicide only to find himself lying in the bushes.

By 1966, Brian is mixing uppers and downers while also smoking dope, drinking a bottle and a half of whiskey a day and doing amyl nitrite poppers. Not surprisingly, he begins to suffer serious bouts of paranoia. Unable to write new material as Mick and Keith do after shows when the band is

on the road, Brian begins hanging out with people the other Stones do not know. While jamming with Bob Dylan in New York, Brian plays mouth harp until his lips bleed. Dylan asks him to join his band and then entitles "Like a Rolling Stone" for him.

Creating a look Mick and Keith as well as Jimi Hendrix will later appropriate, Brian dresses as no one in rock has ever done before. Wearing a Day-Glo sequined collar, a bracelet made of watermelon seeds and lavender suede boots, he steps from his New York hotel room early one morning in 1967 with blood still oozing through his

hair from where a girlfriend cracked open his head with a bottle the night before. Explaining the wound, Brian says, "Well, what do you expect from a pop star?"

"Brian got very fragile...his personality and physically," Keith Richards will later say. "I think all that touring did a lot to break him. We worked our asses off from 1963 to 1966, right through those years, nonstop.... For a start, people were always laying stuff on him because he was a Stone. And he'd try it. He'd take anything. Any other sort of trip, too; head trips. He never had time to work it out 'cause we were on the road all the time, always on the plane the next day."

After a show in Munich one night, Brian meets the woman who will change not only his life but the future of the Rolling Stones as well.



September 14, 1965. A killer queen with a face and body that will soon land her roles on the big screen, Anita Pallenberg is 21 when she meets Brian. Born in Rome, she is fluent in four languages and has studied art. As Christopher Gibbs, the well-known London antiques dealer who becomes one of Brian and Anita's closest friends, will later say of her, "I think in a more gracious age Anita would have been called a witch." Brian spends his first night with Anita in tears, complaining about how Mick and Keith are treating him.

In London, Brian and Anita become the first omnisexual stoned-out power couple in the history of rock, the archetype for Sid and Nancy, Kurt and Courtney, and Pete Doherty and Kate Moss. Long before anyone has ever heard of gender-bending, Brian and Anita regularly wear each other's clothes and jewelry in public. Their private life is just as strange. Dressing Brian up as French folksinger Françoise Hardy, Anita pretends she is Brian and then seduces him. Blond and beautiful mirror images of each other, they are both accustomed to doing just as they please without having to face the consequences. In London, they can now be seen driving about in Brian's brand-new Rolls-Royce with the license plate DD 666 ("Devil's Disciple" followed by the mark of the beast from the Book of Revelations).

During the summer of 1966, when LSD becomes the drug of choice in England for those with enough time and money to expand their consciousness, Brian and Anita take acid together for the first time in their funky flat on Courtfield Road behind the Gloucester Park tube. With scarves draped over the lamps and the smell of hash smoke always in the air, the flat soon becomes the place to be for the hippest people in London—Christopher Gibbs, art dealer Robert Fraser, Marianne Faithfull, Guinness heir Tara Browne and his model girlfriend Suki Potier among them.

Once Keith sees what Brian and Anita are into, he becomes a regular on the scene and is soon living in the flat as well, crashing on the couch as Brian and Anita loudly make love in their bedroom upstairs. Although Keith is always cool when tripping, Brian becomes so paranoid on acid that he curls up in a corner of the living room while everyone else is laughing uproariously. Stoned on

"Call me hard-hearted if you will, Watson—but I can't run the risk of the country being terrorized by Baskerville puppies...."

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LSD, he hears voices in the plumbing. On the wall just above the pillows on his bed, he begins to paint a headstone. Although Brian never puts his name on it, everyone knows the stone is his.

Fascinated by the relationship of the Elizabethan lute to Delta blues, Brian sits on a stool in the studio one night in a floppy white hat with scarves wrapped round it, playing a melody he has come up with on the recorder. When Keith asks him to play it again, Brian does so perfectly. He then proudly explains it is a cross between a work by the 16th century composer John Dowland and a Skip James blues. More than anything in the world, Brian wants Keith to tell him how much he likes the melody. Busy working out the tune on piano so he and Mick can write lyrics for it, Keith never gives Brian the approval he so desperately craves. "Ruby Tuesday" becomes one of the most haunting songs the Stones ever record.

Winter 1967. Suffering from asthma and pneumonia, Brian observes his 25th birthday in a hospital in France as Keith and Anita, who have long been attracted to each other, spend their first night together. When Brian leaves the hospital, he sets off with Anita and Marianne Faithfull for Morocco. As soon as they board the plane, they all drop acid.

Mick soon joins the party at the fashionable El Minzah Hotel in Tangier. Brian, who now knows that Keith and Anita have been together, picks up a pair of tattooed Berber whores in the street, brings them back to his

hotel room and insists Anita have sex with them. When she refuses, Brian goes berserk. Without telling Brian, everyone else who has come to Morocco with him checks out of the hotel the next day, leaving him behind to pay the bill. Totally distraught, he flies home alone in bedraggled lace and tattered velvet.

As Keith will later say, "Just because a chick leaves somebody to go with somebody else is no reason to feel guilty. It could have been someone 12,000 miles away, but it happened to be the guy who stood on the other side of Mick onstage. And that was that."

Completely loaded one night, Brian returns to the flat on Courtfield Road, which he now shares with two beautiful lesbians whom he hates, and drops acid. Stoned out of his mind and weeping, he cuts up the tapes of the music he composed. After waking the next morning surrounded by yards and yards of tangled tape, he does some cocaine with his coffee and then slams his Rolls-Royce into a brick wall.

"They took my music," he says of Mick and Keith. "They took my band, and now they've taken my love." And then, when Brian is at his weakest, the law comes in to finish him off.

May 1967. Twelve detectives raid Brian's flat on Courtfield Road and find enough hash for seven to 10 joints, as well as some cocaine. By the time Brian is led into the Kensington police station, television cameras are already there to record his arrest. After being remanded on bail, Brian sends his parents a telegram that reads, "Please

don't worry. Don't jump to nasty conclusions, and don't judge me too harshly. All my love, Brian."

Instructed by his solicitors not to talk to the other Rolling Stones, Brian is terrified he will be sent to jail. Impulsively, he flies to the Monterey Pop Festival. Tripping, he walks onstage to introduce a new sensation named Jimi Hendrix to the crowd as "the most exciting guitarist I've ever heard." This is what Mick and Keith once said of Brian.

Freaked out by the prospect of prison, Brian is admitted to the Priory Clinic for psychiatric analysis. In court during Brian's trial, his psychiatrist testifies that Brian is "a very sick man" and a prison sentence "would be completely disastrous to his health and [would] mean a complete collapse." The psychiatrist adds that if Brian is sent to jail, "there might be an attempt to injure himself."

Sentenced to nine months behind bars, Brian is driven in a prison van past the Rolls-Royce in which he came to court five hours earlier. After he is set free on bail, his sentence is set aside and he is placed on three-year probation on the condition he continue to receive psychiatric treatment.

After the Stones finish the last track on *Beggars Banquet* on May 20, 1968, an album on which Brian plays slide guitar, mello-tron, sitar, tamboura and harmonica, he takes a sleeping pill and goes to bed only to be awoken in the morning by four policemen. In what appears to have been a setup, the police find a ball of blue wool containing a brown substance in Brian's bedside drawer. Despite his claim that the cops planted the stuff on him, Brian is again found guilty. After being told he will receive only a fine for the offense on condition he not violate his probation again, he sobs uncontrollably in his car.

"They really roughed him up, man," Keith will later say. "He wasn't a cat who could stand that kind of shit, and they really went for him like when hound dogs smell blood. 'There's the one that'll break if we keep on.' And they busted him and busted him...like they did to Lenny Bruce."

Spring 1969. After another stay at the psychiatric clinic, Brian invites Mick and Marianne Faithfull to dinner at Keith's country home. Clad in a floor-length gold brocade caftan, Brian greets them with a bottle of Guinness in one hand and tells them he is now off drugs and drinking again, just like the old days. After Keith's chauffeur puts an elaborate meal on the table, Mick announces he cannot possibly eat such food and goes out with Marianne to a restaurant. When they return a few hours later, Brian is in a rage.

Picking up a steak knife, he tells Mick, "I'm going to kill you. You don't deserve to live!" Brian lunges at Mick, but he sidesteps the blow. Flailing about, they begin hitting each other. Screaming that he does not want to live on the same earth as Mick, Brian runs out of the house and throws himself into a moat believed to be 20 feet deep. As Brian's



head sinks, Mick leaps into the water to save him only to discover the moat is just four feet deep and Brian has been bending his knees so he can pretend to be drowning.

Some months later at a recording session for *Let It Bleed*, Brian says he is thinking of leaving the band. Ian Stewart recommends that Mick and Keith bring in ex-Bluesbreakers guitarist Mick Taylor. On June 1, 1969, Taylor plays on "Honky Tonk Women." The Stones, who by now have long since cut loose Andrew Oldham and signed an even more disastrous management deal with Allen Klein, need money and are planning to tour America again. After mixing "Honky Tonk Women" in the studio a week later, Mick and Keith go with Charlie Watts to visit Brian at Cotchford Farm in Sussex. Brian, who always loved the Winnie

the Pooh books as a boy, has bought the two-chimney brick-mansion estate in which A.A. Milne set the world of Pooh.

When Mick, Keith and Charlie arrive, Brian is sitting by himself at the kitchen table. After Brian tells them he knows he cannot get a visa to join them to tour America because of his drug busts, he says, "I'm out. I was dealt out a long time ago. I haven't been a Stone for years. I don't feel part of it anymore." Promising Brian they will come see him in a couple of weeks, they all exchange embarrassed handshakes and leave. Returning to the dark kitchen, Brian sits down at the table and begins to cry.

In the statement he issues to the press, Brian says, "I no longer see eye to eye with the others over the discs we are cutting. We no longer communicate musically. The Stones' music is not to my taste anymore.... The only solution was to go our separate ways, but we shall always remain friends. I love those fellows."

July 1969. On the last day of his life, Brian joins his Swedish girlfriend, Anna Wohlin, a builder named Frank Thorogood, who has been given the unenviable job of looking after Brian, and a nurse named Janet Lawson for dinner at Cotchford Farm. Brian then takes a powerful sleeping pill and goes to bed. He later gets up, has a few drinks and decides to go for a swim in the heated pool. Ten minutes later, Thorogood goes inside, leaving Brian alone.

When Lawson comes outside, she sees

Brian lying motionless at the bottom of the pool. Diving into the water, Thorogood and Wohlin pull Brian out. Lawson pumps some water out of his mouth while massaging his heart. Someone phones for an ambulance. A local doctor gives Brian artificial respiration for half an hour until he is pronounced dead.

Although Wohlin never testifies at the inquest and the postmortem report finds no illegal drugs in Brian's body, the coroner delivers a verdict of "death by misadventure." Many years later, Lawson says she saw Thorogood jump into the pool and "do something to Brian." She is convinced Thorogood killed him. After speaking to all the witnesses, the first policeman on the scene concludes Brian died as a result of a fight with the builder. The true cause

they were going to make it and they did make it—instead of appreciating what he did, they resented it. And that's when Brian's doom really started. They had a vendetta, Mick and Keith, a real vendetta.... Brian's dying was something of a relief; it solved a terrible predicament for them."

July 10, 1969. In gently falling rain, a 14-car cortege arrives for the funeral service at the church in Cheltenham where Brian once served as an altar boy. His bronze casket is carried into the church through an eight-foot-tall arrangement of red and yellow roses sent by the Stones. The priest conducting the service quotes the telegram Brian sent his parents in which he said, "Please don't judge me too harshly." The priest

then criticizes Brian, the Rolling Stones and all those who follow them for having "little patience with authority, convention and tradition."

The scripture reading that day is the story of the prodigal son. This is also the name of a track on *Beggars Banquet* on which Brian plays mouth harp. On the inside cover of the album is the photo of him that was used onstage at Hyde Park. Mick does not attend the service because he is starring as the outlaw Ned Kelly in a movie being shot in Australia. For reasons known only to them, Keith and Anita do not attend the service either.

In the final irony of Brian's life, a policeman salutes as his hearse goes through the cemetery gates. Charlie Watts, whom Brian once ordered to grow his hair long because he looked too respectable, laughs

out loud at the absurdity of it all. "The policeman saluted," Charlie says. "Brian's curlin' up somewhere, lookin' on and lovin' it."

Beneath the only stone that was always undeniably his, Brian Jones still lies today. Check him out playing harmonica on "Goin' Home," dulcimer on "Lady Jane," marimbass on "Under My Thumb," recorder on "Ruby Tuesday," sitar on "Paint It Black" and "Street Fighting Man," mellotron on "Two Thousand Light Years From Home" and "We Love You," and slide guitar on "Little Red Rooster" and "No Expectations." Although no one ever really understood Brian Jones, himself least of all, there is one thing about him that can be said for certain. That cat, man, he could play his ass off.

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of his death remains a subject of debate to this day.

After Brian's death becomes headline news all over the world, Mick says, "I just say my prayers for him. I hope he becomes blessed. I hope he is finding peace; I really want him to. I wasn't ever really close to him." Concerning the Rolling Stones' upcoming free concert in Hyde Park in which Mick Taylor will debut with the band, Mick adds, "We will do the concert—for Brian. We have thought about it an awful lot and feel that Brian would have wanted it to go on. He was music. I understand how many people will feel—but now we are doing it because of him."

In terms of how Mick and Keith treated Brian, Marianne Faithfull will later write, "When they found out he was right—that





PLAYMATE NEWS



KICKS, FLICKS AND OUR CHICKS BOLSTER BLACKBELT TV

PMOY 2007 Sara Jean Underwood (left) and Miss June 2007 Brittany Binger are strapping on the gloves for Black-Belt TV. Don't worry; no Playmates were harmed in the process. Rather, the 24-hour all-martial-arts premium cable network employs Sockin' Sara and Box'in Brittany as hosts. "They call us Fight Jocks," Brittany says. Think of these knockouts as VJs, only with less music and more punching.



WANT TO WIN? IT HELPS TO BE WELL STACKED

All In magazine is trying to turn Jayde Nicole, our 2008 PMOY, into a card shark. Its project is to spend the year training Jayde for the 2010 World Series of Poker. She has picked up cards quickly, already winning a 900-person online tournament and a live game with 250 entrants. "Playing good poker allows you to be in a position to get lucky," says Jayde. Before, we relished staring at Jayde across the table, but now we'll have to rethink the issue.



FLASHBACK



Ten years ago this month we fell for a girl with three names: **Nicole Marie Lenz**. This intoxicating concoction of Dutch, German, Swedish and Italian DNA was raised in Ohio, but as soon as her Centerfold hit she went international. Since then she's appeared in ad campaigns for Skyy vodka, Bacardi and Paul Mitchell, music videos for Elton John and Duran Duran and movies such as *Confidence* and the Oscar-buzzed *My Sister's Keeper*.

Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates? You can check out the Club at club.playboy.com, access the mobile-optimized site from your phone or go to playboy.com/pmblog.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Miss December 2001 **Shanna Moakler** has returned to the Miss USA Organization as its co-director.

Miss November 1980 **Jeana Tomasino** (now Keough) is off *The Real Housewives of Orange County* but is working on a book.

PMOY 2009 **Ida Ljungqvist** helped launch the new Playboy Girls of Canada slot machine at the Global Gaming Expo.

Miss July 2008

Laura Croft

has some good advice to keep

in mind while watching March Madness: "I hate it when guys watch sports and either talk or yell at

the TV, especially in public," she says. "Sorry, sir, they can't hear you and probably don't care."



MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY ZACH SELWYN

—host, *Catch It Keep It and Fanarchy*

"My favorite Playmate hands down is Miss March 1981 **Kymberly Herrin** because her Centerfold is the hottest picture I've ever seen. She went on to become the girl in the ZZ Top 'Legs' video, which defined my youth. When you look at this photo, you just want to take her in that red Ferrari going 120 miles an hour down to the beach while listening to an Eagles eight track with an ice chest full of dry white wine and beer in the backseat."



INTERIORITY COMPLEX

Vogue called her the "arbiter of all things impossibly chic." Now, in her newest book, *Hue*, Miss September 1994 Kelly Gallagher (now Wearstler) invites you into her home to become inspired. In a time when monochromatics rule the design world, Kelly shows a flair for the resplendent, bringing rooms to life with



luxurious colors. In addition to presenting her own home, Kelly shows off her other masterpieces inside California mansions and commercial spaces such as BG in Bergdorf Goodman in Manhattan and the Tides in South Beach.



We'll let Stephanie take it from here: "My ethnic background is not black or white; it's a mix. And life is not black and white either. Live your life and be happy with who you are, then you won't turn to celebrities to confirm your own identification. I'm happy with who I am, and I still live my life with pride. I have decided to dedicate most of my time to philanthropy and developing as much of a private life as I can possibly have with my husband."... Miss February 2008

Michelle McLaughlin is big in Japan. After acting as our liaison in Tokyo, the blonde made 50 million more fans....

The Girls Next Door's Miss December 2009 **Crystal Harris**, Miss July 2009 **Karissa Shannon** and Miss August 2009 **Kristina Shannon** went to New York



City to swarm the press. When the girls weren't on the morning-show circuit they went ice skating at Rockefeller Center, took in the Statue of Liberty and visited a firehouse. Now here's a fireman's calendar we can all get behind.



modern family

STACY FUSON:
MODERN WOMAN

Miss February 1999 Stacy Fuson, in a cameo appearance on ABC's *Modern Family*, plays a heartbreaker—not much of a stretch for the former St. Pauli Girl. On the new hit comedy Stacy is cast as Doris, who flirts with Phil Dunphy while he is in the hospital—much to the chagrin of his wife, Claire.



Miss September 1986 **Rebekka Armstrong** lectured about HIV at Kent State University during World AIDS Day.

Keep your eyes peeled on MTV: Miss January 2001 **Irina Voronina** appears in a new Motley Crue music video.

DID YOU KNOW ?



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MEGAN MISS FEBRUARY



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VICTORIA MISS APRIL



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HIEDI MISS AUGUST



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PLAYBOY FORUM

OF MONEY AND MEMORY

WITH COMPUTERIZED COMMERCE, FINANCIERS CAN MAKE MORE COMPLEX SCHEMES THAN EVER BEFORE

BY JARON LANIER

Even if you think God is no more than a human invention, you must admit that another idea we humans have invented has ensnared us even more. I am referring, of course, to money.

You probably like money, but it has a benefit you may not appreciate enough: You don't need to know where it comes from.

Money forgets. If we were to know the history of each dollar, the world would be torn apart by war to a greater degree than it already is, because people are more clannish than greedy. Money allows blood enemies to collaborate: While money changes hands we forget for at least a moment the history of conflict and the potential for revenge.

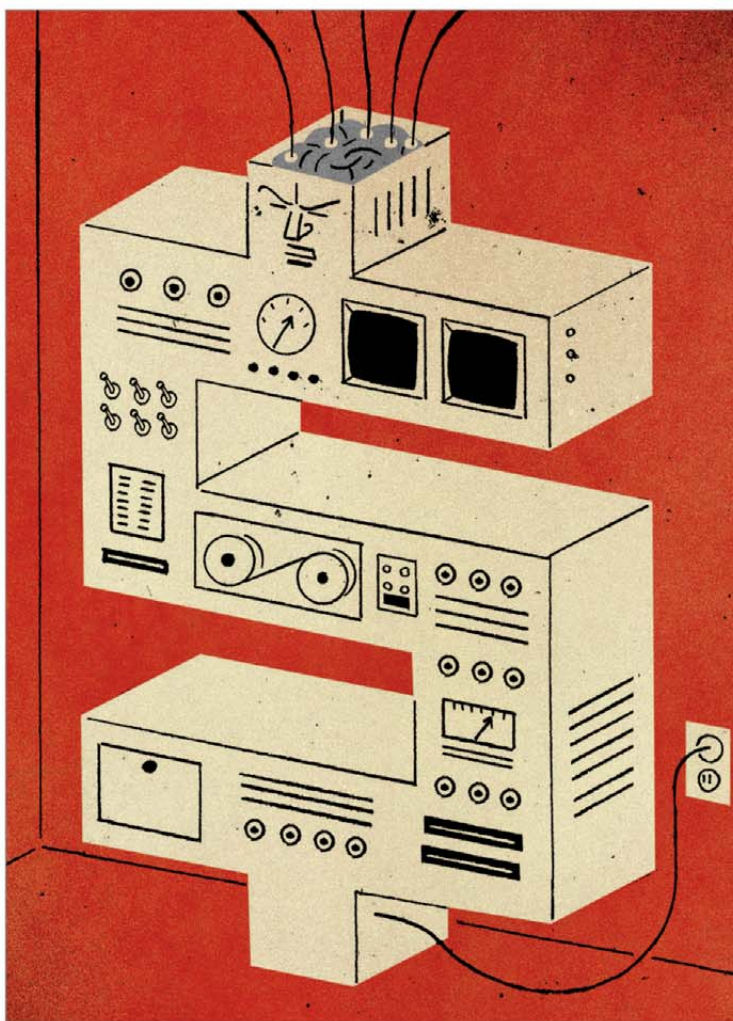
Some conceptions of God seem to date back to the same era of antiquity as money. You can think of them as being similar to the sum of the karmic memories money was fated to forget. God evolved to be almost the opposite of money. Money forgets, but God remembers. God knows how you earned that dollar and keeps a different set of books—moral books—based on that memory.

Money doesn't forget entirely, of course. Money is information. Ancient people in Sumer and elsewhere made markings to keep track of trades and debts, and this might have been the first profound human encounter with numerical abstractions. It used to be a huge bother to carve records in clay. That kind of hassle could not be sustained for just any information. Most happenings couldn't be recorded. Information storage was reserved for only a few special topics, such as stories of kings and divinity (and, it must be noted in present company, the occasional erotic tale).

Money was the first computation, and in this age of computation, there is hardly any chance the nature of money will not be transformed. The combination of relentlessly improving digital technology and capitalism has created a new era in which money sometimes doesn't forget all it should. This is not a healthy development.

Liars have to have the best memories. It's more work to keep two sets of books than one set of books. The most egregious modern liars therefore need computers. The plague of toxic assets and mega pyramid schemes, and the pointless growth spurt of the financial services sector would all have been impossible without vast computational resources remembering and sorting all the details needed to snooker people—the same details that should have been forgotten except by God. Bernie Madoff would have been able to run nothing more than a typical pyramid scheme without computer programmers on his team.

It was only recently that computation became inexpensive enough to be used to hide bad assets in glimmering, massive, bogus statistical wrapping to pass on to dupes like the rest of us. The toxic financial concoctions of the Great Recession grew so complex that unraveling them could become like



breaking a deep cryptographic code. They were pure creatures of big computation.

The lord snookers of Wall Street act as a clan because they know they are working together despite the astounding levels of complexity in their activities. It is miraculous they are able to compute the self-interest that justifies the acceptance of each other's insane bonuses. They feast on unique access to the memories of a new kind of money

that forgets less than any previous money. If they were using forgetful money, or what we call “entropic” money in geek speak, they would enjoy far less ability to coordinate among themselves.

There’s an old cliché that goes “If you want to make money in gambling, own a casino.” The new version is “If you want to make money on a financial network, own the server.” If you own the fastest computers with the most access to everyone’s information, you can just search for money and it will appear. A clear example of this principle is the rise of “high-frequency trading,” in which the clan that owns the server gets to pull money out of a market before nonmembers can even try to make trades.

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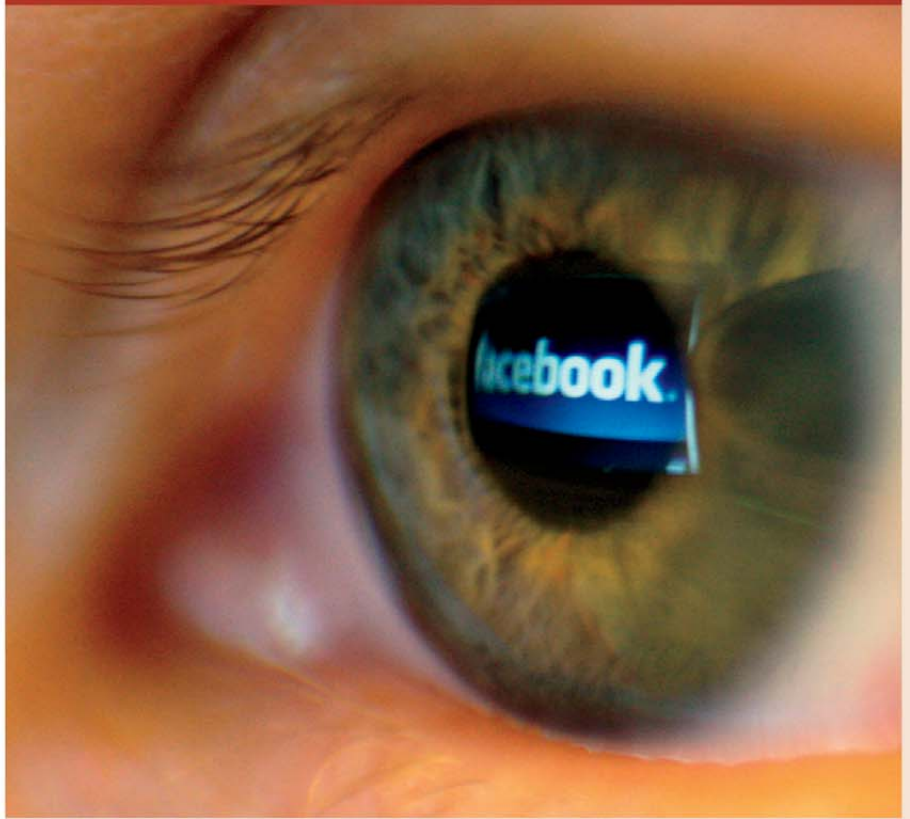
COMPUTERS. The good news is that people, not supernatural forces, designed computers, so it is entirely possible to design the next era of computerized commerce with money that forgets again, or with money that realizes some new balance of forgetting and remembering.

We have no choice but to reinvent the nature of money. I am at work within a little clan of mathematicians and physicists trying to understand at least the theoretical side of how to do this. Your future livelihood is, for better or worse, in the hands of geeks more than it has ever been before.

*Jaron Lanier is a computer scientist and author of *You Are Not a Gadget*.*

THE NEW AD AGE

SOCIAL ADVERTISING KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU. THAT’S NOT NECESSARILY A BAD THING



BY BEN PARR

For almost all its history, advertising has been a one-to-many experience. Everybody sees the same ads when they pick up *The New York Times* or drive past a billboard on the freeway. Magazine ads are targeted based on the demographics of the publication’s subscribers, but every reader sees the same ones.

The rise of the Internet has fundamentally altered advertising. For the first time, ads can be customized to fit an individual’s preferences. That key change, along with innovations from Facebook and Google, has given rise to social advertising.

Social advertising is the practice of targeting online ads to specific individuals. The method began in 2003 when Google bought the ad-software company Applied Semantics, which helped Google perfect the art of keyword advertising. Search for something and the company’s keyword-targeting algorithms make sure the ads you see relate to your search terms.

But that’s only half the story. While

Google’s approach has been powerful, it doesn’t take into account personality, preferences or friendships—all of which affect purchasing decisions. That type of information didn’t become available to advertisers until the rise of social-networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace.

When people sign up for these sites they are asked to enter personal information about their favorite music, birthday, hometown and educational history. They build an online network by adding friends or accepting friend requests. Information about a person’s network of relationships is called a social graph.

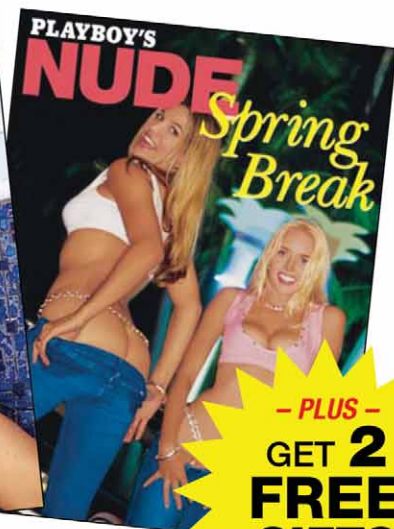
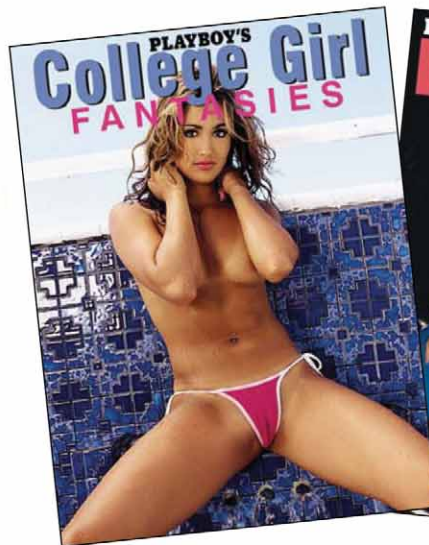
Now this social and personal information, along with keyword targets, is being used to create the most relevant ads ever developed. If you browse Facebook, you’ll find ads based on where you live or what college you attended. Social advertising will only become savvier as it takes more of these factors into account.

Consumers are beginning to push

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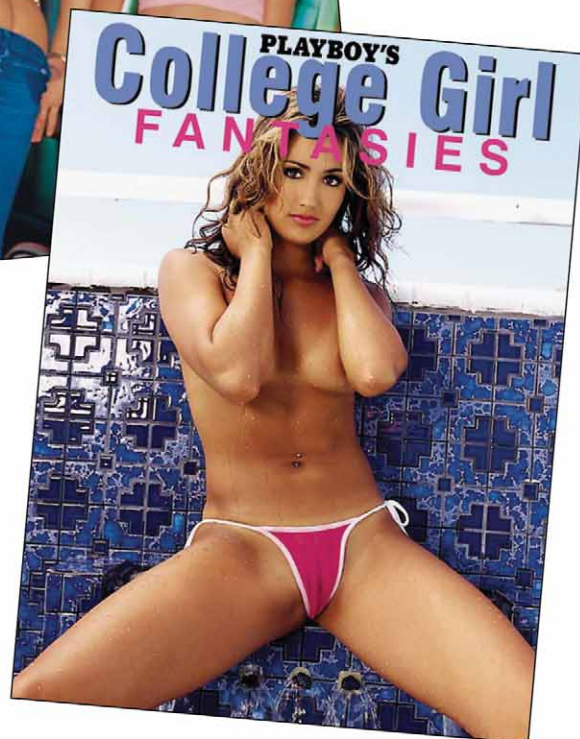
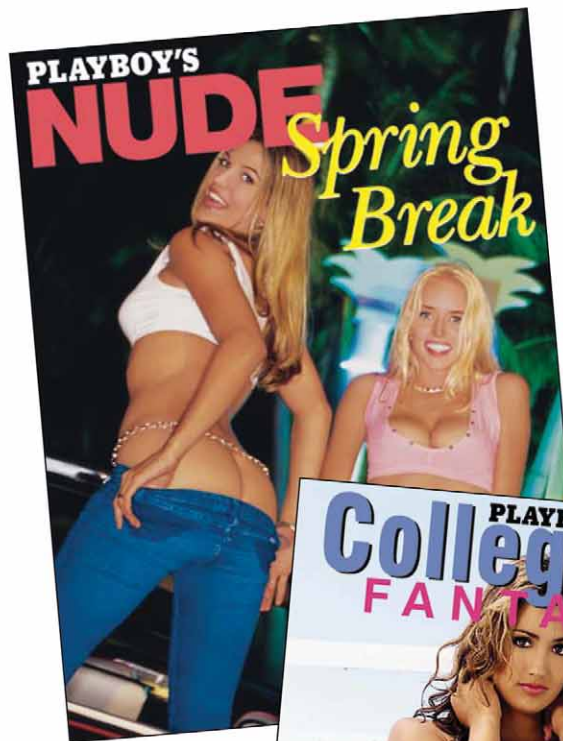
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away from the online-ad formats of the past. They click banner ads less often. And they spend more time social networking. From 2008 to 2009, the amount of time Americans spent on social-networking sites tripled, which is part of the reason social advertising has increased more than 100 percent. Advertisers see the method as a highly effective way to reach a growing audience.

For many, however, social advertising raises privacy concerns. Do we want ads that know our favorite TV shows? Should companies have the ability to use our browsing history to refine their product pitches? It's reminiscent of the film *Minority Report*, set in 2054, in which talking ads seek out Tom Cruise's character and pitch him products based on his likes and previous purchases.

There has been a backlash. Facebook Beacon, an experimental advertising program launched in 2007, allowed companies such as Sony and eBay to publish people's purchasing activity on their Facebook profile in the hopes that their friends would see it and make purchases as well.

Users rebelled, and a class-action lawsuit was filed over the program, which eventually resulted in its demise. Consumers didn't want to publicize all their purchases and didn't trust companies with access to personal information or their social graphs.

Still, while Beacon epitomizes our struggles with the quick ascent of social advertising, the incident is an exception rather than the rule. The technology that protects privacy continues to improve as society adapts to

a world of fast-moving digital information. You still choose the information you put online and who sees it.



We're often scared of new technology at first but embrace it as its usefulness becomes apparent. Social advertising is no different. Socially targeted ads are an improvement on traditional advertising.

When you watch TV you're inundated with commercials about products you would never consider buying. What if those ads focused on your hobbies and actual needs? Television watching becomes not only less painful but also personally relevant.

RockYou, a social-applications developer, is a good example of how this type of advertising can work. Using targeted social ads, it was able to help an online game gain 1.5 million users in a single month. Even more impressive, it helped a yogurt company create successful ads that target women who live within five miles of a Whole Foods store.

And this is only the beginning: As we place more information on social networks, these ads will become smarter and more sophisticated. In fact, social advertising helps us discover products and services we actually want by understanding who we are and what we prefer to buy. In the future, there will be little distinction between being advertised to and being informed. Additionally, social advertising allows Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and countless other websites to remain free.

While there are still potholes on the road ahead, we shouldn't fear a future in which ads could eventually be an integral and useful part of our lives rather than an intrusion. We are in the midst of a social-advertising revolution that is rapidly growing while traditional forms of advertising are declining.

Intrusive advertising is coming to an end, and that will make our lives better.

Ben Parr is co-editor of the social media news site Mashable.

A SHORT HISTORY OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

- ▶ **March 2003:** Friendster launches to the public, followed five months later by MySpace.
- ▶ **February 2004:** A group of Harvard students opens Facebook. With membership limited to select universities, the site is referred to as a college version of Friendster.
- ▶ **March 2004:** MySpace surpasses Friendster in page views.
- ▶ **April 2005:** News Corp. owner Rupert Murdoch comments on the Internet's rise as a disseminator of information while newspapers decline in popularity. Young people, he says, "don't want to rely on a God-like figure from above to tell them what's important." Three months later he buys MySpace for \$580 million.
- ▶ **July 2006:** San Francisco-based Twitter launches publicly.
- ▶ **May 2007:** Facebook initiates Facebook Platform, which enables third-party developers to create applications for the site.
- ▶ **October 2007:** Microsoft beats out Google to buy a 1.6 percent stake in Facebook for \$240 million. The deal values the site at \$15 billion.
- ▶ **November 2007:** Facebook launches ad platform Beacon, which broadcasts users' purchasing activity. MoveOn.org announces campaign to protest invasion of privacy.
- ▶ **April 2008:** Facebook catches up to MySpace in monthly unique visitors worldwide.
- ▶ **November 2008:** Facebook tries to buy Twitter in failed deal. Facebook board member Peter Thiel later acknowledges, "The deal would have to be done with Facebook stock. And then you have to figure out how much the stock is worth."
- ▶ **January 2009:** Beating all other media outlets, Twitter breaks news of a plane crash in the Hudson River. The first recorded tweet of the event: "I just watched a plane crash into the hudson riv in manhattan."
- ▶ **April 2009:** Facebook logs its 200 millionth user.
- ▶ **November 2009:** *New Oxford American Dictionary* announces *unfriend* as its word of the year.

—Ling Ma

READER RESPONSE

POLICE PHOTOS

Kudos to Tim Mohr for exposing two issues rarely discussed: police abuse of power and the rights of photographers ("No Photos Allowed," November). The police have decided that any



They watch us. Who watches them?

slight toward them is an offense that gives them the right to make an arrest. Regarding photography, nobody can expect privacy while in public. The government uses that argument to justify surveillance cameras, so why can't a citizen make the same argument when taking snapshots or video? I understand that certain bridges, airports and nuclear plants may be sensitive, but in general the police act like bullies because they can, and it's a nuisance to fight back. Bert Krages, an attorney and author of *Legal Handbook for Photographers: The Rights and Liabilities of Making Images*, has a free pocket guide posted at krages.com/phoright.htm.

Timothy de Valroger
Hoboken, New Jersey

While I understand Mohr's concerns, his article is overly critical of law enforcement. The examples he cites are inexcusable, but these men and women get paid to run into situations everyone else runs from. He cites the case of attorney Pepin Tuma, who was arrested after chanting "I hate the police" at officers making a traffic stop. Should the officer have called Tuma a faggot and pushed him? Of course not. But as a lawyer Tuma should have had more respect for the officers, who were just doing their job. Plus, if a bystander at a traffic stop begins to chant "I hate cops," couldn't officers reasonably see that as a threat, i.e., potentially inciting others to attack?

Matt Dailey
Davie, Florida

Mohr's commentary addresses an important issue that we cannot continue to ignore. Abusive officers are no better than gangbangers. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Michael Cook
Denver, Colorado

As a faithful PLAYBOY reader and a police officer, I must express my disappointment with "No Photos Allowed." The only publicity our profession receives is negative, and it is sensationalized to the highest degree. It is unfortunate the actions of a few officers are presented as representing the profession. The majority of those in law enforcement are passionate about what they do.

Jessika Kynett
Livingston, Montana

We need police officers on our streets, but we do not need overzealous and macho cops who think they can do whatever they want. We also need to urge lawmakers to get nonsense laws off the books so officers have no excuse for hassling citizens. I have been arrested twice on bogus charges that the state later dropped because I had broken no law.

Andrzej Kubis
Chicago, Illinois

LEGALIZE IT

The November *Newsfront* item "Rocky Mountain High," about the growing number of medical-marijuana users in



If it's going to be legal, let's tax it.

Colorado, speaks to the merits of legalization for those who cherish civil and economic liberties. What consenting adults consume, inhale, perform, read or view in the privacy of their homes or at social clubs should be no concern of the government's. Creative entrepreneurs will always provide whatever products citizens desire regardless of

official approval. Consumers have voted on marijuana with their dollars. Let's legalize it and collect sales tax.

Larry Penner
Great Neck, New York

WITH DUE RESPECT

I am a retired California law enforcement officer, and after 29 years of dealing with the public I can guarantee you police officers believe in free speech. In your defense of Henry Louis



Professor Gates on a better day.

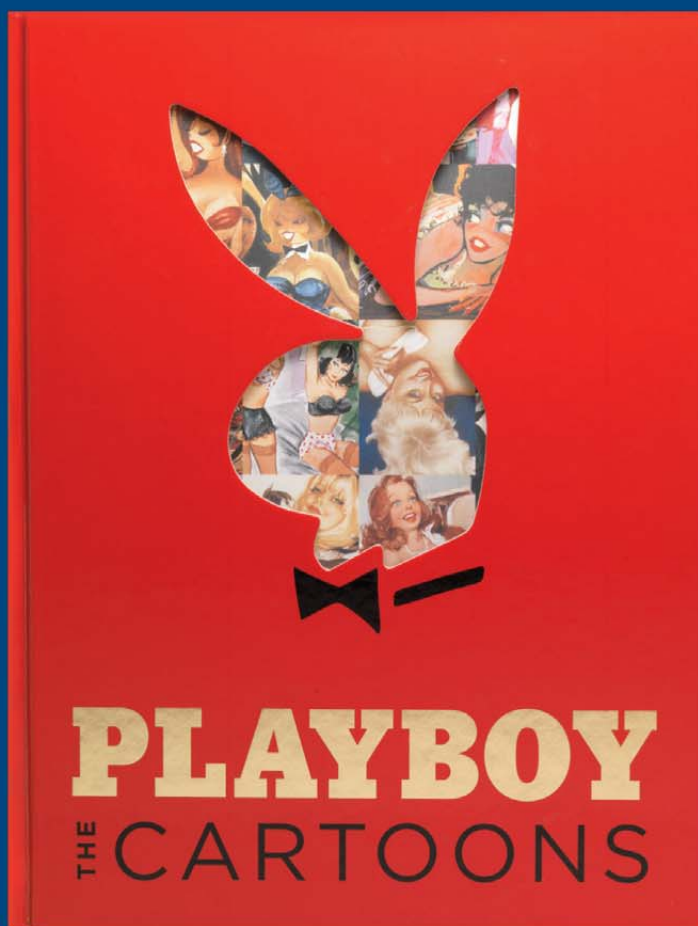
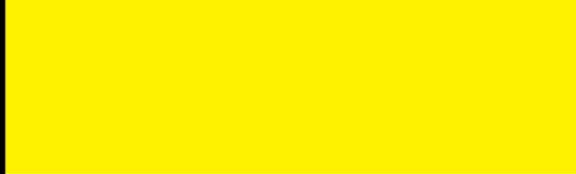
Gates ("Contempt of Cop," November), you assert that "being unpleasant and erratic is not a crime." Your editors need to ride with a cop and see what it's like to encounter an unpleasant or erratic person. Officers have to make an immediate assessment—for their own safety. From there the detained person usually decides how the interaction will go. I understand and agree with a photographer's right to document police incidents on the street. But officers want to go home at night, and we have been trained to protect ourselves at all costs. There is room for improvement, and we are not always right. But why would anybody stand up for an unpleasant and erratic individual? Volunteer at a battered women's shelter or a child abuse center and you'll see firsthand what such people are responsible for.

Dave Putman
Citrus Heights, California

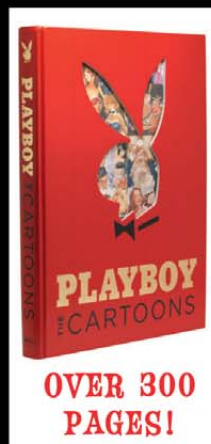
I read your defense of Gates with disbelief. How can PLAYBOY fight for the rights of everyone except those who dedicate their lives to preserving them?

Patrick Walker
London, U.K.

E-mail via the web at letters.playboy.com.
Or write: 680 North Lake Shore Drive,
Chicago, Illinois 60611.



SATIRIZING THE STATUS QUO. For more than half a century, *Playboy* has showcased some of the world's best and brightest cartoonists. *Playboy: The Cartoons* includes riotous work by such favorites as Buck Brown, Jack Cole, Eldon Dedini, John Dempsey, Jules Feiffer, Phil Interlandi, Arnold Roth, Shel Silverstein, Art Spiegelman and Gahan Wilson. This 368-page reprint of the classic 2004 edition will bring the best of visual humor to your coffee table. Hip subversives and sly revolutionaries all, *Playboy's* artists offer a sophisticated brand of humor sorely missing in other men's magazines.



**SOME
LIKE
IT
HOT!**



**A SURVEY
OF SOME OF
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CARTOONS
EVER IN
PLAYBOY**

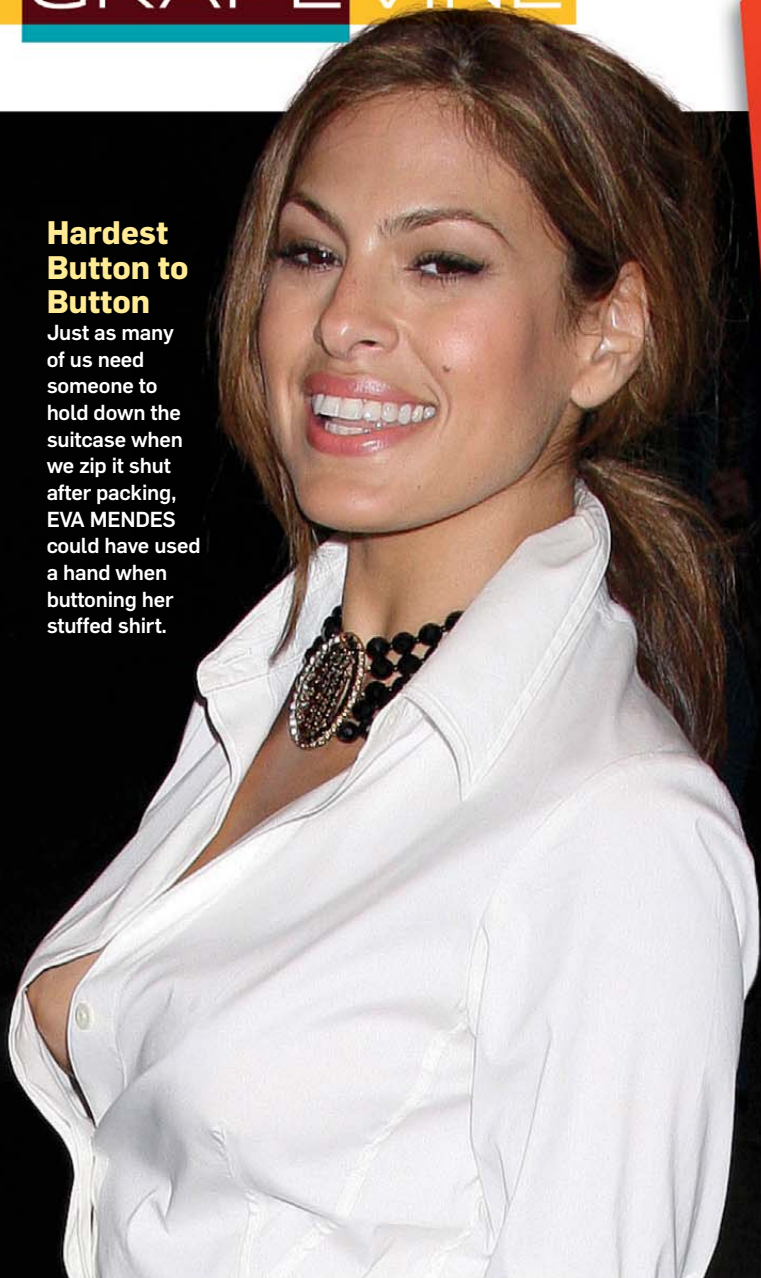
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A compendium of cartoons hand-picked by Hugh M. Hefner (who also wrote the introduction).

Hardest Button to Button

Just as many of us need someone to hold down the suitcase when we zip it shut after packing, EVA MENDES could have used a hand when buttoning her stuffed shirt.



DARA KUSHNER/INFPHOTO.COM

Sneak Peek of Sheridyn

Meet the face—and body—of Playboy Swimwear Australia. SHERIDYN FISHER recently flew in to L.A. for a Playmate test ("It was one of the happiest days of my life!" she says). And while we wait on those photos to see if she has the stuff to become a Centerfold, here's a peek of her here now.



PICDESK.COM/AU/NEIL DIXON

Somebody Put Krystal in a Corner

Kanye West drooled over KRYSTAL FORSCUTT on his blog. But that isn't the highest honor she has received; *Ralph* magazine named her Rear of the Year.



PICDESK.COM/AU/DORON SYNDICATION

Miss India

This is not a young Valerie Bertinelli; this is INDIA REYNOLDS. She's a 19-year-old who does this even when not modeling (her day job). She tells the U.K. magazine *Front*, "I pretty much spend the day wandering semi-naked around the house, which is always nice."



IMPACTURE.COM

Tea for Two

We adore American girls, but we often find ourselves falling into a British dame as she talks about gardening. What is it about them? We can't be attracted to just their accents, can we? No. As this photo of the lithe GEMMA HILES and MISSY LOVE proves, British women are the picture of soft femininity.



POPSTARPICURES.CO.UK

Amy's New Big Release

The Sun's source on AMY WINEHOUSE's boob job: "She can't stop touching them and showing them off." Next is either her anticipated album or more work. The source continues, "She thinks by having bum implants she'll achieve her dream pinup look."

SPLASHNEWS.COM



Flash Photography

When NINET TAYEB attended the MTV Europe Music Awards, she was named best Israeli act, best non-trench-coat flasher and best camel toe.



IAN WEST/PA PHOTOS/LANDOV

Nobody Does It Like Chiara-Lee

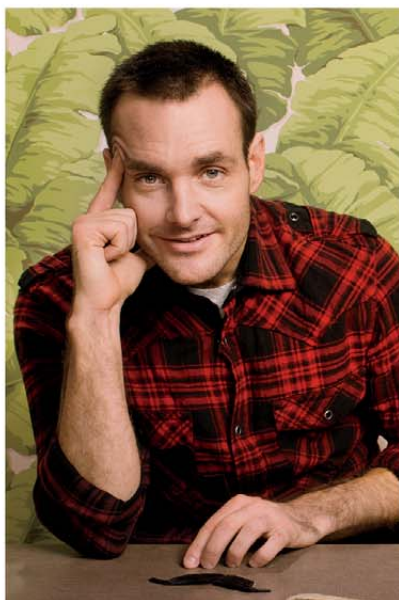
When not banging his drums, Motley Crue's Tommy Lee plays with CHIARA SALVADÉ. We like this guy's taste. To be clear, we specifically mean women: Pamela Anderson, Heather Locklear and now Chiara.



MC PHOTO INTERNATIONAL



BOUCHER WITH HORNS.



WILL FORTE: YOU HAVE TO WATCH THE QUIET ONES.

NEXT MONTH



GOING SOMEWHERE, MR. GOTTI?



EXIT STRATEGY: COULD YOU LIVE LIKE THIS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

CANDICE BOUCHER—YOU KNOW HER AS THE FACE OF GUESS JEANS. WE'RE HERE TO SHOW HER AS THE FACE OF NO JEANS. NO BULL. OR, AS YOU CAN SEE FROM HER PHOTO, JUST A LITTLE BULL.

GODFATHER AND SON—WITH UNPRECEDENTED ACCESS TO FAMILY MEMBERS, **RICHARD STRATTON** RECONSTRUCTS THE COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOHN GOTTI JR. AND HIS FATHER AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE DEATH OF THE MOB.

WILL FORTE—WITH HIS *MACGRUBER* MOVIE SET TO HIT THEATERS, ONE OF THE TOP COMEDIC MINDS OF *SNL*'S RECENT RESURGENCE REVEALS THE SECRETS BEHIND HIS SUCCESS.

THE NEW PSYCHEDELIC RENAISSANCE—FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 40 YEARS A NEW GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO USE LSD AND ECSTASY AS PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC TOOLS IS UPON US.

EXIT STRATEGY—EVERYONE'S HAD THE FANTASY: DISAPPEAR FOR GOOD TO SOME SUN-SPLASHED ISLAND WHERE THE WATER IS COOL, THE WOMEN ARE HOT AND BEER COSTS A QUARTER. BUT IT'S HARDER THAN IT SOUNDS. A GUIDE TO PULLING IT OFF SUCCESSFULLY.

WORLD'S HARDEST SEX QUIZ—THINK YOU KNOW YOUR G-SPOTS FROM YOUR WET SPOTS? OUR SEXPERT **CHIP ROWE** WILL MAKE YOU WONDER HOW YOU EVER MADE IT THROUGH HEALTH CLASS.

THE NEW GLUTTONY—AUSTERITY IS SO 2009. RESTAURATEUR **MARTIN PICARD**'S ILLUSTRIOUS MONTREAL KITCHEN, AU PIED DE COCHON, IS THE MECCA OF A NEW HIGH-END FOOD MOVEMENT AND THE EPITOME OF ELEGANT OVERINDULGENCE. WE STOP BY FOR A VERY LONG DINNER, THEN STAGGER HOME.

THE PLAYBOY CURE—SO YOU OVERDID IT. FOR TWO WEEKS STRAIGHT. YOU NEED HELP, FELLA. YOU NEED THE PLAYBOY CURE. WHETHER YOU'RE RECOVERING FROM ONE OR 1,000 TOO MANY, WE'VE GOT THE HARD-WON, BATTLE-TESTED STUFF YOU NEED TO FIX YOUR BRAIN, STOMACH AND LIVER.

ARIEL DORFMAN—IN THE CONNECTED AGE CAN YOU EVER ESCAPE WHAT YOU'VE DONE? THE AUTHOR OF *DEATH AND THE MAIDEN* DELIVERS A MODERN GHOST STORY OF A COLOMBIAN EX-PAT HAUNTED INCESSANTLY (AND ELECTRONICALLY) BY HIS PAST.

SARAH SILVERMAN—SHE'S THE WORLD'S FUNNIEST SEX SYMBOL AND THE BRAVEST COMIC WORKING TODAY. **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** GETS MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR WHEN HE SITS DOWN FOR A *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW WITH SARAH AND HER FILTHY, SEXY MOUTH.

PLUS—PLAYMATE **AMY LEIGH ANDREWS**, RAINCOAT FASHION (YES, RAINCOAT FASHION) AND A NEW **TONY KELLY** PICTORIAL THAT WILL MAKE YOU LOOK AT ACTION FIGURES IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT.

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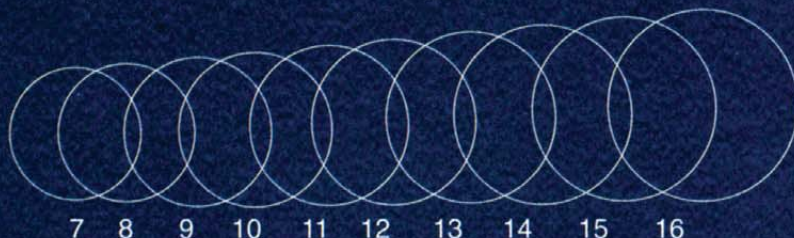
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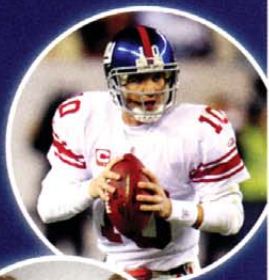


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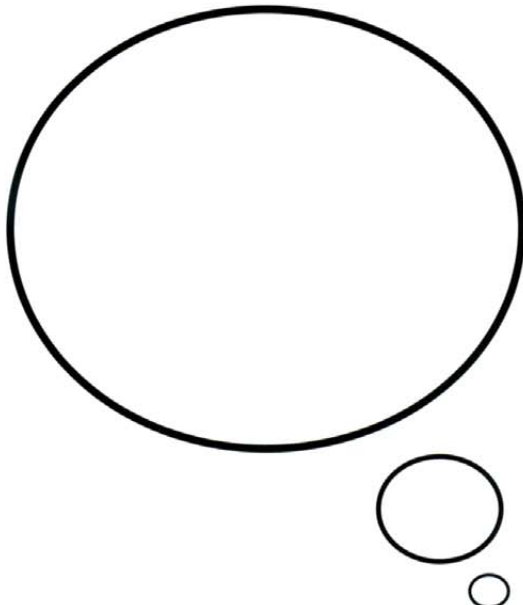
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