

A full-page photograph of Kara Monaco, a blonde woman with blue eyes, wearing a tiara and a light blue, sheer, strapless dress. She is sitting and smiling at the camera, with her legs crossed and arms resting on her knees. The background is dark.

# THE RED HOT GIRLS OF MYSPACE PLAYBOY

www.playboy.com • JUNE 2006

KARA MONACO  
IS **PLAYMATE**  
OF THE YEAR

**20**<sup>Q</sup>  
JASON  
LEE

PLUS:  
**SHEPARD SMITH**  
**INTERVIEW**  
THE GENIUS OF  
JOHN KRUK  
**FICTION BY**  
**LAWRENCE BLOCK**  
GARY MCCORD'S  
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*Scott Campbell 3 of 7*

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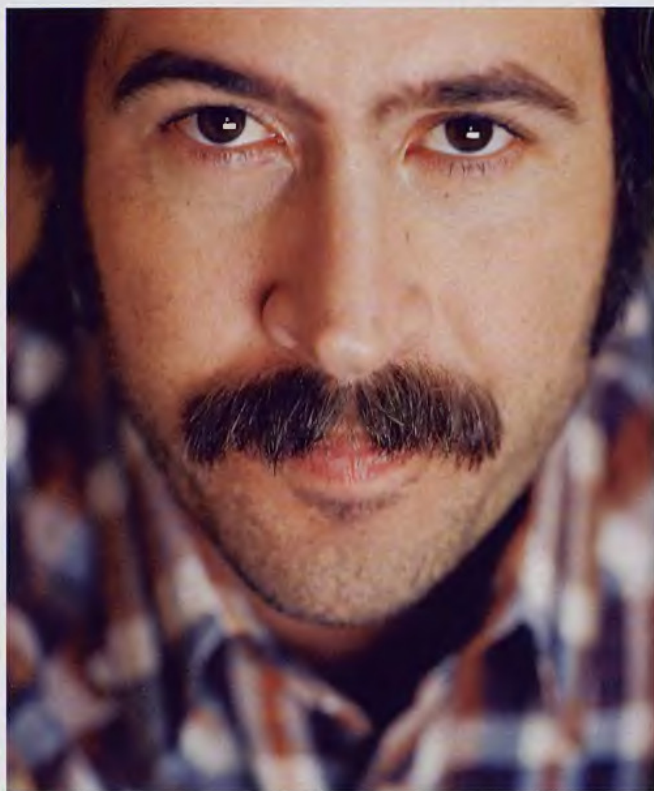
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**vhl.com**





**Eric Spitznagel** sat down for lunch with **Jason Lee** and his soup strainer for *20Q*. "I met with him at a restaurant just a few blocks from his home. He had that bleary-eyed, just-got-out-of-bed look that people associate with his characters," Spitznagel says. "But that's Jason. He was born to be a little rough around the edges. That's what the audiences want, and that's what he gives them in *My Name Is Earl*. You can't clean him up, give him a shave and expect audiences not to feel betrayed. We ate on the sidewalk patio. Because Jason was wearing shades and an outfit that looked like it was taken off a homeless guy, not many people noticed him, but a few stopped for a second look. I'm not sure if they recognized him from his roles or if they were just in awe of his mustache—it really is remarkable."



**Heather Caldwell** went deep into the world of vaginal enhancement surgery for *Rosebud*. After interviewing the doctors and clients who quest for the perfect pussy, she concluded that the next step in cosmetic surgery didn't blossom from public demand. "I believe these surgeons just wanted to create a market to make money," Caldwell says. "It cheapens the vagina. I don't think women ever gave a second thought to its appearance. And as for men, I think they are happy just to see one."



Aside from the Playboy Mansion, the hottest place to hook up is a website called MySpace. For 2006: *A MySpace Odyssey* **Dave Itzkoff**, author of *Lads: A Memoir of Manhood*, spent time online reevaluating the ideas of identity, community and dating. "The network reinforces social behaviors and interactions that prevail in the outside world," Itzkoff says. "MySpace also helps to maintain established relationships through typed words. Alas, it isn't bringing back a golden age of written correspondence. Most of the communication is very brief and rife with poor grammar and punctuation." Become friends with Dave at [myspace.com/itzkoff](http://myspace.com/itzkoff).



"I try to visualize myself as a player in the story, or at least wrap myself around the gross emotive impression the story gives, so that I can feel its power," says **Kent Williams**, the illustrator for *Proactive Keller*, this month's fiction, by Lawrence Block. "I always try to represent the core message of the story. So while I am primarily a painter, I wanted to do an image with a bold graphic quality to it, an image that showed movement, with Keller confronting his challenge—Keller being proactive. I think the use of complementary color, the opaque background color striking up against the powerful blue, supports this idea."



For *Fairway to Heaven*, we couldn't imagine anyone better equipped to select the 10 finest golf courses in the world than **Gary McCord**, the veteran CBS analyst and author of *Golf for Dummies*. "In my business I travel to the best venues in the world," McCord says. "Along the way I have become a course connoisseur. It's a hell of a lifestyle." He equates gorgeous golf courses with voluptuous women. "When I was younger it was much harder to get a low score in golf than it was to score with women."



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# PLAYBOY

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### features

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Parents fear it, at least one college has considered banning it, and Rupert Murdoch likes it so much he paid \$580 million for it. More than 64 million members hook up, make friends and gawk at sexy profiles on MySpace.com, but others call this virtual playground a time-wasting cyberdumpster. Our man hunts for identity and a few meaningful "adds" deep inside this controversial community. **BY DAVE ITZKOFF**

#### 76 FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

He's a seasoned golf pro and an accomplished writer, with one of the sharpest minds in the game. We ask the experienced CBS commentator to pick the world's 10 most extraordinary golf destinations—from Ireland to New Zealand—in an effort to turn you green with envy. **BY GARY MCCORD**

#### 82 ROSEBUD

It was only a matter of time before the cosmetic-surgery industry turned its talent to the female sexual organ. The list of procedures available to women today includes lifts, snips, G-spot collagen injections and even hymenoplasty, a surgery that transforms the most active women into veritable virgins. Our intrepid female reporter takes a closer look at the quest to create the perfect pussy. **BY HEATHER CALDWELL**

#### 100 THE WIT AND WISDOM OF JOHN KRUK

Whether he's debating strategy on ESPN's *Baseball Tonight* or inadvertently keeping David Letterman's audience in stitches, everybody loves Krukker—rants and all. The former Phillie talks without a filter, so his deadpan stories about personal hurdles and the state of the game are always hits. **BY PAT JORDAN**

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A professional hit man, Keller breaks protocol by offering his services to a hapless guy sitting next to him on a plane who would like to ice his business partner. In the business of killing, however, sometimes the hunter gets captured by the game. **BY LAWRENCE BLOCK**

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A member of the 9/11 Commission spells out why we should be seriously concerned that the Department of Defense is gathering vast amounts of information on American citizens. **BY RICHARD BEN-VENISTE**

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On NBC's hilarious *My Name Is Earl*, Lee plays a former petty criminal who discovers karma. Now the skateboarder turned actor rates other celebrities' mustaches, defends naming his son Pilot Inspektor and speaks frankly about his fascination with Burt Reynolds. **BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL**

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#### 53 SHEPARD SMITH

Having covered inaugurations, executions, wars and natural disasters for Fox News Channel, Smith has emerged as one of the most influential anchormen in the post-Jennings, Brokaw and Rather era. The irreverent newscaster who helped make *Fox Report* the number-one cable news program in its time slot gets candid about why verbs are optional, the Hurricane Katrina wake-up call and the infamous time he blurted out "blow job" on live TV. **BY DAVID SHEFF**

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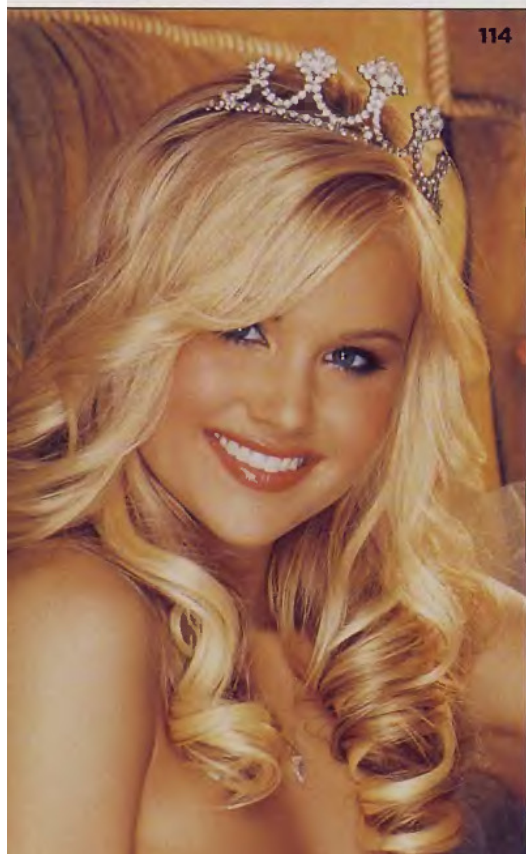
Kara Monaco played Cinderella at Disney World, was named one of America's sexiest bartenders and then became a Playmate. Now Miss June is your 2006 Playmate of the Year, and the platinum-haired princess returns in a gilded carriage to live out her fairy tale come true. Senior Contributing Photographer Arny Freytag captures the magic. Our Rabbit is in line to be her Prince Charming.





# PLAYBOY®

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# THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



## GOING FOR SECONDS

More, more, more. Once is never enough. You can't have too much of a good thing. Citing all of the above, E! renewed *The Girls Next Door* and followed the announcement with a fete (above) at L.A.'s Ritz-Carlton.

## YEAR OF THE RABBIT

With a red-hot economy and a taste for sexy Western wares, China is surely the next frontier. Playboy's Christie Hefner (below) planted the company flag in Hong Kong, opening a Playboy Concept Boutique in the city's chic Fashion Walk complex.



## AUTO EROTIC

Playboy Racing made a roaring debut with a podium-worthy third-place finish in the first race of the 2006 Grand-Am Cup Series at Daytona. Playboy's traffic-stopping Playmates were there to cheer the team on (and possibly distract competing drivers).

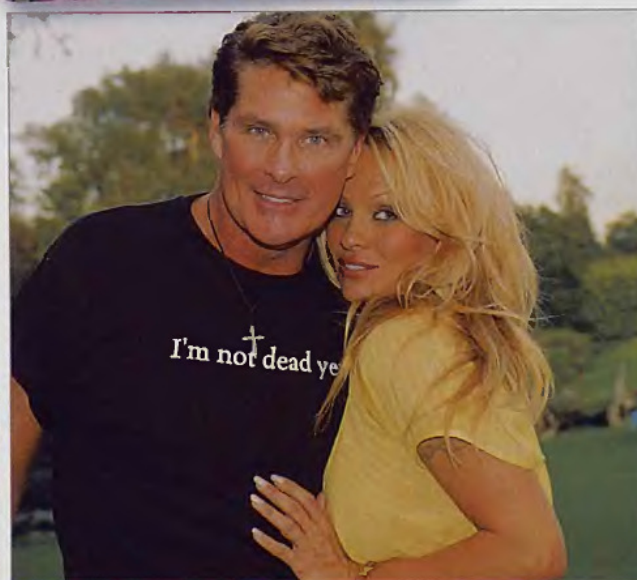


## TV TIME-OUT

After Playboy's Super Bowl party in Detroit (following page) Hef, Bridget, Kendra and Holly held their own shindig on Super Sunday at the Mansion, where the seating is always front-row. Friends



like David Hasselhoff and Pamela Anderson (below) dropped in for the pigskin action. A *Desperate Housewives* promo featuring the fantastic foursome (left) aired during the game, adding an extra kick to the event.





# SUPER BOWL SUPER BASH



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Once again Playboy's party was the highlight of Super Bowl week. Held in an empty airport hangar magically transformed into the dazzling Eight Mile High Club, the party was packed with athletes, celebrities and Playmate Bunnies, generating star power Detroit hasn't seen since Motown's heyday. (1) Kanye West gets down with the Playmates. (2) Broncos safety John Lynch intercepts Penelope Jimenez. (3) *Grey's Anatomy* stars Isaiah Washington, Justin Chambers and James Pickens Jr. (4) Actor Josh Lucas from *Poseidon*. (5) Jenna Jameson and Jim Belushi. (6) Joan Jett and the Blackhearts rock on. (7) Playboy Bunnies multiply! (8) *The Bachelor*'s Bob Guiney with his wife, actress Rebecca Budig. (9) Usher with Playmates Stephanie Heinrich and Tina Jordan. (10) The Reverend Al Sharpton with Pilar Lastra. (11) *Desperate Housewives*' Ricardo Chavira with Jennifer Walcott and Shallen Meiers. (12) Jaime Pressly. (13) Tom Arnold and 2005 PMOY Tiffany Fallon.



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## SEXY CELEBRITIES

If you asked a thousand men to name their favorite female stars, I bet they would mention only nine of the women in *Playboy's 25 Sexiest Celebrities* (March). How could you not include Charlize Theron, Jessica Biel, Paz Vega, Penelope Cruz or Kate Beckinsale?

James Kivell  
Plymouth, Michigan

Where's Salma Hayek? *In Touch Weekly* says she has the second-best cleavage in Hollywood, behind Jessica Simpson, who is also absent.

Jim Poore  
Plainville, Massachusetts

Jessica Alba is definitely the hottest woman in entertainment, but how can you put her on the cover and not show her naked inside? Thanks for the blue



You won't find sexier than Jessica Alba.

balls. At least you made up for it with Willa Ford, who looks unbelievable without clothes.

Matt Dufour  
State College, Pennsylvania

Christina Ricci has a better ass than Vida Guerra, and Leeann Tweeden is sexier than Jennifer Aniston.

Vincent D'Addio  
Signal Hill, California

As a Colombian, I don't appreciate your crack that Colombia has given the world "coffee, cocaine and 'Kira.'" We share Shakira and this is your thanks?

Daniel Dirnfeld  
Miami, Florida

## GLOBAL WARMING

Tim Flannery is probably correct in saying that global warming is already happening and that its impact will be more extreme than many people think (*What's Going on Here?*, March). But we need to get beyond the rhetoric that claims fossil fuels are bad. Many such fuels are available—perhaps 1,000 years' worth—and we have the capacity to use them without emitting greenhouse gases. For example, we can require the fossil fuel industry to capture and store a growing percentage of the carbon it processes, reaching, say, 50 percent by 2050. Energy costs may rise by 25 to 50 percent in that period, but that is less than one percent annually and much cheaper than if we were to force the complete abandonment of fossil fuels within this century.

Mark Jaccard  
Vancouver, British Columbia

Jaccard, who teaches environmental management at Simon Fraser University, is the author of *Sustainable Fossil Fuels*.

What Flannery does not address in his compelling article is how we can prevent further global warming. Raising the fuel efficiency of the average new U.S. passenger vehicle to 40 miles a gallon within a decade would cut annual carbon emissions by 315 million tons in 2015. Twenty states and Washington, D.C. have already started requiring utilities to gradually increase the use of renewable types of energy such as wind, solar and geothermal. Further, the 162 parties to the Kyoto Protocol (not including the U.S.) are employing a mandatory emissions-permit-trading program that draws on the power of the market to reduce pollution. The trouble is, Congress refuses to take action. Moreover, the Bush administration is stalling negotiations on a post-2012 update to the Kyoto agreement.

Julie Anderson  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Washington, D.C.

The same environmentalists who show such concern about global warming also work to keep foresters from managing forests, which is one of the best ways to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This includes not only logging but pest control, thinning and fire control. The U.S. Forest Service estimates that managed forests reduce emissions by 310 million metric tons a year.

Tom Hawsworth  
Roseburg, Oregon

The repeated reports of Antarctic warming originate from data gathered on the Antarctic Peninsula, which accounts for about one percent of that continent's landmass. All computer-model projections for the next 100 years show that the Antarctic will gain ice, which will help reduce the rise in sea level. As for the Arctic, the World Wildlife Fund has published maps of the regional decline of polar bears there. The greatest declines are in regions that are cooling, while large population rises are occurring in the Bering Sea region, which is warming. The global-warming issue is much more complex and probably much less emergent than Flannery suggests.

Patrick Michaels  
Waynesboro, Virginia

Michaels, a professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, is the author of *Shattered Consensus: The True State of Global Warming*.

If even half of what Flannery reports about the dire effects of global warming were true, I'd be scared too. Fortunately, his article is filled with dubious claims. For example, the research indicating that krill populations are declining in the Antarctic because of receding sea ice does not



A heated debate about earth's future.

stand up to an examination of the historical record, which does not show much of a change in sea ice extent since 1960. It does show big losses in the first part of the 20th century, but apparently krill populations did not plummet as a result. There is a strong tendency to ignore longer temperature records in research suggesting or implying that global warming is the



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cause. The British Antarctic Survey's record for the continent shows mostly stable or declining temperatures over decades, and while the ice sheet is melting on the Antarctic Peninsula, it seems to be thickening on the much larger continent. The same goes for the breathless claim that hurricanes Katrina and Rita are a sign of global warming. The historical data show that storm frequency and intensity vary according to a natural cycle over decades. Finally, the claim about massive species extinction is based on one study using a deeply flawed computer model and a specific example that doesn't stand up under scrutiny. The 1999 study of the golden toad's extinction in Costa Rica was quick to blame rising temperatures, but a 2001 study more convincingly attributed it to local deforestation. Computer models using implausible assumptions cannot predict what the climate will be in 50 years. And a large body of literature suggests that higher carbon dioxide levels and warmer temperatures will lead to an increase in biodiversity.

Myron Ebell

Competitive Enterprise Institute  
Washington, D.C.

*Tim Flannery responds: "In my book The Weather Makers I present an overview of the best science available on climate change and leave it to readers to make up their mind. Taken in the aggregate, the evidence for global warming and its deleterious effects is beyond dispute."*

#### KANYE WEST

Great *Playboy Interview* with Kanye West (March). Rob Tannenbaum asks the right questions at the right times to evoke responses that I imagine surprised even West. It's one thing to predict the future of hip-hop and one's role in transcending it; it's another thing to call oneself a historic figure.

David Norris

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina

What is compelling or unique about West? He worships bling like Diddy, makes silly observations like Sinéad O'Connor and cranks out crossover tunes like Missy Elliott.

Kirsten Jordan

Atlanta, Georgia

#### FOLLOW ME

Five years ago I quit my job, sold everything and sailed a 30-foot sloop around the world, a trip I just completed. Before I left, my friends gave me a subscription to *PLAYBOY*. I managed to arrange delivery of this lifeline to many remote ports. Through

good times and bad—military coups in Fiji, raging storms in the South Pacific, sunbathing with beautiful women in Bora Bora—the magazine found me.

Mantis Calvert

Santa Barbara, California

#### MUSIC MANIA

Thank you for expressing hope in *The Year in Music 2006* (March) that New Orleans will return. Most of the country seems to have already forgotten about this wonderful city.

Bill Sifert

Las Vegas, Nevada

Indie, Brit pop, garage and punk are getting a lot of attention lately, but there haven't been many great albums. Many in the "underground," myself included, have turned to electronic music rather than putting up with the many passionless bands trying to be the next Strokes. However, your review in March of the Subways' *Young for Eternity* got my attention. I listened from start to finish and wasn't bored once—a rarity. I can't believe I almost missed it. Thanks for the tip.

Michael McNabb

Cockeysville, Maryland

#### OUT OF THIS WORLD

I am an engineer with NASA and thought you might enjoy this photo taken from the space shuttle *Discovery*



The Rabbit Head, as seen from space.

as it approached the International Space Station over the Jura Mountains in Switzerland. Look closely and you will see a familiar image.

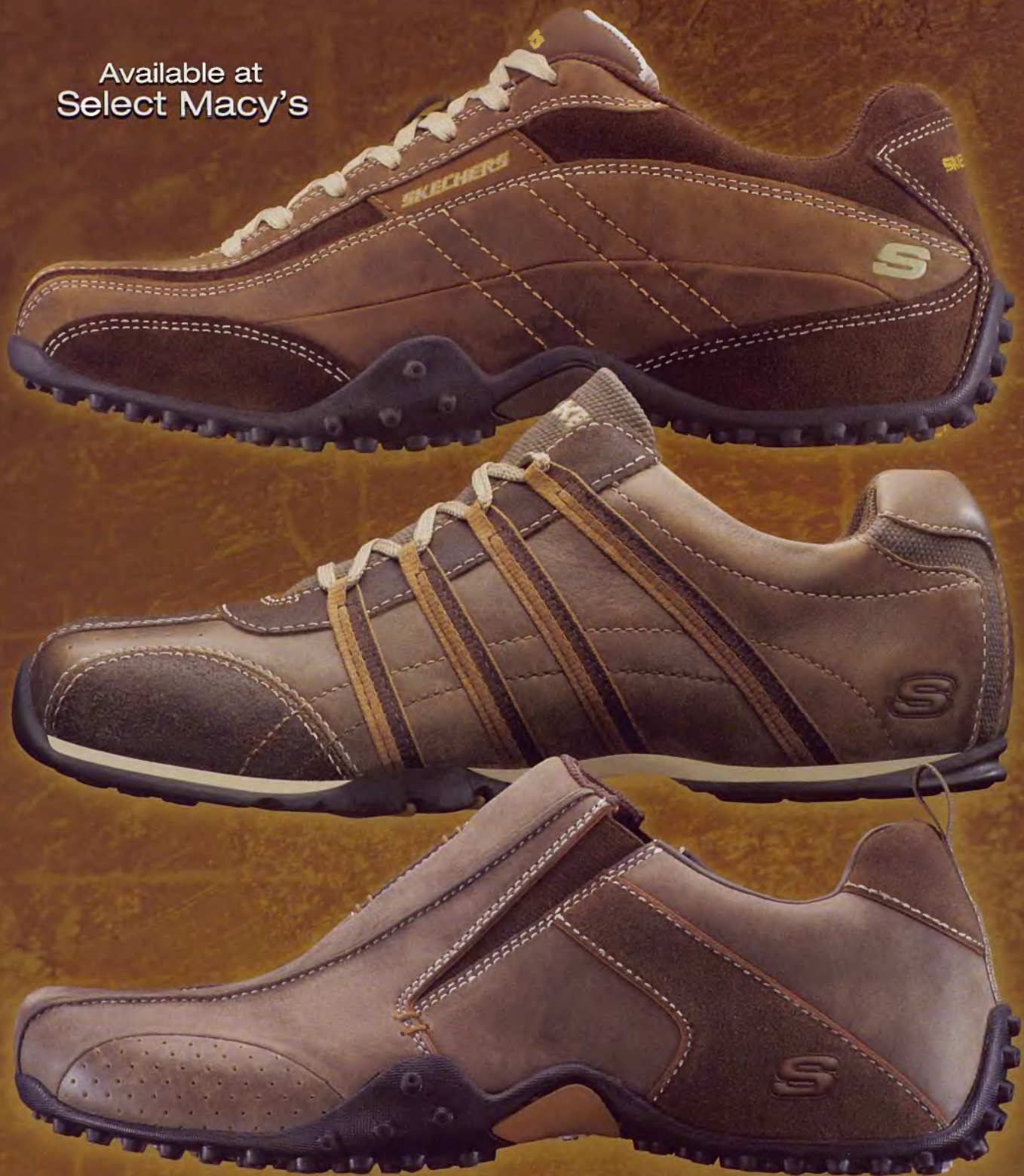
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# PLAYBOY

## after hours

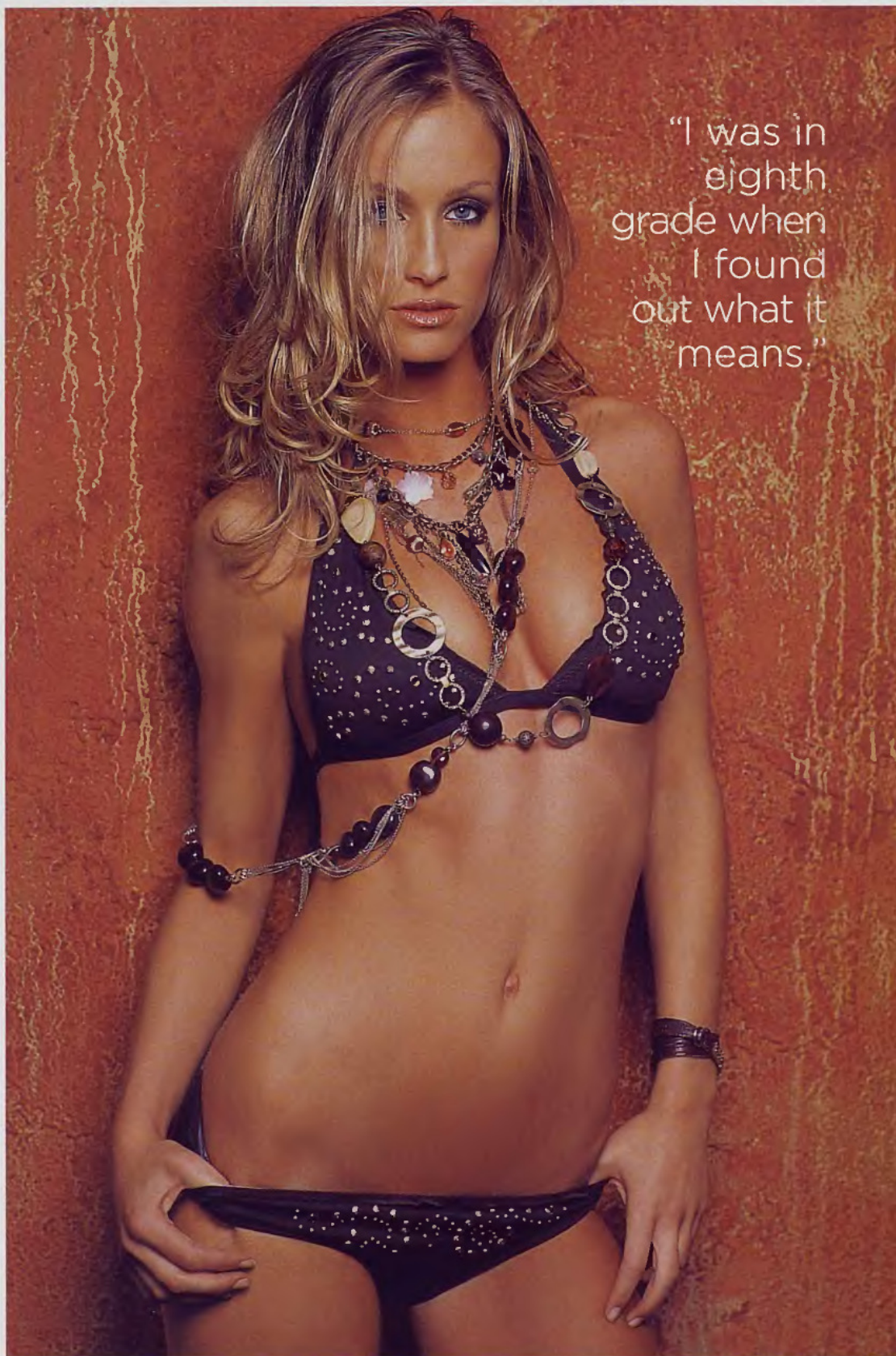
Babe of the Month

### Michele Merkin

WIGGING OUT WITH  
THE HOST OF E!'S  
COMING ATTRACTIONS

The first two things you notice about Michele Merkin: She's six feet tall, and she has a raspy, bubbly voice that sounds like a bad stage whisper. It's conspiratorial, as if we were gabbing in the back row during third-period algebra class. She was a bean-pole in high school; she played hoops, and people called her Giraffe or Manute Bol. Then when they weren't looking she turned drop-dead gorgeous. "I have good genes," she admits. "My Swedish mom is stunning. In the 1970s she was in the first Victoria's Secret catalog. But I don't have the rack for Victoria's Secret—didn't get the family jewels." She did get the endless torso of a Modigliani nude, though. "I've always gotten compliments on my stomach," she says. "I'll take any compliment I can get, and if people say they like my stomach, then I'll wear a bikini." Humility is as much the real Michele as all the brass and sass; ask about love and she's as sweet as a lemon-lime Slurpee. "I'm in love with love," she coos, which is surprising for someone who recently ended what she calls a "Black Hawk down" marriage. "I want everybody to be in love." We're falling for her as she says this, so the vibe gets weird. The subject needs changing. How about that wacky last name? "I was in eighth grade when I found out what it means," she recalls. "It was a big topic of discussion at school. Tragic. Now I laugh. I tell people my name and they ask me to spell it. I'm like, 'Yup, pussy wig, that's me.'"

"I was in eighth grade when I found out what it means."





## colorful character



"There's a lot of foolish, immature behavior going on here!"



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

## Eldon Dedini Remembered

PLAYBOY BIDS FAREWELL TO A MASTER CARTOONIST



The *PLAYBOY* family lost a beloved member with the death at the age of 84 of cartoonist Eldon Dedini, who painted nearly 1,000 cartoons for this magazine. He lived an idyllic life in Carmel, California among a group of other notable cartoonists who would convene at "Doc's Lab" (of Steinbeck's *Cannery Row* fame) to, as Eldon put it, "study wine, jazz and philosophy." Dedini also helped initiate the Monterey Jazz Festival.

"Eldon's world was one of light and music," recalls Michelle Urry, *PLAYBOY*'s Cartoon Editor. "He drew on both in his work. His art was gentle and good-natured." His watercolors—images of satyrs and nymphs, spoofs of Japanese pillow books and Sunday funnies—are unmistakable and ubiquitous; *PLAYBOY* has run a Dedini in almost every issue since 1960. His vision of a bucolic paradise populated by sexually liberated mythological characters became a part of the magazine's identity. Eldon will be deeply missed.

## big trouble down under



## How the Outback Was Won

GUY PEARCE BRAVES THE AUSTRALIAN BADLANDS

*The Proposition*, an ultraviolent Australian Western written by Nick Cave, stars Guy Pearce as a desperado who agrees to track down and kill his older brother to save his younger brother from the gallops. We talked to Pearce about his latest antihero incarnation.

**PLAYBOY:** For lack of a better term, you're filthy in this movie.

**PEARCE:** I am into complete realism, and reality in this case was hot and grimy and sweaty. I told the wardrobe girls not to wash or iron my shirts. I wanted them all creased and looking like they'd been slept in and sweated in.

**PLAYBOY:** As in *L.A. Confidential* and *Memento*, your character is both hero and villain. Why do you choose these gray roles?

**PEARCE:** That's how I see life and how I see myself. I struggle with the idea that people are good or bad. We all come from the same seed; we're all capable of going down a dark road.

**PLAYBOY:** Did you find this film's copious violence appealing?

**PEARCE:** I see violence looming at any moment. You and I could suddenly get off on the wrong foot and start yelling at each other and belting each other. That happens. I can't ignore that potential energy.





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employee of the month

## Hot House Flower

**PERHAPS THIS LAYOUT WOULD SUIT YOUR NEEDS, SAYS BUILDING PLANNER KELLI LEIGH**

**PLAYBOY:** What exactly do you do?

**KELLI:** I show model homes to customers so they can decide if they want the same layout for their house. We look at the floor plans and make any adjustments or customizations before we start building. Basically I make dreams come true.

**PLAYBOY:** We bet you do. Had any fun requests recently?

**KELLI:** A guy put a beer tap in his sink. What a great idea.

**PLAYBOY:** Do male clients ask if you come with the house?

**KELLI:** Walking into an empty house alone with a girl in a cute skirt is pretty intimate. They do try to pick me up sometimes.

**PLAYBOY:** Have any of them succeeded?

**KELLI:** I've never done it with a customer, but I have used a model home to my benefit after hours.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you use your sex appeal on the job?

**KELLI:** I always wear clothes that fit my body well. It looks more professional. Sometimes my breasts happen to show a little.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you treat couples differently than bachelors?

**KELLI:** You have to sell to the women; ultimately they make the decisions. Women like the kitchen and the dining room—sounds clichéd, but it's true. Men love the basement, the family room, the three-car garage. They love their man caves.

Employee of the Month candidates: Send pictures to Playboy Photography Department, Attn: Employee of the Month, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Must be at least 18 years old. Must send photocopies of a driver's license and another valid ID (not a credit card), one of which must include a current photo.

## drink of the month

### America's Sweetheart

#### TASTY AS THE GIRL NEXT DOOR

At New York City's Barcelona Bar, where creative shots are the house specialty, standbys like the kamikaze and the prairie fire mingle with new inventions like the full metal jacket and the monica lewinsky. We asked the shot doctors to invent one for the lady we honor each June.



#### Playmate of the Year

*Place a whole raspberry in a double shot glass and fill halfway with Chambord. In a small shaker combine equal parts Stoli Ohranj, peach schnapps and milk, then layer the mixture over the Chambord in the shot glass.*

Mixologist Jason Sturm explains, "It has a wholesome beginning with a soft peach flavor, and it finishes sweet and firm." And the raspberry? "That's a kiss." Close your eyes, lean back and think of a favorite.

## Steve Schirripa, Method Eater

### THE SOPRANOS' GENTLE GIANT BOBBY BACALA ON SACRIFICING HIS BODY FOR HIS ART

"The food we eat on the set is really good. To look authentic, you have to eat it the same way each take. For the opening episode of season four, I ate six porterhouse steaks. I didn't want to eat meat for three months after that. You know, for the first two seasons I wore a fat suit. I'd love to say I put on the weight on purpose, but I didn't. I don't mind so much—there are a lot of skinny actors out of work."

## hard-core pawnography



## Check Mating

This isn't the usual piece-on-piece action. In the *LoveChess* video games, gods and goddesses make hot war, with conquest of the board followed by sexual conquest of the enemy. Available with Egyptian or Greek deities, from [lovechess.nl](http://lovechess.nl).



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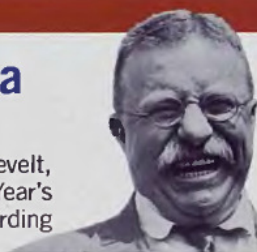
### The Wayback Machine

The U.S. and Mexico are building a **\$120 million** telescope on a Mexican volcano to let astronomers study cosmic events that occurred **13 billion** years ago. More than **80%** of U.S. funding has come from the Department of Defense, a fact that makes some Mexican politicians queasy.

#### Book of Pointless Records

### Most Handshakes by a President in One Day

**8,000** (approximately), by Teddy Roosevelt, who clasped all those paws at a New Year's reception in either 1906 or 1907, according to handshake historian Brian Burke.



### "Rep. Lott Admired Thurmond's Views Shoes..."

In a six-month period the peer-edited online encyclopedia Wikipedia tracked more than **1,000** changes in the biographies of U.S. House and Senate members made by their staffers to delete unflattering material or enhance their entry.

### Løtahümpen

An estimated **1 in 10** European babies is conceived in an Ikea bed.

### Fresh Tunes

Amount spent worldwide on digital music in 2005: **\$1.1 billion**. Amount spent by Americans on cat litter in 2005: **\$1.2 billion**.

#### Price Check

### \$6,000

Price paid at auction for the suit and Celtics gear Len Bias wore on NBA draft day 20 years ago. Touted by Boston's GM as "Michael Jordan with a better jump shot," Bias was the second overall pick but died from cocaine intoxication less than 48 hours after being selected.



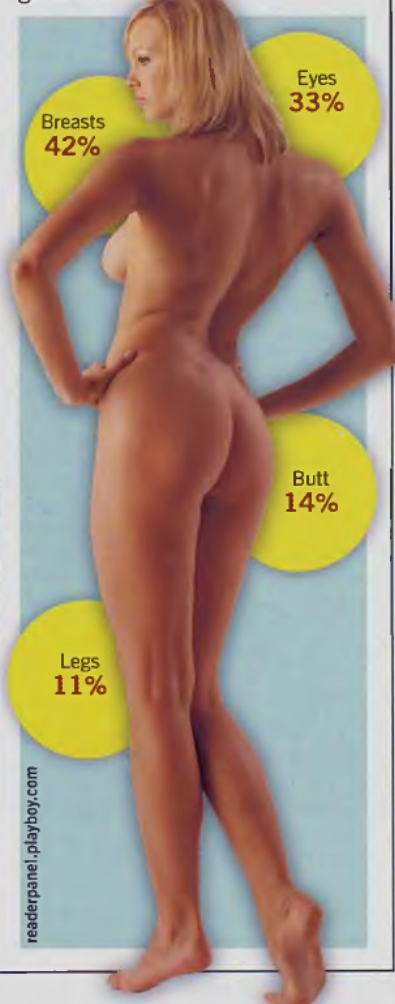
### Just Keep Your Mitts off the Interns

**72** percent of U.S. companies have no policy regarding office romances and dating.

#### The Playboy Poll

### Just One Look

An attractive woman walks into the room. Your eyes immediately go to her...





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# R E V I E W S

## m o v i e s



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### the movies of the month

#### [ THE DA VINCI CODE ]

##### The book you couldn't put down goes Hollywood

Dan Brown's unholy best-selling novel—about a grisly murder in the Louvre that sends a symbolologist (Tom Hanks) and a cryptographer (Audrey Tautou) tearing through Europe, where they stumble on a sinister, ancient secret society within the Catholic Church—gets the big-deal screen treatment from the duo behind *A Beautiful Mind*, director Ron Howard and screenwriter Akiva Goldsman. With some religious groups getting up in arms about the film's purported anti-Catholicism, are the moviemakers risking boycotts of theaters and screeds on Fox News? "Hardly," says Alfred Molina, who plays a high-ranking Spanish bishop in the film. "The book and the movie are incredibly respectful of people's beliefs. They're certainly not anti-Catholic propaganda nor a threat to anyone's faith. The hysteria is completely unwarranted. All the nut jobs come out of the woodwork."

#### [ X-MEN: THE LAST STAND ]

##### A mess of new mutants have X appeal

It can be tough to muscle your way into any clique, let alone a group of genetic mutants who superpowered their two previous big-screen adventures to more than \$700 million worldwide. But being a newbie in the third *X-Men* flick proved no problem for Kelsey Grammer, who plays the brainy, highly moral, blue-furred Beast. The former *Frasier* leads a pack of frosh freaks including Angel (Ben Foster) and Juggernaut (Vinnie Jones), who get involved with series stalwarts Halle Berry, Hugh Jackman, Famke Janssen, James Marsden, Ian McKellen, Anna Paquin, Rebecca Romijn and Patrick Stewart. Says Grammer, "An opportunity arises for the mutants to no longer be mutants, which makes this a great story about choice, courage, challenge, faith and heart. I think audiences will love it. I hope they love me in it." So does Fox, since the studio plans not only a Wolverine spin-off but, hints Grammer, maybe more. "They made me agree in my contract to the possibility of another movie."



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#### [ NACHO LIBRE ]

##### Jack Black wrestles with a wacky new comedy

After miring himself in the jungle in *King Kong*, Jack Black is back in more recognizable comedic form as a Norwegian-Mexican cook and monk-in-training who secretly dons the mask, cape and tights of a flamboyantly macho *luchadore*—a Mexican wrestler—to save an impoverished Mexican monastery's orphans (and a virginally sexy nun) from ruin. Loosely based on the tale of a real-life Mexican priest who wrestled incognito for years until one of the orphans in his care recognized him and rattled him out, this merrily eccentric film is directed by *Napoleon Dynamite*'s Jared Hess, from a script co-written by Mike White (*The School of Rock*). "There's a lot more weird crap in this movie than people are expecting. Jack is a huge part of what makes it funny, but the whole world of the movie is bizarre, cool and unique," says White. "It's more a Jared Hess movie than a Jack Black movie. It's too original and nonformulaic to fit into anybody's nice little box. It's like a Fellini movie with farts."



## [ A PRAIRIE HOME COMPANION ]

Robert Altman channels Garrison Keillor

Director Robert Altman's best works, such as *MASH*, *Nashville* and *Gosford Park*, are jazzy free-for-alls of colliding acting styles, wild mood swings and largely improvised dialogue swirling loosely around a smoke ring of a plot. This time Woody Harrelson, Tommy Lee Jones, Kevin Kline, Lindsay Lohan, John C. Reilly, Maya Rudolph, Meryl Streep and Lily Tomlin converge on a Garrison Keillor script thick with backstage intrigue, boiling-point passions and a nasty corporate takeover during the final broadcast of a certain long-running down-home radio show. Concerns about the 80-year-old Altman's stamina ran so high that throughout the filming *Magnolia* director Paul Thomas Anderson was by him on the set, in a director's chair that read PINCH HITTER. But, says Keillor, "I got a voice mail from Altman sounding like a 25-year-old, saying he had finished the first day of shooting. That was the high point for me—knowing it was actually happening."



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## [ CLICK ]

Adam Sandler goes on remote control

If you've ever had the urge to fast-forward through life's suckier stuff and keep replaying the sweet bits, Adam Sandler's new rom-com just may click with you. Sandler plays an architect who has little time for his kids or wife (Kate Beckinsale) because he's so stressed by the demands of his career and especially his belligerent boss (David Hasselhoff). Then Sandler walks through the back door of a Bed Bath & Beyond and squirrely Christopher Walken mysteriously slips him a one-of-a-kind universal remote with life-altering capabilities. Hasselhoff says, "It's a really touching, great movie with a lot of good things to say about what's important in life and what isn't. It harks back to *It's a Wonderful Life*, with Chris Walken as kind of the angel who helps Adam's character pause his life and appreciate all he has. People know me as the action hero from *Baywatch*, but I think this movie could open new doors for me. If the Oscars add a category for best boss from hell, I think I've got a shot."



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## also showing

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### The Break Up

(Jennifer Aniston, Vince Vaughn) An art dealer (Aniston) and a tour-bus driver (Vaughn) fall out of love with each other but not with their pricey condo. Economics and the rules of romantic comedy dictate that the exes must co-exist as hostile roomies—with all the complications you'd expect.

**Our call:** Aniston and Vaughn's real-life are-they-or-aren't-they game may be a big yawn, but their on-screen chemistry can jazz up even the most sitcom-friendly of premises.



### The Omen 666

(Julia Stiles, Liev Schreiber, Mia Farrow) The 1976 shocker, about a wife raising a son whom her husband substituted for the baby they lost, gets an update. When the kid grows up and folks around him start dying violently, Mom realizes he's not just going through a bratty phase: He's the Antichrist.

**Our call:** Whatever possessed moviemakers to mess with a horror classic, there will be hell to pay if this redo packs too little of the fire and brimstone that scorched the original *Omen*.



### The Lake House

(Keanu Reeves, Sandra Bullock, Dylan Walsh) The *Speed* co-stars reunite in a romance that has a lovelorn doctor (Bullock) and a frustrated architect (Reeves) swapping letters. They fall in love only to learn that a mysterious mailbox has bridged time and space—and the soul mates actually exist years apart.

**Our call:** Time-travel love stories depend on the chemistry between the stars, so if the Bullock-Reeves vibe doesn't grab you, you may want to dive into the nearest lake.



### The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift

(Lucas Black, Bow Wow, Sung Kang) Without Vin Diesel, Tyrese and Paul Walker along for the ride, this third installment in the rubber-burning series features an outsider (Black) fleeing to Tokyo so he can avoid jail time. Instead he gets caught up with Japanese mobsters and the drift racing underground.

**Our call:** The third time is rarely the charm for sequels. Can drifting—the hippest, scarier auto sport going—revive this fading franchise? Or is it officially out of gas?





## dvd of the month

## [ THE JOHN FORD COLLECTION ]

The iconic director shows how the West was won—and then some

"My name's John Ford. I make Westerns," the great film director once modestly introduced himself. Imbuing his tales of cowpokes and desperadoes with intense realism, epic drama and a sense of history, Ford also brought this sensibility to every other type of picture, as the five new-to-DVD movies in this collection demonstrate. *The Lost Patrol* (1934) has a band of World War I-era British soldiers trapped by sniper fire in a Mesopotamian desert oasis; *The Informer* (1935), which tells the story of an Irish rebel in 1922, garnered Ford his first of four best director Oscars; *Mary of Scotland* (1936) features Katharine Hepburn as the country's most famous queen; and both *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964, pictured) find Ford revisiting the West in widescreen and color. Also new to DVD and being released simultaneously is the superb *Fort Apache* (1948), starring John Wayne and Henry Fonda. **Extras:** Behind-the-scenes and making-of docs, commentaries. ★★★ —Matt Steigbigel



**ENTOURAGE: THE COMPLETE SECOND SEASON** (2005) There's no sophomore slump for HBO's superbly written, deftly cast series. When we last saw Vince Chase (Adrian Grenier) and his trio of hangers-on, they were headed for New York to film a low-budget flick. Now they're back in L.A., where they cause trouble at a Playboy Mansion party. Foul-mouthed hyperagent Ari Gold (Jeremy Piven) has Chase lined up to star in *Aquaman*, with James Cameron directing. **Extras:** Executive producer Mark Wahlberg interviews the cast; the real Johnny Drama is revealed. ★★★ —Buzz McClain



**THE PINK PANTHER** (2006) *Sacrebleu!* Steve Martin retools Blake Edwards's infamously bumbling Inspector Jacques Clouseau in a jewel caper-murder mystery. This limp prequel has a handful of hilarious moments, but it lacks the sparkling wit of its predecessors and seems aimed more at kids. Sexy Beyoncé Knowles adds only scenery. **Extras:** Beyoncé's "Check on It" music video, deleted scenes. ★½ —Bryan Reesman



the futile eye-for-an-eye cycle of Israeli-Palestinian violence pissed off partisans on both sides of the conflict. Open-minded viewers, however, will enjoy one of 2005's best films. **Extras:** Spielberg's first DVD commentary? Alas, no. ★★★½ —Greg Fagan



**JAG: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON** (1995) The TV military drama finally debuts on DVD with this six-disc set. Two lawyers in the Judge Advocate General's Corps—a former fighter pilot (David James Elliott) and his partner (Tracey Needham)—find time to flirt while investigating Navy and Marine crimes involving terrorism, espionage and murder. **Extras:** This non-lethal weapon isn't even loaded. ★★★½ —Kenny Lull



**UNDERWORLD: EVOLUTION** (2006) With the vampire-versus-werewolf mythology already established, this sequel launches right into stylized action. Vampire warrior Kate Beckinsale and her hybrid-monster boyfriend (Scott Speedman) try to outrun and outgun an evil vampire overlord. Plenty of bullets, beasts and exploding choppers punctuate the Gothic goodness. **Extras:** Various stunts, visual-effects, design and music featurettes (also available on Blu-ray). ★★★ —Brian Thomas



## tease frame



We love demure Dixie chicks, and Kentucky belle **Ashley Judd** has Southern-charmed our pants off in films like *Normal Life* and *Eye of the Beholder*. Although she shied away from doing nudity in her first movie, 1992's *Kuffs*, she revealed her holiest of holies for a church-set dream sequence in the 1996 HBO drama *Norma Jean and Marilyn* (pictured). In the recent Sundance flick *Come Early Morning*, our favorite steel magnolia plays a barfly who keeps waking up with a different strange guy in her bed. We're asking a higher power to get it into theaters—fast.



## summer sounds



## [ CHILL PILL ]

Gotan Project returns with a perfect Grotto groove

Five years ago Gotan Project hitched mellow electronica to Argentine tango and created an out-of-left-field sensation that not only had heads bobbing around the world but also sold more than a million copies. The key seems to have been the level of sophistication the trio brought to the electronics (top-notch trip-hop beats, remixes by Peter Kruder), as well as the authenticity of the traditional instrumentation. Absent were the cheesy pitfalls of many world-music projects—second-rate beats; synths standing in for pianos, accordions or horns; pointless attempts to blandly tailor the exotic sounds for American or European ears. On *Lunático*, the follow-up, Gotan has tweaked the formula enough to avoid a simple rehash of *La Revancha del Tango*, but the group again hits a sweet spot, evoking all the imagined sultriness of, say, Buenos Aires in the 1960s while meshing perfectly with the jet-set cool of today's urban rooftop hotel lounges. The intermittent vocals, catchy syncopation and occasional exotic percussion sounds prevent you from drifting from chill-out to doze-off, but the cumulative effect will still have the girls eyeing you with half-closed lids of seduction. There's no easier way to turn your pad into the Playboy Mansion—at least for an hour. (XL Recordings) ★★★ —Tim Mohr

## LAGOS ALL ROUTES

Nigerian music has long been overshadowed by the genius of Fela Kuti. But as this amazing anthology shows, a lot of other fine music was made in Lagos between the mid-1960s and 1980. This and a companion volume, *Lagos Chop Up*, rank among the best African collections ever compiled. (Honest Jons) ★★★ —Leopold Froehlich



## THE RACONTEURS

## Broken Boy Soldiers

The White Stripes get better with every album; Jack White is successful as a producer, too. Here White joins forces with Detroit buddy Brendan Benson and others, so the question is, Can he bring his golden touch to a supergroup? The answer: yes. (V2) ★★★ —T.M.



## GNARLS BARKLEY • St. Elsewhere

Here Danger Mouse, producer of the notorious *Grey Album* and the last Gorillaz LP, teams with vocalist Cee-Lo of Goodie Mob. The result has the playful lift of the Gorillaz, the unself-conscious eccentricity of OutKast and the kaleidoscopic cool of 1980s Prince. It's weird and wonderful. (Atlantic) ★★★ —T.M.



## ICE CUBE • Laugh Now, Cry Later

Taking a break from Hollywood, Ice Cube returns to the rap scene with a vengeance on his seventh and arguably best solo LP, with production from Scott Storch, Swizz Beatz and Lil Jon, and a Snoop guest spot. Flashes of Cube's N.W.A swagger are also sure to please fans. (Lench Mob) ★★★ —Dean Gaskin



## [ RIDDIMS RELOADED ]

Smoky variations on a Jamaican theme

Historically, Jamaican producers have recycled rhythm tracks for a variety of different songs: The same backing track can accompany a woman singing a love song, a saxophonist playing an instrumental or a trio of Rastafarians voicing a protest anthem. Somewhere along the way, such repurposing became a form of its own. Legendary reggae label Greensleeves will soon issue its 85th volume of rhythm albums, on which one producer uses the same rhythm for 20 or so different songs by some of the biggest names in Jamaica today. Although the songs were intended to be heard separately, there's something compelling about having the same rhythm stretched out over an hour. Or you could buy a few CDs—try volumes 52 and 80—and play them on shuffle. The Basic Channel label takes this notion further with its Rhythm & Sound release, *See Mi Yah*, on which versions of one simple dub rhythm track glide together into one long, smoky song. —L.F.









## showdown of the month: streetball

## [ TAKING IT TO THE STREETS ]

Street-style basketball beats a sim-style rulesfest any day. Here, two of the best go one-on-one

**NBA BALLERS: PHENOM** (PS2, Xbox) Call it Grand Theft B-Ball. *Phenom* keeps the great looks, gameplay and lifestyle elements of the original *Ballers* and takes them for a walk in downtown Los Angeles. There you'll rock the court in a million-dollar competition and freely wander a virtual city packed with minigames, chatty folk and legendary streetball courts. It's all rounded out with deep character customization, detailed crib crafting and some seriously twitchy two-on-two action.  $\text{YYY}\frac{1}{2}$  —Chris Hudak



**AND 1 STREETBALL** (PS2, Xbox) Bristling with tricks and spanning multiple cities (each with its own players and radio personalities), *AND 1* takes a different path to the hole. Three levels of tricks build the Ankle Breaker meter, allowing for showy finishes that require both sticks and the right trigger. Manage a level-three trick and the court slows to a *Matrix*-like crawl. Career mode is as much about showboating as it is about winning the actual games. Not exactly surprising, but exciting.  $\text{YYY}$  —C.H.

**DREAMFALL: THE LONGEST JOURNEY** (PC, Xbox) Gamers pining for the point-and-click adventures of the 1990s can rekindle the love affair with this continuation of *The Longest Journey*, one of the best adventure games ever. Players control three interconnected characters as they explore worlds, solve puzzles and engage in engrossing combat sequences. A rich and emotional cinematic experience, *Dreamfall* is one of the few great games your girlfriend will like as well.  $\text{YYY}\frac{1}{2}$



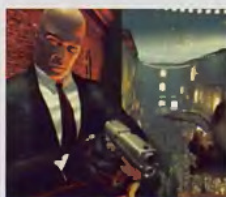
—Marc Saltzman

**COMMANDOS STRIKE FORCE** (PC, PS2, Xbox) In this latest version, Eidos scraps the real-time strategy in favor of first-person action. Set during World War II, *Strike Force* pits your three-man team against the Nazis in locations throughout France, Norway and the Soviet Union. Each character (a stealthy spy, an action-oriented Green Beret and a sharpshooting sniper) offers a different gameplay style, skillfully separating *Commandos* from the mass of WW II shooters.  $\text{YYY}$



—John Gaudiosi

**HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY** (PC, PS2, Xbox) Baldy's back. Agent 47's fourth outing is spiced up with attacks from ambitious rival assassins and a payment system that nets you extra cash for making your victims' death look accidental. (Freak chandelier mishap, anyone?) Witnesses increase your notoriety, which makes your life harder, but when all else fails, you can use your earnings to bribe the press to spike stories about you. A competent and improved sequel.  $\text{YYY}$



—Matt Lachlan

**GUILTY GEAR JUDGMENT** (PSP) Break open a barrel, have an ice-cream soda, and then beat up some lizard people with your guitar. It's all in a day's work in the cracked-out world of *Guilty Gear*, the cult fighter gloriously resurrected for PSP. Two games in one, it comes with *Guilty Gear X2 Reload* (originally for Xbox), plus an entirely new adventure whose plot involves genetic experiments and heavy-metal bands; it proves coherence is not a prerequisite for awesomeness.  $\text{YYY}\frac{1}{2}$

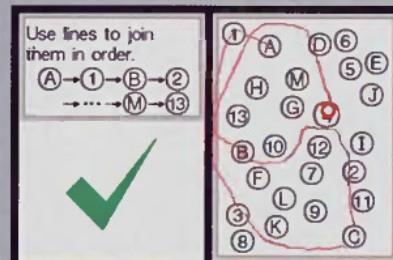


—Scott Stein

## games are good for you

So-called brain games promise to stave off dementia and keep your gray matter chipper. Whether those claims are true or these are just fun puzzles that pass the time is open for debate, but one thing's for sure: We know a good excuse when we see one. —Brian Crecente

**BRAIN AGE** (DS) Designed to be played a few minutes a day, the first brain trainer (below) to come out of Japan includes Sudoku and was developed specifically to increase brainpower and memory.  $\text{YYY}\frac{1}{2}$



**EXIT** (PSP) Art meets action in this tricky title, in which you're a hero who uses intellect more than brawn to work his way through buildings and save a cast of hapless victims.  $\text{YYY}\frac{1}{2}$

**PQ** (PSP) This feast of strange sounds and cyberific visuals is full of block moving, memorization and brain twisting. The best part: If you make it through the mental gantlet, you can post your scores online with other survivors'.  $\text{YYY}$



## memoir of the month

## [ LIFE AFTER FICTION ]

In his fiction Donald Antrim has proved himself a master of the outlandish. With his first memoir he shows he's as deft with reality

**Q:** How did writing a memoir differ from writing fiction?

**A:** My novels were written in a haze of invention. I began this book shortly after my mother died. It was something I needed to do. Beyond that, I was constantly concerned with getting the story right—not with whether it might upset someone but whether I could relate whatever might be upsetting in a compassionate way. I struggled with what I feel is an obligation to write in good faith.

**Q:** What do you think about James Frey?

**A:** His case is probably going to be a litmus test; it's going to make readers curious about the accuracy of what they read. I had the good fortune of having much of this book fact-checked by *The New Yorker*. My family feels I've got a pretty good handle on the past. I do too, actually.

**Q:** What memoirs did you read to jumpstart your work?

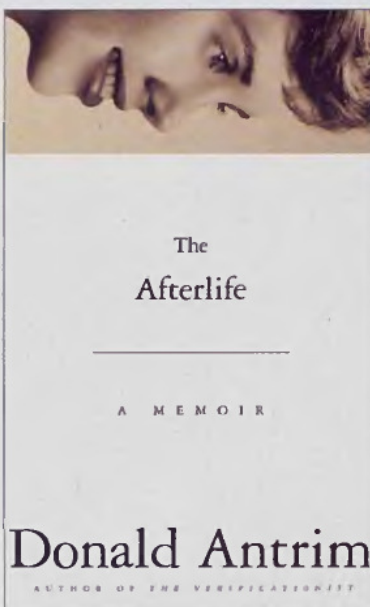
**A:** The books of W.G. Sebald. And I was very moved by what Frank Conroy was able to do in *Stop-Time*. Understand that I never imagined myself writing a memoir. It took me by surprise, and it remains to be seen how this will affect my work. I've made a conscious attempt to offer something of myself in the book, and that has me questioning how I can continue to do so with fiction.

**Q:** You grew up in the South, but you don't have an accent.

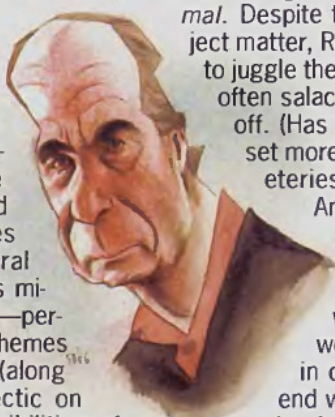
**A:** I've lived in New York for over half my life, but it comes out when I get emotional or tired. Mainly it comes out when I have to go back.

**Q:** Which probably leads to your getting emotional and tired.

**A:** Exactly.


**EVERYMAN • Philip Roth**

In the medieval play *Everyman*, Death informs an ordinary man that his time has come, and before his end, this quotidian hero suffers the loss of everything important—friends, family, wealth, health, looks, intelligence—exiting with only his good deeds. So it goes in Philip Roth's new novel, in which the life of an unnamed advertising executive, divorcee and would-be painter is laid bare, exposing his failures and successes both moral and material. The novel is minor Roth. But it underlines—perhaps too thoroughly—the themes of sex, illness and death (along with the simmering dialectic on the meaning and responsibilities of Jewish identity and the elegiac examination of the smashed city of Newark, New Jersey) that have come to define his work, from the sex-and-Jewish farce



of *Portnoy's Complaint* to the more soberly comic treatment of human transience marking the works of his mid-period to the mortality-obsessed shelf of books commencing with *Patrimony* and rolling on through *The Dying Animal*. Despite the solemnity of the subject matter, Roth's unique comic ability to juggle the morbid with the sensual, often salacious, allows him to pull it off. (Has any contemporary writer set more fiction in hospitals, cemeteries and flagrante delicto?)

And *Everyman* is both an unsettling and oddly exhilarating book, which seems to claim that we each have to do what we can to find satisfaction in our lives, because in the end we all must pay the same price for having been here. "This is how it works out, he thought, this is what you could not know.... It was time to worry about oblivion. It was the remote future." ❧❧❧ —Chris Sorrentino

## top 10

## [ BEST SPORTS BOOKS—EVER ]

By Will Blythe

***A Fan's Notes* by Frederick Exley** Fandom is a sport all its own. Exley manages to make watching football, in bars or on the couch, heroic.

***Fat City* by Leonard Gardner** Not just a fantastic boxing novel about two California palookas, this is a great American novel, published in 1969.

***Solo Faces* by James Salter** In the best novel ever about mountain climbing, each sentence seems cut from a sheer rock face.

***An Outside Chance* by Thomas McGuane** If Ernest Hemingway had done a few hallucinogens and had a better sense of humor, he might have written these perfect essays on hunting and fishing.

***Heaven Is a Playground* by Rick Telander** Especially if you're a white guy hooping with the best in Brooklyn in the summer of 1974, the heyday of blacktop heroes like Fly Williams.

***End Zone* by Don DeLillo** The author eerily conflates the terminology of nuclear warfare and football. It makes sense that the novel was published during an era when Richard Nixon used to phone in plays to the Washington Redskins.

***Joiner* by James Whitehead** An unjustly forgotten novel about Sonny Joiner, a six-seven tackle from Mississippi who survived violence on the field and off.

***Bang the Drum Slowly* by Mark Harris** Baseball scribes have been responsible for more elegiac piffle than any other breed of sportswriter, but this is a wise-cracking, heartbreaking beauty of a novel about a major-league catcher dying during the course of his last season.

***The Fight* by Norman Mailer** An account of Ali's "rope-a-dope" fight with Foreman in Zaire. Mailer, sent by PLAYBOY to cover the bout, writes as brilliantly as Ali boxed.

***Swimming to Antarctica* by Lynne Cox** This extraordinary book inadvertently asks the question, Is long-distance swimmer Cox a hero or a masochist?

Will Blythe's latest book is *To Hate Like This Is to Be Happy Forever*.







MARK NASON®





## Suite Talk

### A hotel room in Hong Kong redefines over-the-top Chinese style

A NEW GAME is being played in celebrated cities around the globe. It's called "Who can build the most astonishingly opulent hotel suite?" Behold the new world champion: the Presidential Suite at the InterContinental hotel in Hong Kong. Grab your best girl, load the private jet up with Cristal and Astroglide and head for China; the planet's swankest love nest awaits. The suite is a 7,000-square-foot duplex with five bedrooms. There's a private gym you don't have to use and a master bedroom the size of Madison Square Garden, as well as expensive art, electronics and furniture throughout. The real hook is the outdoor space: View the striking Hong Kong skyline from your own 2,500-square-foot deck 16 floors up, complete with a Jacuzzi and a 340-square-foot infinity pool. When you're ready to hit the town, have the butler grab your Bentley for you. Of course there's a complimentary Bentley; this ain't the Comfort Inn. Before you split make sure to let the butler know to prepare the terrace for a party. You'll be bringing back some friends. A night in this suite will cost you a mere \$11,180; book at [hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com](http://hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com).

## Chinese Insults

Qin wode pigul

A MAN HAS just insulted your lady at a bar in China? Stand up for her, lad! A short guide to the ancient art of Chinese verbal combat:

*Ni juede wo hen ben ma?* ("Do you think I'm an idiot?")  
*Wo xi wang ni man man si, dan kuai dian xia di yu!* ("I wish you a slow death but a quick ride to hell.")  
*Ni you piao liang de lu mao zi!* ("Your wife is cheating on you"; literally "You have a pretty green hat," a major insult.)  
*Ni shi wo de biaozi!* ("You are my bitch.")  
*Ni bu neng peng wo!* ("No, you may not feel me up.")  
*Wo bu yao peng ni!* ("No, I don't want to feel you up.")  
*Wo zhidao wo shuo ni shi wo de biaozi, keshi na bu shi wo de yisi!* ("I know I said you were my bitch, but that's not what I meant.")  
*Zaijian!* ("Good-bye.")

Chi shi!

## Double Happiness

PALM AND MICROSOFT had been fighting forever. Turns out they were just uncomfortable with how much they wanted to start kissing. Each side had its merits—Palm's ease of use versus Pocket PC's Windows fluency. Now the Palm Treo 700w (\$400, [palm.com](http://palm.com)) offers the best of both. It uses Windows Mobile on Palm hardware, with web access, e-mail, contacts, schedules and, oh right, phone calls. The quad-band version works seamlessly whether you're in Poughkeepsie or admiring stone inscriptions on the Shaolin Temple.







## Heavy Hitter

THE WIZARDS AT Toshiba have crammed an HD-DVD player, a TV tuner, a digital video recorder, a 17-inch screen capable of displaying HD at 1080P and a full-fledged one-bit amplifier into the laptop you see here. A 10-pound replacement for your home entertainment center, the Qosmio G35-AV650 ([toshiba.com](http://toshiba.com)) costs \$3,000, but add up what's inside and it's a bargain. Although 10 pounds may be a lot of laptop to lug, this behemoth is meant for moving around the house, not leaving it. For safety's sake, though, you might think about reinforcing your lap.



## Beauty and the Beast

TAKE A GLANCE at the cover of this magazine. Imagine that girl—Kara Monaco, our Playmate of the Year—straddling the new Honda CBR1000RR sport bike (\$11,300, [honda.com](http://honda.com)), the machine throbbing between her thighs. Now picture that vision pulling into your driveway. Perchance to dream. In honor of her PMOY coronation, Kara received this bike from Honda. A new model for 2006, it gets its DNA from the company's championship MotoGP RC211V. The CBR1000RR boasts a 998 cc liquid-cooled four-cylinder engine that will take on a highway at more than 200 miles an hour. Fast girl, that Kara.

## Club Rules

WHEN TOUR EDGE DEBUTED its Exotics three wood last year, the club was such a hit that golfers immediately began screaming for the driver. Here it is. The Exotics (\$400, [touredge.com](http://touredge.com)) has a 460 cc head made of three types of titanium that are chemically bonded, not welded. The ball spring is like a gunshot. Aim and fire.





## Reservations

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## Reservations

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## Raw Material

JOSH HOLLOWAY MAY be lost on TV, but when it comes to fashion he knows where he's going (as a 15-year modeling veteran, he should). On those rare occasions when he's off the beach and on the town, Holloway goes with Paul Smith, Armani or Valentino suits and cuff links. (He prefers vintage cuff links but allows that "Tiffany and Chrome Hearts have some nice ones.") The humidity on the *Lost* set kills high-end watches, so he sports a Casio G-Shock but favors Omega and Breitling when back in civilization. And though he drives a 1997 Jeep Wrangler, he says his ultimate wheels are "a 2006 silver Aston Martin convertible with red interior and a Dodge Ram with a supercap short bed that I'd fill with toys like a dirt bike and snowboard." Sounds like someone's had enough of the beach.



## Sun and Sip

MAYBE IT'S A little 1980s, and maybe it wasn't hatched from the mind of a master mixologist in an urban bar full of haircuts. But when it comes to a beach cocktail, let us praise the tequila sunrise. We love its refreshing kick and simplicity—the drink can be made from a few ingredients most people have lying around. Traditionally it's a shot of *blanco* tequila with OJ over ice in a rocks glass (or a beach-friendly plastic cup), with a float of grenadine on top. We like to use top-shelf tequila and double the portion so we can taste the unique character of the agave. Worth trying are a few new small brands that will be showing up at your local booze shop (from left): Partida (\$50), a floral *blanco* with a deep agave richness; Distinguido (\$53), with sweet vanilla tones; and Tezón (\$50), redolent of cut grass.

## Of Beaches and Beatniks

A LOT HAS happened in the surf world since Hobie Alter opened his San Diego shop in 1954, and nobody is better equipped to tell the best from the rest. Hobie's Black Bird (stock \$880, custom \$1,080; [hobie.com](http://hobie.com)) marries the look of a classic long board to such modern features as a three-fin setup and a slightly concave nose. How nice to hang 10 knowing you're old-school *and* cutting-edge.





SOME THINGS YOU ENJOY MORE  
WITHOUT WOMEN.

LOOKING AT  
OTHER WOMEN,  
FOR EXAMPLE.



U.S. Smokeless  
TOBACCO CO.



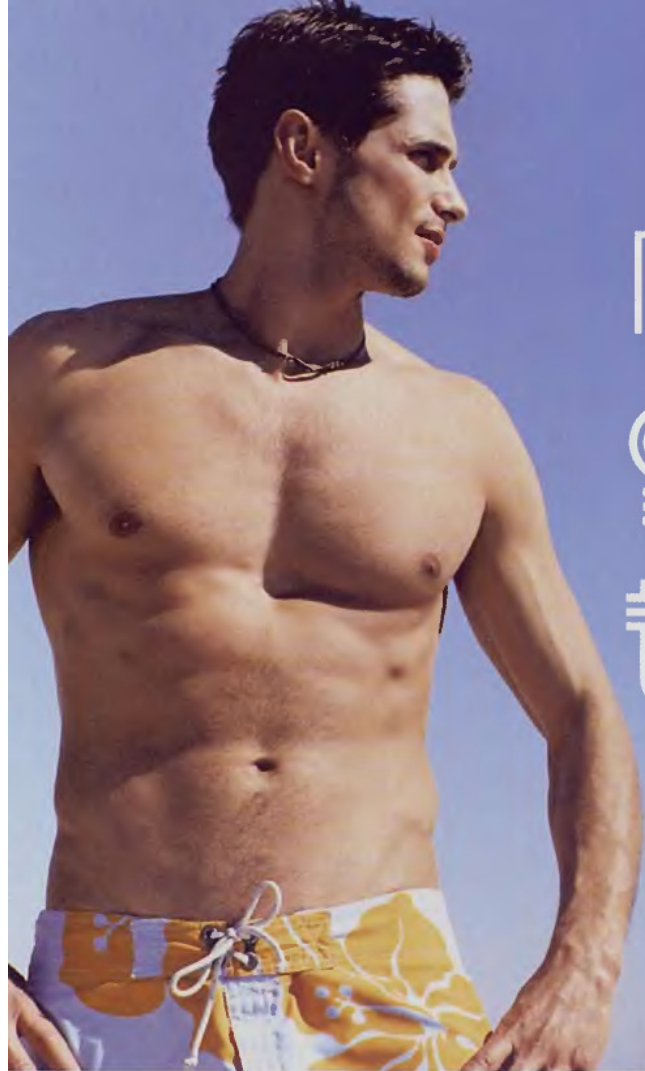
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DISEASE AND  
TOOTH LOSS

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Always fresh.

*Always*  
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# PLAYBOY'S SUMMER tune=Up 2006

REMEMBER back in high school when some girls would end the school year as dorks only to mysteriously morph into devastating hotties over the summer? Guys can do that too...YEAH, YEAH, we know, all playboy readers are total studs and would never in a million years need tips on how to evoke naked desire in the women of your dreams and self-esteem-crumpling envy in your Archnemeses. So we're going to skip all that and get you right into the good stuff, which is how to make all that evoking, be it of desire or envy, even more effortless than it is already. Remember this word: SIMPLE.

## FITNESS FINESSE

### >EXIT THE CAVE

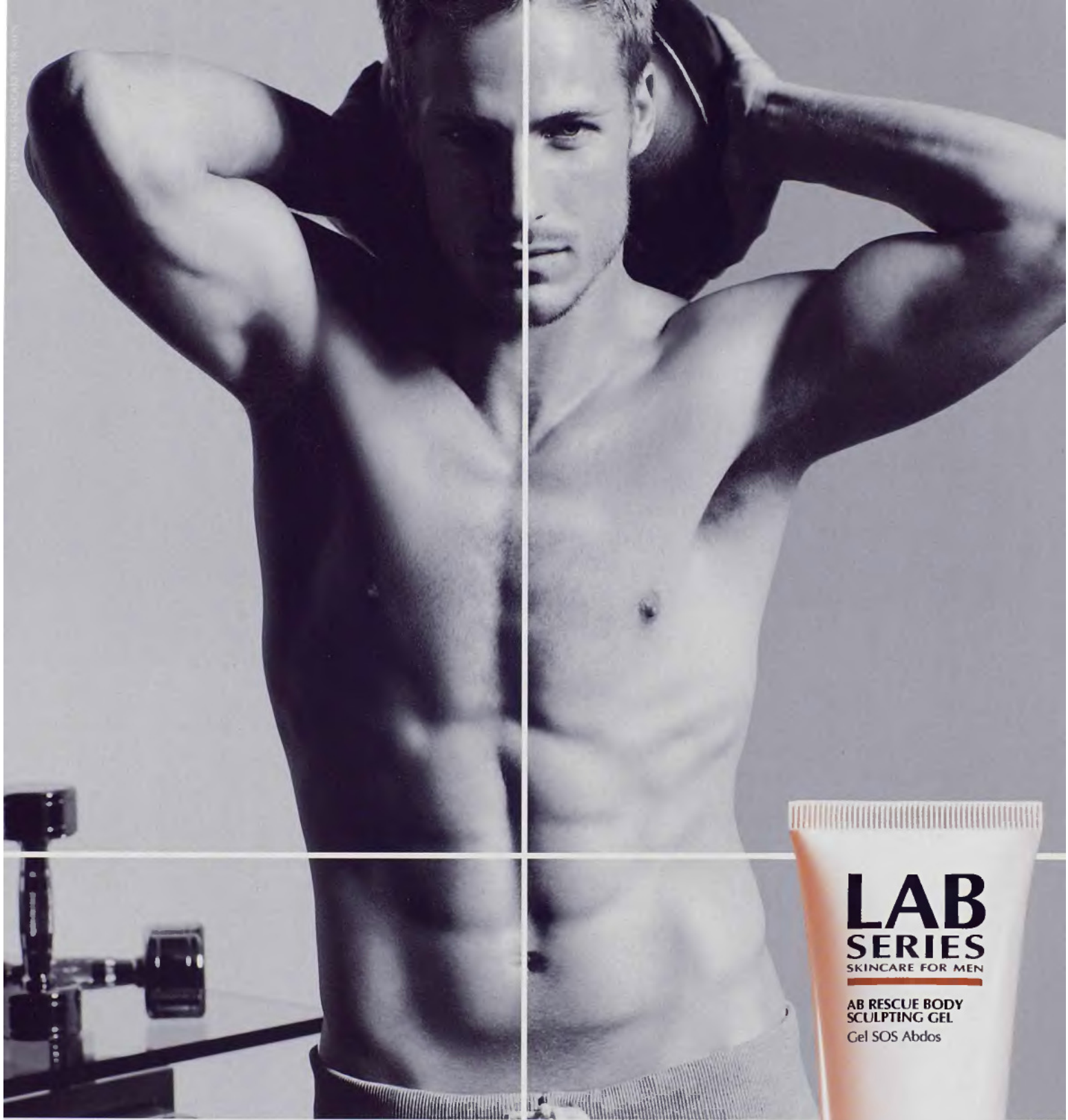
You're ready to come out of hibernation, but your New Year's resolution never got off the ground. No big deal. There's still plenty of time to whip yourself into shape—if you train smart. Step one is to get yourself out of the cave and into the gym. Once you're there, the bright lights and eye candy will help shake you out of that pizza-induced torpor.

### >BUILD MUSCLE

COMMIT to one month of consistent work. "If you're serious about wanting muscle that makes a visual impact, the key is regularity," Michael Mejia, C.S.C.S., co-author of *Scrawny to Brawny: The Complete Guide to Building Muscle the Natural Way*, has observed. According to Mejia, you can gain five to seven pounds of muscle weight in as little as four weeks if you follow this advice:

**1. DON'T SKIMP ON MEALS.** To build new muscle, you need calories. "A lot of guys don't eat enough," says Mejia. To keep your metabolism humming, aim for four or five smaller meals each day.





## tune up

### AB RESCUE BODY SCULPTING GEL

The goal: firmer, more defined abs. The means: diet and exercise. What can you do in addition? Use Lab Series Ab Rescue. This advanced cooling gel helps tighten, tone and define, for better-looking abs. Are abs that important? Absolutely.

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SERIES**  
SKINCARE FOR MEN



## summer tune-up

**2. FOCUS ON COMPOUND LIFTS.** Squats, dead lifts, presses and pull-ups are examples. These exercises work several muscle groups simultaneously, which is the best way to grow muscle fast.

**3. DON'T LIFT TOO MUCH.** For fast results, "you need less volume and more intensity," says Mejia. For the first three exercises of a session, do five sets of five reps, resting for two minutes between sets. For the fourth and last exercise, do three sets of 10 reps. Use a weight that makes it difficult to complete all five sets—once you can, increase the weight by five percent.

### training trial

**MONDAY** Dumbbell squat; barbell incline bench press; pull-up; weighted sit-up

**WEDNESDAY** Hang clean, squat and press; barbell dead lift; dip; side-lying external rotation

**FRIDAY** Front squat; dumbbell bench press; bent-over row; back extension

#### >DEFINE YOURSELF

Once you start increasing your muscle mass, cut up with cardio. Cardiovascular exercise doesn't burn away hard-earned muscle, as some people think. Done right, cardio reveals muscle. All you need is an intense 10- to 15-minute workout. It's a myth that you have to work out continuously for 20 minutes before you start burning fat; your body uses more energy when training at high intensity. To add muscle, limit your aerobic work to twice a week. To get lean, increase to four times a week. Separate cardio and strength to different days, but if you do them on the same day, hit the weights first.

#### >THE FLEX FRONT

If you want to avoid injury, you have to stretch. Most people still perform the classic "hold for 30 seconds" static stretch, which some experts believe can lead to muscle damage. Your muscles have a

***It's a myth that you have to work out continuously for 20 minutes before you start burning fat.***

built-in stretch reflex that engages after rapid movement or three seconds in a stretched position. When a muscle is statically stretched, it has a natural tendency to protect itself by contracting back to normal range. To continue stretching while your muscle is trying to contract gives way to a tug of war that invites injury.

Many experts believe that active-isolated stretching, or AIS, is the best way to get the benefits of stretching while minimizing its risks. In AIS, you hold each stretch for just three seconds and then return to the starting position to relax. After resting for a few seconds, you ease into the stretch again, progressively warming and elongating the



muscle. "Because AIS circumvents the stretch-reflex reaction, muscle fibers can elongate and release tension more efficiently," says John O'Dea of the American College of Sports Medicine.

#### >STAY COOL

Jump right into a steaming hot shower after a hard workout and you could pass out. More likely, though, you'll continue to perspire through the shower and after you dress, negating your grooming efforts. Instead, take five minutes after your workout to cool down before you hose off. When you're done, towel off thoroughly, use powder and change into a clean pair of Under Armour's relaxed boxer briefs. Made of a high-tech fiber designed to wick perspiration away from the skin, Under Armour is the perfect way to ensure you stay cool and dry no matter how hot it gets.

And you do want things to get hot at some point, which is why you should think about what it would be like to get really, really close to you. What happens when your ladylove is lusting and it's time to get physical in a whole new way? You'll be large and in charge if you've taken some mirror time beforehand to ponder what she'll experience when she gets up close and personal with your studly self.







## THE ADVANTAGE IS UNDENIABLE.

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Pictured: Relaxed Boxerbrief (0857). ©2006 UNDER ARMOUR® Performance Apparel.

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## summer tune-up



## GROOMING GREATNESS

## &gt;TRIM AND TRIMMED

Take a look at your hair—and we don't mean the stuff on your head. "The hair on the back of your neck is something to take care of between haircuts," says Bob Sloan, co-author of *A Stiff Drink and a Close Shave: The Lost Arts of Manliness*. "When you have hair creeping out your back collar, that isn't good at all." Fashion guru Nole Marin takes a whack at excessive eyebrows. "The unibrow is a horrible thing," he advises, "but don't overpluck. You don't want to look like Lady Spock." Nose hair should never be plucked but trimmed short enough to stay where it belongs. And the hair down there? Ultimately, it's your choice whether to trim, shave or go au naturel, but if your date starts humming "Welcome to the Jungle" the next time she heads below the equator, a few careful minutes with a razor, or at least a comb and scissors, is probably in order.

## &gt;SKIN TO WIN

CHECK your skin. If you're like most, you're covered with a dry, flaky layer of shine-dulling, pore-clogging schmutz left over from those long winter months in your cube. Molting has never been simpler, thanks to an advanced new lineup from the one-stop shop Lab Series



Skincare for Men. The Cool Comfort Collection includes three easy-to-use hydrators—the Instant Moisture Gel, Instant Moisture Eye Gel and Instant Moisture Lip Balm—which are sure to refresh and revive your skin.



Just don't stop at the neck, unless of course that's where you'd like all your enchanted evenings to end as well. For the collarbone to the toes, Axe has an exfoliating body scrub, which will leave the skin on your arms, chest, back, legs, feet and behind as soft as a baby and smelling irresistibly great from shower to shower.

And now that your outsides are flawless, Kara Monaco, playboy's 2006 Playmate of the Year and our certified date-ologist, is here to put

the finishing touches on your study of enhanced studliness by instructing you on the finer points of charming, seducing and finessing the female human.

Editor: Peter McQuaid, Contributors: Susannah Gora, Mike Smolinsky  
Advice: Kara Monaco



## FINISHING TOUCH

**SCENT-SATIONAL** "I love the smell of men's cologne, so it's definitely a plus. Bad body odor is an instant deal breaker."

**GET GEARED** "Simple is sexy—a plain undershirt with basic black boxer briefs peeking out from under his basketball shorts."

**FOCAL POINT** "My favorite muscle on a toned man's body is right by the hip bone on the lower abs—but it takes dedication to achieve that sort of definition."

**HANG IN THERE** "If you're about to throw in the towel, just remember how gratifying the rewards will be. When you feel good about how you look, it gives you confidence. And, for extra motivation, you'll get girls like me!"

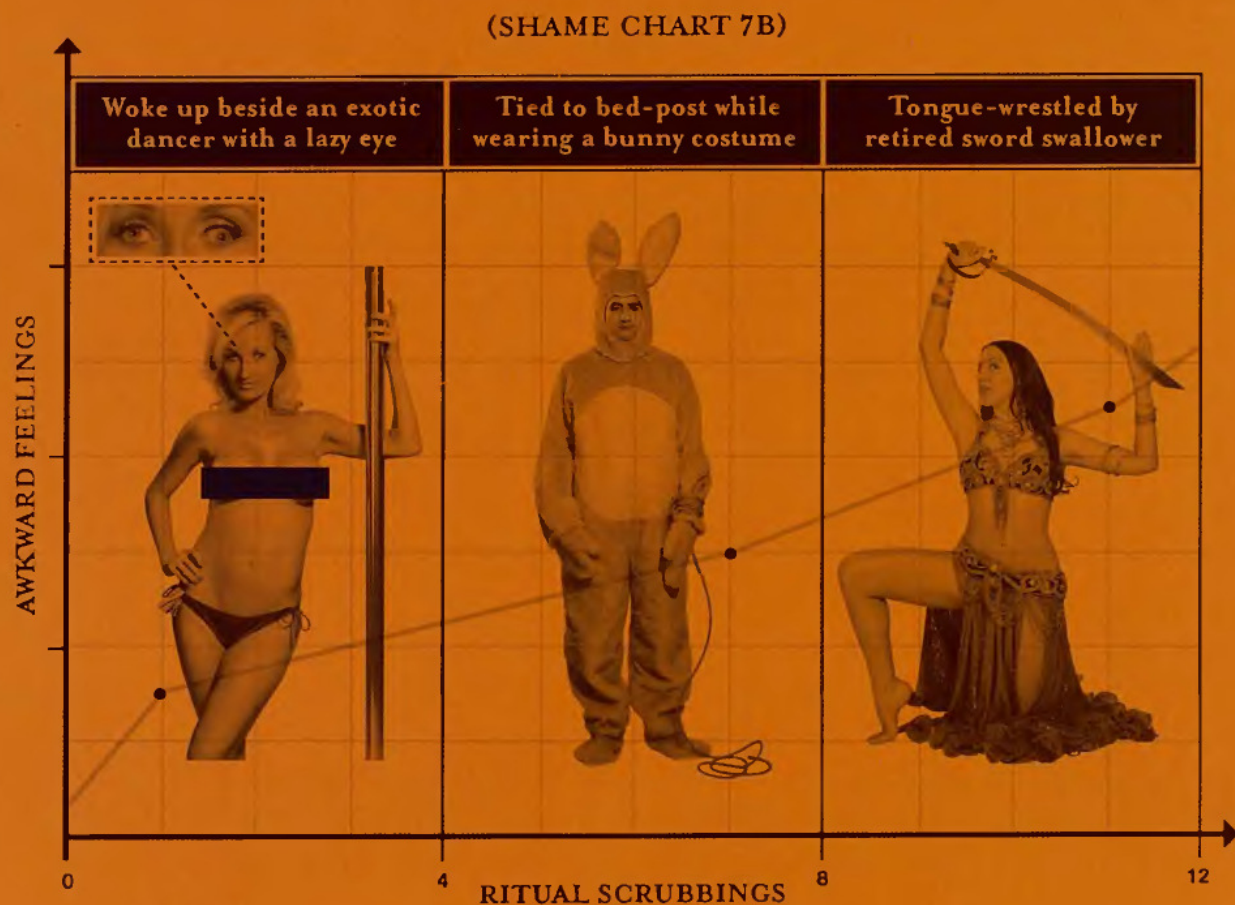
**THE ULTIMATE SECRET** "Bring your workout to the beach. All the eye candy is sure to keep you entertained—you might even catch a glimpse of a playboy shoot."





# Scrub Away The Shame

*The Order of The Serpentine can help you get over a questionable hook-up.*



Using *Axe Snake Peel* as part of *The Daily Scrubbing Ritual* will wash away shame caused by a questionable hook-up. In rare instances when an extremely questionable hook-up (illustrated above) occurs, several scrubblings may be required. Remember, rinse and repeat.

For further info, or to join, visit [www.orderoftheserpentine.com](http://www.orderoftheserpentine.com)



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CLEAN CONSCIENCE.





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"Superb-Highly Recommended"  
- *Wine Enthusiast*

"Gold Medal Winner"  
- *World Spirits Competition*

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# The Playboy Advisor

I am disturbed by the reader who said he earns "penis points" from his wife that he can redeem for sex (February). This sad letter reflects the fact that American men have lost control of their sex lives. More and more of my middle-aged friends say their wives have informed them they have no use for sex and the men should "get over it." There is even an implied ban on masturbation. The attitude seems to be that men are entitled to only as much sex as their wives desire. If she wants to host a gang bang in the town square, the attitude is "You go, girl." But if she wants little or none, the assumption is that it must be the guy's fault for not being romantic and making her want it. Is this happening everywhere or just among my friends? Men need to get some balls and demand their right to get sex either at home or elsewhere. I don't think of myself as macho, but enough is enough. Is anyone willing to join the movement?—P.L., Cocoa, Florida

Every man is already a member of the movement or at least sympathetic to the cause. Rarely will both partners in a couple that has been together longer than a year want sex in equal measure. Of course any wife who adopts the attitude that her husband should get over his desire to shag her is not contributing to a happy partnership. More important, she's missing out on a great sex life. Therapist Michele Weiner-Davis, who has written the best book we've read on this topic, *The Sex-Starved Marriage*, notes that many people view the difference in sexual desire as their spouse's problem rather than a shared challenge. "In most marriages, you end up with a tacit agreement that the person with less desire, whether husband or wife, can say, 'I don't want sex, but I also expect you to be monogamous and be okay with that,'" says Weiner-Davis. "It's blatantly unfair. In our culture women talk openly about not being in the mood, and they get social support for that. They never acknowledge what it must be like for a man to be rejected repeatedly by his own wife. The stereotype is that men just want to get off, and sometimes that's true. But sex is also about feeling wanted, attractive, loved and appreciated." When sex drops off, intimacy of other kinds tends to fade as well. Men get angry and stop interacting with their wives—never an effective seduction technique. "Demanding sex is the worst approach," Weiner-Davis says. "If guys can get away from their anger and express the loneliness and rejection they feel, they may find women to be more responsive. Men also make the mistake of thinking their wives are turned on by lingerie or X-rated movies or the same things that turn them on. But as the penis-points letter demonstrates, what women want is help around the house, an unexpected call from work to say you're thinking about her or more conversation." In other words, sex can't happen in a vacuum.



What's the best response when a woman tells you, "Let's just be friends"? I become tongue-tied and don't know what to say to keep the relationship going.—S.G., Phoenix, Arizona

There is no relationship. That's the point of LJBF. We much prefer to hear LJBL, or "Let's just be lovers."

The Advisor once wrote that "the best hangover treatment is to know your limits." You also mentioned one of the 50-odd products that claim to cure hangovers. As part of my medical school course work, I read everything scientists know about hangovers and also tested products with my friends. One recent study intrigued me. It found that an extract from the skin of the prickly pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) helps reduce inflammation caused by impurities in booze or mixers. With funding from the makers of an herbal pill that contains the extract, Dr. Jeffrey Wiese of Tulane University recruited 55 medical students for two experiments. Each student was given the extract or a placebo five hours before drinking. Wiese found that the extract helped reduce three of nine common morning-after symptoms (nausea, dry mouth and loss of appetite) and that the risk of severe hangover was reduced by half.—J.R., Morgantown, West Virginia

The three main factors that contribute to hangover, Wiese tells us, are dehydration, lack of deep sleep and mild poisoning of the body from the impurities you mention. So one common method to lessen a hangover's severity is to consume a glass of water between each drink and limit yourself to one beer, one shot or one glass of wine an hour, which is about the

rate the body can absorb it. To consume fewer impurities, drink white wine instead of red, and vodka or gin instead of rum or whiskey. It helps as well to stick with better-quality liquors. Studies have also found that aspirin and ibuprofen provide only slight relief, which is probably offset by their effect on an already irritated stomach. As for the many products out there, it's safe to say that if you need a supply of hangover pills, you drink too much, too often.

I am married to a man with a small penis. I thought I could force myself to be happy, but I'm sorry to say that size does matter. I've had numerous affairs, most recently with my husband's best friend, just so I could feel a larger cock. I learned three things: (1) Sex is only temporary, no matter how terrific it is at the time, (2) most men with big dicks are big dicks, and (3) it's not worth destroying a family over.—L.B., Indianapolis, Indiana

There's nothing wrong with being a size queen. But the question you need to answer is whether you would be happy even if your husband were better endowed.

Thank you for mentioning my site, womenrussia.com, in December. However, I found the letter from D.S. in the same issue to be somewhat misleading. He wrote that "few single Russian women can afford a train ticket to Minsk" and "any American getting seriously involved with an FSU (former Soviet Union) woman should be aware that he may be expected to support her family forever." What nonsense. If you visit Russia thinking the young women there are starving and you will be able to buy a girlfriend or wife, you will be taken for a ride. The simplest way to avoid scams is to ignore unsolicited e-mails and never send money to anyone you haven't met in person.—Elena Petrova, Queensland, Australia

On her site Petrova notes that Russians who advertise online for husbands are often dismissed as mail-order brides. In fact, she says, they are educated, adventurous women who would prefer to meet their ideal man in Russia, and often do, but have also expanded their search through the Internet. That distinguishes them, she believes, from women in poorer countries who are looking for sugar daddies.

In the February Advisor, PLAYBOY's fashion director implores men never to roll up their sleeves at the office. As a consultant, I have observed business dress in many corporate cultures. I find it is best to have buttoned sleeves (as well as a coat and tie) when meeting a client for the first time or delivering a sales presentation. However, removing your coat and rolling up your sleeves at your desk or in a problem-solving meeting gives the impression that you are a hard worker. Would-be executives are



well-advised to cultivate such an appearance.—M.B., Indianapolis, Indiana

*Working hard with your sleeves buttoned leaves the impression that you're cool under pressure, so we choose that option. It also looks better.*

**M**y girlfriend wants to know how I lost my virginity. Actually, after 26 years of waiting, I hired a hooker. That was four years ago. I have been honest with my girlfriend about everything else, so I feel guilty about withholding this. I'm pretty certain she would end our relationship if she knew. What should I do?—R.C., New York, New York

*Tell her the truth, including your motivation ("I waited a long time, and I didn't think anyone like you would ever come along"). Even without that honey coating, you may be surprised by her reaction. If she leaves in a huff, don't be too disappointed. What kind of woman throws away a relationship over such a detail? The alternative is to continue to be honest with her except about the parts of your life you think she won't approve of. That's a burden.*

**I** am getting married soon and am looking for gifts for my groomsmen. I would like to stay away from flasks, poker sets, beer mugs, money clips and other traditional items. Any suggestions?—R.G., Le Sueur, Minnesota

*Ideally you will choose a gift for each man that demonstrates your clear understanding of his passions—for example, a heavy-duty meat thermometer or personalized steak brander for the hard-core griller in the group. That's thoughtful, and he may even use your gift once or twice. But guys generally aren't as satisfied with souvenirs as they are with buddy experiences. We know one groom who bought six lift tickets. Another took everyone out for breakfast and a hot-lather shave on the morning of the nuptials. A third picked up the tux rentals and hired a masseuse to give chair massages before the ceremony.*

**I**n February a reader wrote to say he had become angry after his girlfriend tied and gagged him for 90 minutes. The Advisor said the couple needed a safe word to end the game. How exactly does one utter a safe word while gagged?—M.P., Defiance, Ohio

*Our safe word is "mmmmph," so it always works out. If you're planning to be gagged, you need a safe move. Your top might give you a bell to ring or a ball that you can drop if the scene becomes too intense. The couple in February had a larger issue to address, which is that the bottom didn't trust his top. A safe word or move is pointless without that. In his book SM 101, Jay Wiseman offers more tips for bondage that we found helpful the last time we couldn't get away for lunch: "(1) SM is something you do with someone, not to someone. (2) You almost never get into serious trouble by going too slowly. (3) If you want to know what they're into, watch their eyes. They can't fake their eyes. (4) Experience it yourself before you do it to someone else. (5)*

*Never tie a submissive into a position that would require his cooperation in releasing him." And finally, "(6) If you don't have a current CPR card, you cannot call yourself a responsible dominant." Youch.*

**C**an you tell me the best way to press a tie? Taking ties to the cleaners can rack up quite a bill. Is there an inexpensive alternative?—J.K., Jacksonville, Florida

*Use a handheld travel steamer to work out wrinkles. You should take in a tie (or a jacket, for that matter) only for spot cleaning.*

**C**all me weird, but I hate high heels. They make women's legs look disproportionate to the rest of their body. My wife insists on wearing them, which makes her taller than I am by an inch. She looks like a cross between Big Bird and a telephone pole—a total dork. Do you have any advice? After 12 years of telling her how I feel, I don't know what else to say.—J.N., Bakersfield, California

*Can you make your wife sound any hotter? Regardless of your feelings, this is a stupid thing to pursue for 12 years. Obviously your wife enjoys wearing heels, so stop looking at her feet. Besides the fact that they elongate a woman's legs, spikes also make her unsteady as she walks. That gives her an air of vulnerability that appeals to a man's biological desire to serve, protect and pursue.*

**M**y girlfriend gives great blow jobs and loves anal sex, but she won't let me give her oral. Although she is 35, she says she is saving that for marriage. She also claims she has never had vaginal intercourse. Is that possible? Whenever I attempt to go around front, I get shut down. I would like to at least get a look at it. She is a Christian and sometimes even wears a dress to bed. She rolls it up so I can get to her ass. Should I be worried that she has issues?—R.H., Birmingham, Alabama

*We'll put this as delicately as we can: You need a vagina to have vaginal intercourse.*

**H**ow often should a guy get a physical? I'm 38, and my wife wants me to go every year. Also, what are the best tests to ask for?—R.L., Chicago, Illinois

*You should have a physical every other year in your 40s and every year starting at 50. The American Heart Association recommends that men and women have their fasting lipid profile (which measures cholesterol levels, an indicator for heart disease) checked at least every five years after the age of 20 and their fasting blood glucose (which helps predict the risk of diabetes) checked every three years after the age of 45. Dr. Raul Seballos of the Cleveland Clinic, who specializes in preventive medicine, says an important gauge of health is your waist circumference, measured over your belly button. It has been found to be a better indicator than body-mass index (weight in relation to height) of an increased risk for heart disease and diabetes. A waist of more than 40 inches in men or 35 inches in women is cause for concern. Seballos suggests that*

*each exam also include a prostate-specific-antigen test, which screens for prostate cancer. The test is sometimes inaccurate and no one agrees on the best treatment if your PSA is high, but Seballos says it's useful to establish a baseline to make sure levels don't spike. He also recommends a test for highly sensitive C-reactive protein, which your liver produces. An elevated result indicates you have inflammation somewhere in your body; the location can be pinpointed with further tests. Finally Seballos suggests having the level of vitamin D in your blood checked. It helps absorb calcium, and a deficiency can indicate trouble.*

**D**uring a poker game, one of my buddies had a few too many and, upon laying down his cards, didn't realize he had won the pot. Another player scooped in the chips, but I stopped him. I said the cards speak for themselves. The other player insisted the individual is responsible for minding the action. Who's right?—Y.R., Ypsilanti, Michigan

*We think that if you're so intoxicated as to be oblivious to winning, it's past the time to bow out. That said, the cards always speak. In fact players are obliged to assist the dealer and call attention to errors of this nature, including the misreading of a hand or an insufficient bet. In this situation, Jake Austen, editor of the anthology *A Friendly Game of Poker*, notes that you should never show your hole cards unless you're sure you have a shot at the pot, because it reveals too much about how you play certain hands. He also notes that in games such as seven-card stud an oblivious winner may beat an eager pot scooper with only his up cards, and anyone at the table is more than right to point that out. "A more odious faux pas is the habit of announcing what cards are needed for the nut hand during play," Austen says. "While there is an obligation to inform the table of errors, terrible players shouldn't be discouraged from folding winning hands by a Chatty Cathy."*

**S**ay I'm out with a new girlfriend and her ex shows up and tries to win her back, and I have to have a talk with him to set things straight. What is the best thing to say to make him go away and stay away?—S.T., Atlanta, Georgia

*What is this, Wild Kingdom? To him you're a nobody, a big mistake, so anything you say will sound as if it's coming from Charlie Brown's teacher. It's a bad situation; step back until your girlfriend can convince her ex that it's over. It becomes your problem only if she needs to convince herself.*

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 each month. Write the *Playboy Advisor*, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or send e-mail by visiting our website at [playboyadvisor.com](http://playboyadvisor.com).





# THE PLAYBOY FORUM

## DON'T SPY ON ME

A MEMBER OF THE 9/11 COMMISSION TELLS US WHY WE MUST  
KEEP THE MILITARY OUT OF OUR DOMESTIC BUSINESS

BY RICHARD BEN-VENISTE

**A**n informed citizenry needs to participate in the critical issues that challenge its civil liberties and privacy. But that isn't always what happens. Partisanship and attack politics are the rule today. Americans who have raised legitimate questions and demanded honest answers have found their patriotism questioned by an administration that doesn't seem to distinguish between selling a candidate and promoting its decisions on a broad range of issues. Sadly, we've departed from our long history of bipartisan cooperation when the nation's security is involved.

In foreign relations, our proclaimed hegemony as the world's sole major power—and our corresponding disdain for coalition building—has squandered most of the international empathy for the United States that came after September 11, 2001. Only recently have we been trying desperately to recoup what we so cavalierly discarded.

In contrast to the toxic partisan atmosphere in Washington, D.C., the 9/11 Commission, made up of five Republicans and five Democrats, shocked official Washington and the national media by working together collegially and issuing a unanimous final report. We took note of a palpable hunger among Americans who wanted us to restore the unity of purpose that brought us together after 9/11. We struggled to find consensus on both procedure and substance. As we went along, we were pleased to find ourselves more often in agreement than not. Ultimately we realized there was a great power to be harnessed in unanimity—power that could be used to promote change. And while it was paramount to examine terrorist threats to our homeland and recommend ways to enhance our safety, we never lost sight of the precious freedoms that we were protecting.

At the commission's first public hearing, in early 2003, I expressed the need to balance the enhanced antiterrorism powers provided to the federal government with vigorous protection against degrading those civil rights and liberties that define us as a nation. In our final report, issued in July 2004, the commission observed that any choice between liberty and security would be a false one, for if

our liberties were curtailed, we would lose the values we struggle to defend. The 9/11 Commission recommended creating a civil liberties board as a watchdog to oversee privacy and civil rights compliance within the executive branch. Congress authorized a Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board in December 2004, albeit with diminished authority, inadequate funding and five members unilaterally selected by the president rather than through a bipartisan procedure. This anemic board did not even hold its first meeting until March 2006.

In December 2005, 17 months after our final report, the 10 members of the 9/11 Commission issued a public "report card" on the government's response to our 41 recommendations. On the subject of attention to civil liberties, the administration mustered no better than a D.

Since we issued the grades, a steady stream of reports has shown that the administration's lack of concern for humane treatment of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib was mirrored by a disregard for constitutional protections when it came to spying directed at U.S. citizens at home. An increasingly isolated group within the Bush administration has excluded other administration officials from policy decisions regarding National Security

Agency eavesdropping and the dissemination of wiretap information to other government agencies. Those in the administration who reportedly voiced concern (such as former deputy attorney general James Comey) were simply cut out of the loop.

I am particularly apprehensive about the expansion of our military's role in domestic intelligence gathering. The collection of vast amounts of information on American citizens by the Department

of Defense should be a serious cause for concern. The Pentagon's ill-named Total Information Awareness program didn't just evaporate when Admiral John Poin Dexter (of Iran-Contra notoriety) resigned. Programs such as Counterintelligence Field Activity, Eagle Eyes and TALON—names unfamiliar to most Americans—must receive robust scrutiny by Congress and the





media. Information has already surfaced about how the military is watching and maintaining files on antiwar protesters.

I believe that if another terrorist attack occurs on our soil, the administration will call for expanded military involvement in domestic intelligence gathering. Justifications such as "force protection" for expanded domestic operational bases are being discussed. History has proved that involving the Army in police and surveillance activities at home is dangerous to both civil government and the military. The Posse Comitatus Act, which restricts the military's role in domestic law enforcement, is neither quaint nor irrelevant, no matter what proponents of military expansion say.

Critics of the Bush administration have pointed to its penchant for distorting intelligence to suit its purposes. Former CIA intelligence official Paul Pillar recently pointed out how administration officials concluded that the best way to "sell" the war in Iraq was to link it with what post-9/11 America feared most: terrorism and Al Qaeda. The misuse of intelligence to create a false impression of an alliance between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein is a striking case in point. Attempts to manipulate public opinion through the politics of fear and to question the patriotism of critics such as former senator Max Cleland and Representative John Murtha—decorated war heroes—can be met only by vigorous congressional oversight, serious media coverage and a concerned citizenry.

But we have reasons to be optimistic. The outrage over President Bush's authorization of warrantless domestic wiretapping—sidestepping the secret court set up by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to consider such applications—reverberates on both sides of the aisle. A small number of conservative Republican senators has begun to speak out on civil liberties and privacy issues. The obvious logic that protecting our homeland and safeguarding our liberties are not mutually exclusive goals has begun to resonate.

It is comforting to hear Senator John Sununu (R.-N.H.) quote the words of Benjamin Franklin that have been a staple of my public appearances in the past two years: "Those who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Like many patriots concerned with the society we hand over to our children, I'd just as soon not put Franklin's warning to the test.

## RUBY WILL SET YOU FREE

THIS POP STAR'S MIDRIFF IS TRULY REVOLUTIONARY

By Joseph Braude

Ruby is on a crowded street, amid a throng of Westerners. Loose tassels on the singer's top flutter in the breeze, offering a generous glimpse of midriff with every rock-infused Arabic beat. Ruby is dancing—belly dancing—harder and faster than you've ever seen. The scene shifts and she's indoors on a couch, singing plaintively against an accordion riff.

Music videos like the one for "You Know Why," sung by one of the biggest stars in the Middle East, 24-year-old Ruby, are everywhere. Wherever you find hookahs and backgammon you'll also find Ruby's washboard stomach and men of all ages gawking at her. Every day her visage is beamed via satellite into millions of bedrooms from Baghdad to Casablanca and even across Saudi Arabia, where such

broadcasts are illegal. Don't be fooled by her tiny waist: Ruby is bigger than Osama bin Laden. Which is why some bearded clerics want her dead.

An Arab writer on a popular Internet forum recently used four words—"Kill Ruby, Liberate Jerusalem"—to sum up the backlash against the onslaught of Western-style pop culture. But what does Ruby have to do with Jerusalem? And why kill her? She's not half as brazen as rival Cairo teen idol Pussy Samir, who donned a

French maid's outfit for her breakout video last year. And unlike the more radical pop stars of Lebanon, Ruby avoids weighing in on politics. Still, critics worry that Ruby—not suicide bombers or Hollywood blockbusters—is the most destructive force in the modern Middle East.

The controversy over Ruby is symptomatic of a revolution in Ara-

bic culture that has the region's conservatives cringing. Though Arab women have long been entertainers in the Middle East, belly dancers traditionally have bellies. The top-selling female vocalist in the Arab world, Umm Kulthum, weighed more than 200 pounds. To some, the slim and sultry Ruby represents a corruption of values, by which decadent Western-style individualism



displaces Islamic ideals. It's easy to see why the region's self-appointed guardians of public virtue are up in arms.

The revolution dates to the 1990s, when satellite technology ended the stranglehold of state-controlled television. Before then you could watch the unelected ruler of your country shake hands with diplomats on the evening news or a Muslim cleric trash the Jews in a weekly Friday sermon. You still can. But the satellite dish offered forbidden thrills: back-to-back

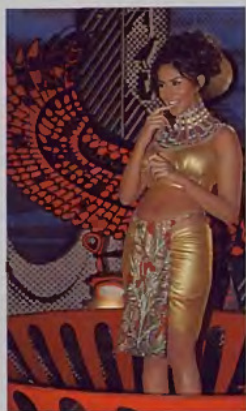


Hollywood movies, 24-hour news and French porn every night at 11 o'clock Mecca time. Though the religious establishment rallied to ban the dish—a ruling that's still law in Saudi Arabia—nine in 10 Saudi households have acquired one anyway. One of the architects of this cultural revolution is Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, a nephew of the Saudi king and a major shareholder in Planet Hollywood and Disneyland. A shrewd observer of his fellow Saudis, Bin Talal understood that the success of Al Jazeera, the Arabic news network, meant similar desires could be tapped in pop culture: Local teens would want music videos in a language they can understand, with sexy VJs who look like the girl next door minus the head scarf. Bin Talal's music empire, Rotana Audio Visual Company, controls the careers of 120 Arab stars. The company owns the rights to their songs and produces their videos. It also operates the five biggest satellite channels on which Arabic music is broadcast and controls major concert venues. But Bin Talal doesn't own Ruby: The idea of taking a modest Egyptian girl and exposing her midriff is too wild even for a royal.

The anti-Rotana crusade is a bit like Middle America's backlash against rock and roll in the 1950s, only with semiautomatic weapons. The Palestinian group Hamas, for example, slammed videos "and those who fund them" in one of its weekly newspapers, charging that Rotana's festivals promote nudity and shamelessness. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan dubbed video-clip culture "a component of the vile attack against Islam." But music television

now rivals the mosque and the military for the attention of the region's youth. Mostly in their teens and 20s, these fans represent one of the largest baby booms in history. Whoever wins their esteem can move Arab politics.

Ruby grew up dirt-poor in a Cairo slum; her family didn't even own a satellite dish. Her career began when she was 16, with an agency contract her parents signed on her behalf. While still in her teens she landed several movie roles and hooked



Ruby on the half shell.

up with a producer who shot a music video and released it on a privately owned satellite network. Her debut single, "You Know Why," broke a long-standing taboo: belly dancing with an exposed midriff on a city street. A watershed event in Arabic music television, the video made Ruby a star—and the right wing's *bête noire*—overnight. With each subsequent video, Ruby's celebrity grew bigger and more controversial, so that now her defiant sexuality has taken on Madonna-level significance in the Arab music world.

Ruby provokes more anger from the Islamist right than any of her competitors at Rotana, and she lacks the protection of the friendships on the secular left so deftly cultivated by Bin Talal. Still, in a region where teens and 20-somethings are the majority of the population, Ruby's midriff has become the emblem of a generation. A recent popularity survey in a Cairo newspaper put Ruby ahead of Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. Tame stuff, perhaps, by Western standards. But Ruby could be the most powerful force against fundamentalism in the Arab world.

## THE WAR AT HOME

ALTHOUGH IT WAS TEMPTING to watch with incredulity as violent protests against the Muhammad cartoons unfolded and spread, a new movie makes the important point that we still face similar forces here in America. *Heart of the Beholder*, which has screened on the film-festival circuit and is available on DVD, is based on the story of a young entrepreneur who ran afoul of religious activists in St. Louis when he stocked *The Last Temptation of Christ* in his chain of video-rental shops. The drama hews closely to the real-life 1988 attack orchestrated by Donald Wildmon's National Federation for Decency (now the American Family Association) against Ken Tipton and his Video

Library business. The only chain willing to carry the film in St. Louis, Video Library was picketed, and the local prosecutor slapped it with a bogus obscenity charge. Tipton even received death threats against his children. Though Tipton won the court case, Video Library went bankrupt and he subsequently attempted suicide. In re-creating these events, *Heart of the Beholder* offers a chilling message: Riots and Danish flag-burnings are analogous not only to the ugly, much-publicized gatherings (pictured) held in front of the home of *Last Temptation* studio head Lew Wasserman but also to the largely unrecognized intimidation of ordinary Americans like Ken Tipton.



## MARGINALIA

**FROM A STATEMENT** by ex-Smiths singer Morrissey after it was revealed that the FBI and British intelligence had questioned him about his criticism of the Iraq war: "I don't belong to any political groups, I don't really say anything unless I'm asked directly, and I don't even demonstrate in public. My view is that neither England nor America is a democratic society. You can't really speak your mind, and if you do, you're investigated."



### FROM COMMENTS

by Roanoke College psychology professor Galdino Pranzarone: "The Greek goddess of beauty, Aphrodite, was beautiful all over but was unique in that her buttocks were especially beautiful. Her shapely, rounded hemispheres were so appreciated by the Greeks that they built a special temple, Aphrodite Kallipygos, which literally meant 'goddess with the beautiful buttocks.' This was probably the only religious building in the world that was dedicated to buttock worship."



### FROM AN ADVERTISEMENT

for Guardsmark security: "Being serious about security is not just about employing more security officers or buying more technological equipment. It is about approaching security in a different, smarter way. It is about knowing the background of one's employees and on-site contractors. It is about ensuring that the one person accountable for security also purchases security. It is about considering the realm of possible threats and developing proactive solutions. It is about forming vendor partnerships to give others a stake in ensuring that all that can be done is done. It is about a commitment to total quality."

**FROM AN ESSAY** by Safiyyah Ally on Altmuslim.com: "I'm quite troubled over the cartoon controversy in Denmark, not because of the cartoons themselves, which I agree are offensive, but rather because of the absurd overreaction of Muslims worldwide. We haven't learned from the Rushdie affair—this is yet another instance where we've gone out of our way to make ourselves look stupid. Why are we so excitable, anyway? Why even care what a newspaper thinks? We Muslims cannot force other people to appreciate the Prophet the way we do."



**FROM A GUEST BLOG** written by Senator Russ Feingold (D.-Wis.) about domestic spying, on TPMcfe.com: "This administration reacts to anyone who

(continued on page 49)



# READER RESPONSE

## RIVER DEEP, TOXINS HIGH

Your article "Don't Drink the Water" (March) doesn't go far enough. The pharmaceutical residues in our water supply will have disastrous implica-



Dead fish hint at future problems.

tions for the human species. When people and animals ingest antibiotics, up to 90 percent is excreted. While water-treatment methods remove all but a few parts per billion of these residues, the remaining few parts present in groundwater, lakes and rivers provide the perfect conditions to create antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Continuous low-level exposure allows bacteria to develop resistance. We already have resistant strep, staph, TB, salmonella and other bacteria, and it looks likely that antibiotic-resistant pneumonia will become a major killer in the future. Particularly saddening is that, because the problem is beyond individual control, everyone ignores it. Our government ignores the problem too, and our scientists will not agree until it is too late. Thanks for your article. At least it makes people think about it.

Michele Buchanan  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

## THOU SHALT WHAT?

If creationists want to believe the earth is only 10,000 or 50,000 years old despite overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, that's fine with me ("Origins of Life," February). They can believe the world is flat, for all I care. But when Hugh Ross asserts that all of humanity descended from one man and one woman, I wonder if he even considers the most obvious implication of this belief. If the story of Adam and Eve were a literal one, that would mean all of us are the end product of an act considered to

be one of the most vile and disgusting in cultures the world over: incest. For Adam and Eve's children to have had offspring of their own, they would have had to mate with their siblings or with their own parents. It would have taken a couple of generations of rampant incest before a person could possibly have made the choice to mate with someone who wasn't an immediate relative. Would Ross have us believe that the idea of screwing one's own family members was somehow less sickening to people back then?

Alex Townsend  
Waverly, Pennsylvania

PLAYBOY furthers the promise of religious freedom by opening *Forum* to religious discussion; that's pretty exciting. Many religions are liberal traditions. However, Bernard Gert's 10 new commandments (February) are just another list of neoconservative thou-shalt-nots constituting a repetition of all the old mistakes. His language is legalistic, his stance arrogant. God himself deemed the original Ten Commandments a failure (the Bible story says no man can obey the law); so too are Gert's 10 fated to inadequacy. The problem of obedience without understanding is in the human condition, not in the law. Remaking failed pseudoreligious law is like trying to contain water with chains.



Ten simple rules?

Gert's remade laws, like the ones before them, become complex, hypocritical and impossible to follow.

Charles Edwards  
Austin, Texas

## MUSLIMS' EURO TRIP

Here in Denmark, where I live, we are in the midst of a battle over some drawings of Muhammad that appeared in a

Danish newspaper. The kind of reaction they've caused is crazy. People are boycotting Danish companies in Muslim countries and burning our flag in Gaza. I guess the Middle East just hasn't had a Hugh Hefner to loosen them up.

Peter Käehne  
Copenhagen, Denmark

Reading the outrageous, inflammatory and in my eyes xenophobic letter by Michele Milford ("Reader Response," February) compelled me to comment. I am the German wife of a sergeant in the U.S. Army. While I by no means deny that there is an ongoing problem between American soldiers and the local



Germany's Turks spark debate.

Turkish population, the notion that it is not safe for an American citizen to take a taxi at night in a German city is deeply insulting and flat-out untrue. It must also be said that Turks are not the sole factor in this conflict. American soldiers are far away from home, and they tend to be young and quite frequently drunk, out looking for a good time. A good number of them do not show a lot of sensitivity when it comes to the local customs, be it in their approach to Germans or Turks. The problems German society faces with Turkish residents are very complex and should not be reduced to just Turks hating Americans or anybody else. I apologize if my letter seems insulting toward Americans in any way. I am not trying to downplay the problems one faces when stationed abroad, but I do wish to state that there are assholes all over the place, and that goes for soldiers as well as Turks.

Siiri Wright  
Mons, Belgium

E-mail via the web at [letters.playboy.com](mailto:letters.playboy.com). Or write: 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019.



## NEWSFRONT



## Monster Truck

BOISE, IDAHO—A Homeland Security officer arrived on February 7 at the federal Natural Resource Center and demanded that Dwight Scarbrough remove antiwar signs from his truck or move it off the federal lot. Scarbrough, who served five years in the Navy, is a scientist at the center. He also works with Veterans for Peace, participates in protests and likes to display his opinions on his pickup. Last year, after complaints at work about a BUSHIT sticker, he and his boss reviewed the relevant statutes and found his expression was perfectly legal, so Scarbrough was disturbed by the recent visit. "My rights are very dear to me," he says. "I served my country to defend them. And one of the things I was defending is free speech. It's the First Amendment for a reason—not the last, not the middle. The first."

## Illiberal Arts

PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA—In February the state legislature passed a version of the so-called academic bill of rights, the pet cause of David Horowitz, conservative activist and author of *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*. The national movement in favor of this platform—spearheaded by the right-wing Students for Academic Freedom—came about in reaction to professors voicing opposition to the war in Iraq. Under the guise of protecting free speech, advocates seek to impose political oversight of personnel and curricula decisions, thus attempting to stifle professors who would criticize the Bush administration, the war or any of a host of positions conservatives hold dear, such as outlawing abortion. In a particularly Orwellian twist, Students for Academic Freedom uses language from the Supreme Court's 1967 decision *Keyishian v. Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York*, which actually struck down Cold War loyalty oaths New York demanded of its professors. Bills similar to South Dakota's are being considered in a dozen other states, including Pennsylvania, where hearings are currently under way. The U.S. Congress may try to add an academic bill of rights to the Higher Education Reauthorization Act this year.

## Under Armor

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Two years into President Bush's five-year, \$15 billion global AIDS plan, some hard numbers have emerged. Of the \$294 million spent in 2005 on prevention programs, \$76 million went to abstinence efforts (primarily

run by faith-based groups), while only \$66 million went to pay for condoms and programs to encourage their use. "We clearly recognize that it is very important to work with faith-based organizations," says Dan Mullins, a deputy regional director in Africa for the humanitarian organization CARE. "But at the same time, we don't want to fall into the trap of assuming faith-based groups are good at everything." Dr. Abeja Apunyo, a Ugandan representative for the reproductive-health nonprofit Pathfinder International, adds, "This drive for abstinence puts a lot of pressure on girls to get married earlier. For years now we have been trying to tell our daughters they should finish their education and train in a profession before getting married. Otherwise they have few options if they find themselves separated from their husband."



## Roaming Charges

LONDON—It is possible to track cell phones by the signal they emit, even if they don't feature embedded GPS technology. Several British companies now offer online monitoring of the movements of mobile phones. The companies will provide instant position information, scheduled location checks, time-lapse maps of movements or longer-term reports. Theoretically, cell phone owners must give their consent to allow their phone to be used as a tracking device, but initial reports demonstrate alarmingly lax security.

## MARGINALIA

(continued from page 47)

questions this illegal program by saying that those of us who demand the truth and stand up for our rights and freedoms somehow have a pre-9/11 worldview. In fact, the president has a pre-1776 worldview. Our government has three branches, not one. And no one, not even the president, is above the law."

**FROM AN EDITORIAL** by George Monbiot about radio-frequency identification tags implanted in U.S. workers by CityWatcher.com, an Ohio company:

"A tag like this has a maximum range of a few meters. But another implantable device emits a signal that allows someone to be found or tracked by satellite. The patent notice says it can be used to locate the victims of kidnapping or people lost in the wilderness. There are, in other words, plenty of legitimate uses for implanted chips. This is why they bother me. A technology whose widespread deployment, if attempted now, would be greeted with horror will gradually become unremarkable. As this happens, its purpose will begin to creep. As it is with all such intrusions on our privacy, it won't be easy to put your finger on exactly what's wrong with this technology. It won't really amount to a new form of control, as all the people who accept the implants will already be subject to monitoring or tracking of one kind or another. It will always be voluntary, at least to the extent that anything the state or our employers want us to do is voluntary. But there is something utterly revolting about it. It is another means by which the barriers between ourselves and the state, ourselves and the corporation, ourselves and the machine are broken down."



**FROM COMMENTS** by David Swanson, co-founder of AfterDowning Street.org, in the book *The Case for Impeachment*: "If you can't have impeachment now, with all the crimes of this administration, you're basically saying you can have impeachment only for adulterous sex."

**FROM MARK OLIVER'S BLOG**, discussing revelations that Prince Charles sees himself as working against the prevailing political consensus: "Should our heir to the throne be classified as a political dissident? When we think of political dissidents we probably don't think of people who live in palaces and castles and ride around in horse-drawn carriages. Let's face it, Prince Charles is not exactly Aung San Suu Kyi. He might burn his tongue on a particularly hot crumpet, but he's hardly likely to be spirited away in the middle of the night and be held under indefinite house arrest, even under the latest antiterror laws."





## SEX AND THE SERVICE

SOLDIERS ARE HUNKERED DOWN IN FOREIGN LANDS, BUT SOME THINGS TRANSCEND BORDERS. JUST CHECK THE FACTS AND FIGURES



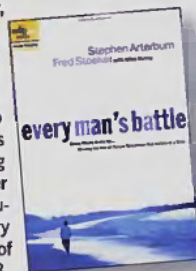
**FIVE TO SIX PERCENT** of female soldiers are pregnant at any given time, according to a 1999 Army study. Military maternity uniforms are provided to enlisted personnel; officers can purchase them. Soldiers who decide to remain in the Army through their pregnancy are considered available for worldwide deployment four months after giving birth.

**"SERGEANT CONDOM"** IS the name of an educational brochure distributed by the Army. Among its words of wisdom: "Don't open them with your teeth," "Wetter is better," and "Never reuse condoms." For soldiers unfamiliar with safe-sex variants, the pamphlet delves into what it calls "Rip n Roll etiquette" and describes several different types of condoms, including "Big Johnson, one size does not fit all," "The Hugger, fits all shapes" and "The Tickler, ribbed and knobby."

## A FEW GOOD MEN

**9,501 SOLDIERS WERE** discharged for homosexuality between 1994—when the "don't ask, don't tell" policy was adopted—and 2003, according to a 2005 General Accounting Office report. Perhaps more significant is how many of those soldiers could have provided crucial skills. The number of those dismissed for homosexuality who are experts in Arabic, Farsi or Korean, the languages of the "axis of evil" countries: 322.

**NEW LIFE MINISTRIES** hopes to send 6,000 abstinence kits, titled "Every Soldier's Battle," to chaplains. The kits promote Bible-based abstinence from pornography, adultery, nonmarital sex and masturbation, offering this advice: "Your goal is sexual purity. You are sexually pure when no sexual gratification comes from anyone or anything but your wife." Cost per kit, which comes in camouflage: \$50. As of February 21, 2006, the number of kits requested was 26,268.



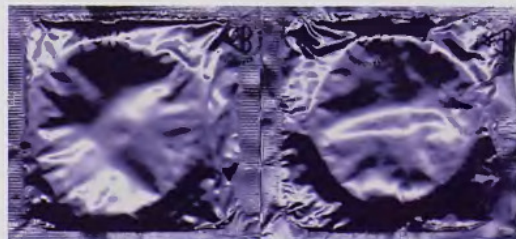
**FROM 1951 TO 1972** pregnant soldiers were involuntarily discharged. With the establishment of an all-volunteer force in 1972, the Army was authorized to assess pregnancy discharges on a case-by-case basis. In 1976 involuntary pregnancy discharges were ruled to violate the Fifth Amendment. Now "soldiers may choose to remain in the service or separate," according to the Army's policy guide. "Officers with obligations due to schooling, incentive pay or funded programs are not eligible for release until completion of service obligation."



**43,606** IS THE NUMBER of boxes of condoms sold by tactical field exchange operations in Iraq between January 2004 and January 2006. (Some troops use condoms to keep sand and moisture from jamming their weapons.) Iraq tactical field exchange operations also sold 9,528 pregnancy-test kits in the same period. (There is no known military use for a pregnancy test.)

**OVERSEAS MILITARY HOSPITALS** are barred from performing abortions. The ban went into effect in 1988 at the behest of Ronald Reagan, was repealed in 1993 under Bill Clinton and was reinstated in 1995 after Republicans gained control of both houses of Congress in the 1994 midterm elections. If soldiers seek an abortion elsewhere, military health insurance will not cover the cost, even in cases of rape or incest.

**IN 2002 31 PERCENT** of men in the Navy agreed with the statement "When a birth-control method is not available, I believe you just have to take a chance and hope a pregnancy does not occur." Among female sailors, 15 percent agreed with the statement.



## STEALTH HELP

**ACCORDING TO THE NAVY**, emergency contraception pills are available at every Navy clinic and hospital in the world at no cost. (The pills greatly reduce the chances of pregnancy after unprotected sex.) But according to the Navy's own 2003 survey, only 23 percent of enlisted women believed emergency contraception was available where they were stationed; 10 percent of men thought it was available.

## 901 SEXUAL ASSAULTS

of service members were reported to the Department of Defense in 2002. That number has continued to increase, with reports rising to 1,012 in 2003 and jumping again, to 1,700, in 2004.

## 12 PERCENT OF WOMEN

at the junior enlisted level reported having been subjected to sexual coercion, according to a 2002 Defense Manpower Data Center survey. In the same survey, 36 percent indicated that they had received unwanted sexual attention.

## FRIENDLY FIRE

**A 2005 NAVY REPORT** said that 10 percent of young female sailors became pregnant in 2001. Of those pregnancies, 64 percent were unplanned. Unmarried women accounted for 49 percent of the unplanned pregnancies. In 81 percent of these unplanned pregnancies involving unmarried women, the father was also in the military.





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# PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: SHEPARD SMITH

*A candid conversation with the Fox News Channel anchor about political bias, watching a man die and the infamous time he said "blow job" on the air*

Ask many television watchers about Fox News Channel's Shepard Smith and, even though he has covered inaugurations and executions, wars and natural disasters, they will recall the time he was supposed to say that Jennifer Lopez's Bronx neighbors were more likely to "give her a curb job than a block party" but instead, on live TV, he slipped and said "blow job." Despite (or partly because of) the J. Lo BJ incident, Smith has been gaining eyeballs almost as swiftly as he delivers his lightning-fast on-air reports. Indeed, he has emerged as one of the most influential television anchormen in the post-Jennings, Brokaw and Rather era, a feat made more impressive by his not being on a Big Three network.

Known for his gripping, irreverent, folksy, rapid-fire style, Smith anchors two daily Fox News Channel broadcasts: Studio B, at three P.M., and, at seven, Fox Report, which had already trounced its cable competition before Smith broke from the pack last year with some of the most riveting Hurricane Katrina coverage found on any station. He placed himself on a New Orleans highway overpass that became a de facto refugee camp for sick and dying people who literally emerged—on foot and on home-made rafts—from the rising floodwaters. His passionate, emotional reportage won critical praise and tripled his ratings.

Fox Report, which ushers in the network's prime-time lineup, a blitzkrieg of Bill O'Reilly,

Hannity & Colmes and Greta Van Susteren, has been the number-one cable news program in its time slot for more than 60 consecutive months. The show beats the other cable news networks' offerings combined, with double and sometimes triple the ratings of CNN's Situation Room, with Wolf Blitzer, and quadruple those of MSNBC's Hardball With Chris Matthews.

Katrina wasn't the first story for which Smith provided engrossing coverage. He has reported from the scenes of the Columbine massacre and the Oklahoma City bombing, as well as such international hot spots as Iraq and Israel. Along the way he has made a few notable blunders, including the time he announced the death of the pope while the pontiff was still alive. And, of course, video of the J. Lo blow-job comment flooded the Internet. Asked about the worst part, Smith says, "I had to explain it to my mother."

The gaffe was an embarrassing moment for a family from the small country town of Holly Springs, Mississippi, population approximately 8,000, where Smith was born and raised and where his father worked as a cotton merchant.

After what he describes as a normal small-town childhood, Smith attended Ole Miss, where he was a reporter for the university television station. That led to a series of jobs at small stations throughout the South. After a

stint in Miami he moved to Los Angeles, where he covered the O.J. Simpson trial for *A Current Affair*. Next came reporting assignments for Fox affiliate stations and, finally, an anchor job at Rupert Murdoch's fledgling Fox News Channel. In September 1999 Smith took the helm of Fox Report and transformed the show, making it TV's fastest-paced newscast—so fast that he often dispenses with verbs.

To talk with Smith, PLAYBOY tapped Contributing Editor David Sheff, who last interviewed New York Times columnist Thomas L. Friedman for the magazine. Sheff reports, "Throughout the day, Smith moved as fast as he speaks on his newscasts. Keeping up with him as he met with his staff, rewrote scripts, cracked jokes, answered e-mails, fielded phone calls and raced through the building to arrive a second before his new live Fox radio broadcast went on the air—all while answering my questions—was dizzying. On my way to Smith's office in the Fox News Channel building in New York City, I passed Bill O'Reilly, the subject of a 2002 *Playboy* Interview. When O'Reilly asked where I was heading, I told him, 'To see Shepard Smith.' He responded, 'Make him squirm.'"

**PLAYBOY:** In late winter ABC News anchor Bob Woodruff was wounded by a roadside bomb in Iraq. How has that affected your industry?



"The more secretive a government is, the more skeptical we need to be. News is not broken in a White House briefing room. Whenever we don't get information right away we have learned that we have to pay more attention."



"I got the sense that some people there during Katrina, especially reporters, didn't realize poor people existed. I think it was a wake-up call for some media elite who grew up with a silver spoon and don't really know America."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

"Some people have come to believe that we are right-wing and in the hip pocket of the administration. I don't toe anyone's line. The moment they try to tell me to distort reality, I tell them to fuck off. It has never happened."



**SMITH:** It's one of the many reminders of the hazards and risks you take on when you sign up for the job. We have to be careful, however. We have to report it but not overdo it. Some stations overdid it.

**PLAYBOY:** How can such a significant story be overreported?

**SMITH:** He is one of our fraternity—a respected member—but that should not necessarily make the story any larger or more important than those of the other injuries and deaths that occur every day in Iraq. Many viewers are familiar with him, so it's a compelling way to tell the story, and I understand that. But I also understand when the military community and families remind us that soldiers over there are being harmed and dying. To be fair to them and to do our jobs correctly, we have to recognize that some of the non-stop reporting on the Woodruff story is wrong. We've tried not to do it here. We update it when there's something new to say, and meanwhile we pray for his recuperation.

**PLAYBOY:** Would the bomb make you think twice about heading back to Iraq?

**SMITH:** No. There are risks working in mines and risks in doing what we do. You go where the stories are. We do it because we think it's important for Americans to know what our government is doing on our behalf. Relying on press releases from the White House isn't enough. We have to go out there and look for ourselves.

**PLAYBOY:** Is it becoming more difficult for reporters to do that? The Bush administration has been accused of having draconian control over reporters' access, whether in Iraq or Washington.

**SMITH:** I wish we could go out and report all over Iraq, but the insurgents have made it impossible for journalists to go where we want. If you go out in a vehicle that has TV on the side, you may as well put a bull's-eye on it.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you deny the administration has been successful in controlling reporters' access to this and other stories?

**SMITH:** No, it concerns me. The more secretive a government is, the more skeptical we need to be. News is not broken in a White House correspondents' briefing room. As journalists, whenever we don't get information right away we have learned that we have to pay more attention.

**PLAYBOY:** Such as when it took days for the White House, and particularly Dick Cheney's office, to comment when the vice president shot a prominent lawyer in a hunting mishap?

**SMITH:** Yes. History says you put out information as soon as you have it—unless

you have to work the information. Was it reworked? We don't know. White House spokesman Scott McClellan says he was surprised by the way it was handled. The White House says it was surprised by it. Every Republican commentator who has come on our air has said he or she wishes it had happened differently. The only person in America who says it was handled correctly is the vice president. But listen, every administration tries its best to control the flow of information, and it's our job as journalists to try to get as much information as possible. Short of anything that would compromise national security, I want access to everything.

**PLAYBOY:** One of the differences between the coverage of the war in Iraq and that of

**PLAYBOY:** The administration probably wasn't thrilled to have you reporting from the highway overpass in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, particularly at a time when it was telling the American public the government was in control of the situation. For the next hurricane or natural disaster, people like you may well be kept out.

**SMITH:** If that's the case, it's a sad state of affairs. I would hope they would get better at managing crises, not managing the media.

**PLAYBOY:** In addition to Iraq, you have reported from Israel.

**SMITH:** I just returned. There was a great deal of sorrow about Ariel Sharon, about what their warrior, as they call him, has gone through. But more than that, there was concern that it leaves a power vacuum.

**PLAYBOY:** Did the Hamas victory in the Palestinian election catch you off guard?

**SMITH:** We had some inklings, though the margin of victory was universally surprising. You never know what will happen. Who would ever have thought that the leader of Sinn Féin and the prime minister of Great Britain would come together and shake hands, but they did. We can all be hopeful, but the Middle East remains a difficult region.

**PLAYBOY:** What's the most likely scenario for Iran?

**SMITH:** Iran looked so good at one point, or at least better, but Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad seems to march to the beat of his own drummer. International consensus is that the world cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon, so it doesn't look good over there. I don't know how you end up solving it.

**PLAYBOY:** In Iran, in Iraq and throughout the Middle East, protests and violence erupted over the publication of cartoons depicting Muhammad in ways that offended many

Muslims. Was the press wrong to show the cartoons?

**SMITH:** I remember when a piece of art that had hung on the Virgin Mary was shown in New York. Christians were not pleased. It became a news story, and publishing it was right. You don't stand back from publishing things that make people uncomfortable. The Abu Ghraib prison photos made people uncomfortable. You don't want to overplay them. You don't want to inflame and incite. But, hell, they're news. The cartoons were news because of the reaction. We ran them—judiciously, sparingly and in context—and I'm glad we did. I understand the fear of other news organizations that were afraid to run them,



The blood rushed to my toes. I had just said "blow job" on the air.

previous wars is the administration's prohibition against showing flag-draped coffins in the media. Should they be shown?

**SMITH:** I suppose that depends on your perspective.

**PLAYBOY:** What's your perspective?

**SMITH:** Many people understand that people die in wars, yet they don't want to see flag-draped coffins every day on the news. A parade of flag-draped coffins can desensitize you.

**PLAYBOY:** Yet they are part of the story—a reminder of daily U.S. casualties.

**SMITH:** I didn't make the decision not to show them. If it were up to me, I might make another decision. In general I believe less secrecy and more access is always better.



but I'm glad we chose to. Sometimes you have to stand up to those who want you to become fearful.

**PLAYBOY:** After covering stories from Iraq to Oklahoma City, you have said Hurricane Katrina was the story of your life. Why?

**SMITH:** I knew and cared about New Orleans, so it was personal, but the main thing is I was there in the middle of the story as it played out. I saw firsthand what was being done and, more important, what wasn't being done. I was in one place, on one overpass, watching people wash up out of the floodwaters, thousands of people. When they got to the bridge, they weren't told where to go. They weren't given water or food, formula for their babies or insulin that would keep them alive.

**PLAYBOY:** Looking back, where do you place the blame?

**SMITH:** Initially I blamed mother nature and those levees. You can also blame people just being there in the first place. Who thinks it's a good idea to have a city behind levees that can stand only a category-three hurricane? It's moronic. How frickin' stupid. Once it happened, however, I started blaming the system. Where was the federal government? Where was the leadership? Immediately after the planes hit the Twin Towers in New York, Rudy Giuliani came out of the bowels of the city and led it. Where was the leader in New Orleans?

**PLAYBOY:** At what point did it dawn on you that most of the people in the most serious trouble were black?

**SMITH:** From moment one. I know New Orleans. I knew who was affected.

**PLAYBOY:** Some officials and commentators blamed the people themselves for refusing to leave.

**SMITH:** We saw many people who tried to leave but couldn't. If you're very poor, evacuating is harder. It's expensive. You have to eat, you have to pay for gas if you have a car. If you have no car, it's nearly impossible. I came away from New Orleans very, very sad, and I remain sad. The rich people were fine, but the rest.... We—our government—couldn't respond. I got the sense that some people there, especially reporters, didn't realize poor people existed. I think it was a wake-up call for some media elite who grew up with a silver spoon and went to Harvard or Yale and don't really know America.

**PLAYBOY:** It has come out that the White House knew there were serious concerns about the levees breaking even as President Bush, responding to a question from Diane Sawyer, said, "I don't think anyone anticipated the breach of the levees."

**SMITH:** Nobody should have assumed the levees wouldn't break. Many studies had been done. Most astounding to me all these months later is that we're now repopulating a place where we know it will happen again if there's another hurricane like that one or worse. I'm dumbfounded.

**PLAYBOY:** During your coverage, at some point it seemed you had lost your objectivity as a reporter. You were pissed off. In your opinion, is it acceptable for a reporter to become emotionally involved in a story?

**SMITH:** This one just got away from me.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you generally in control enough not to become emotional?

**SMITH:** Almost always, except there in New Orleans. I've shed a tear here or there accidentally. There are overwhelming moments.

**PLAYBOY:** Covering the hurricane, Geraldo Rivera cried too.

**SMITH:** It must have been a horrible shock for somebody like Geraldo, who's an emotional guy in the first place, to arrive at a story he'd been watching unfold for days and find out it's even worse than he had heard it described.

**PLAYBOY:** Is getting emotional good for ratings and therefore encouraged, or would you try not to cry?

**SMITH:** Normally you wouldn't show it. You have a commercial break when you can regain your thoughts and organize yourself. In this particular story there were no commercial breaks. The news was unfolding before us. When someone with a dying baby in his hands walks up to you—and you have been screaming about the situation for days—you don't always have time for editing. I was emotional because I was frustrated and confused. I became exasperated because help was not coming for these people. You shouldn't be left to die in 90-degree heat on a bridge in the middle of a major American city. If we can't be ready for something like this—something like a hurricane we knew was coming—what's going to happen when those bastards light a fire under us again? What's going to happen the next time they knock buildings down? How are we going to respond?

**PLAYBOY:** You broadcast from a network that has been charged with bending over backward in its support of the president, but you're making a serious accusation against the Bush administration.

**SMITH:** When you talk about this sort of thing, some people are 100 percent convinced that you're politically motivated and trying to bring down the government, that you want to hurt the president. But I do not come at life from that place. I just think we as a country need to answer these questions before it's too late. As to bending over backward to support this administration, I don't toe anyone's line. No one in this building toes anyone's line. The moment they try to tell me to distort reality, I tell them to fuck off. It has never happened.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you deny that Fox is conservative and pushes a conservative agenda?

**SMITH:** If you hear something enough, you come to believe it, and yes, some people have come to believe that we are right-wing and in the hip pocket of the administration. But I know better.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you seen *Outfoxed*, the documentary that purports to expose

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Fox News Channel's right-wing political agenda?

**SMITH:** I've never seen it.

**PLAYBOY:** How do you respond to its premise that Fox is a political tool for the right, backed by owner Rupert Murdoch and chairman Roger Ailes?

**SMITH:** I know the premise, and I know the truth. I'm real comfortable here. I sleep well at night.

**PLAYBOY:** That doesn't address the charge that the network has a political agenda.

**SMITH:** A lot of our critics come from the competition. No one cared until we started beating everyone. They think, Who the hell are you, getting these crazy numbers? Who the hell are you, attracting all this attention from media all over the world? Why does everybody care? Here you upstarts come along with your damn Rupert Murdoch. That's what it comes down to.

**PLAYBOY:** Fox News Channel's slogan is "Fair & Balanced." Do you maintain that it is?

**SMITH:** It's our mandate.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you suggest that Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity are fair and balanced?

**SMITH:** Bill O'Reilly does a show about what Bill O'Reilly thinks. He's very honest about that. It's commentary. It's about his opinion. Is Sean Hannity a right-winger? Yessiree Bob, he is. He wouldn't disagree with that. But I don't find it interesting to slant the news, so I don't. I don't care about the politics of it all. I don't care, really, about who's to blame for people on the bridge dying around me. I just want to know who is in charge and who is responsible.

**PLAYBOY:** Would you cover CIA leaks, for example, in the same way if Clinton were in office? Are you more inclined to give the Bush administration the benefit of the doubt?

**SMITH:** My group just wants to get it right. We're not here to take people down or build people up. We're here to let our viewers know what happened.

**PLAYBOY:** Fox seemed to exult in the woes of the Clinton administration and often minimizes the ills of the Bush administration. Do you think exposing a CIA agent is more egregious than having sex with an intern?

**SMITH:** Do we try to find out the truth as aggressively with this administration as we had with a previous administration? We'd better. My group certainly does. Brit Hume says his bunch does, and Brit is a man of integrity, as far as I'm concerned.

**PLAYBOY:** Have you ever been asked to push a conservative point of view on a story?

**SMITH:** I wouldn't still be at Fox if I had.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you acknowledge that Murdoch started Fox News Channel as an answer to the perceived liberal bias in the media in general and on CNN in particular?

**SMITH:** I've been here since before there was a Fox News Channel, long before, and there's nothing further from the truth. It's about serving a market and telling the truth. When I was standing in New



Orleans, I called out my Fox colleagues in New York when they were reporting one thing while I was seeing another on the front line. It's no one's party line.

**PLAYBOY:** You're referring to your on-screen fight with Hannity, when he announced that the National Guard had arrived. You said it hadn't. What exactly happened?

**SMITH:** I respect Sean Hannity. Sean understands more about life than people give him credit for, but on this story he was out of touch. Like everyone else, he was told everything was going to be okay. Once he heard the truth, however, he was fine with it. And we didn't have a fight on the air. Sean was reporting the news he was fed, but I was there. When I told him, he understood.

**PLAYBOY:** Before Katrina, when else were you at the center of a breaking story?

**SMITH:** I got to Columbine the day the massacre happened, and I stayed for a couple of weeks.

**PLAYBOY:** Was it a random assignment, or did you ask to go?

**SMITH:** The shooting started when I was in the newsroom. Jesus Christ, I thought, They're shooting inside a school? I needed to go. Period. I was there a few hours later. It was pre-9/11, so you could get on a plane pretty damn fast. I was on the air before other networks arrived.

**PLAYBOY:** Similarly, did you fly to Oklahoma City right after the bombing?

**SMITH:** I was working at a Miami station then. We heard what happened, and I was at the airport 20 minutes later. I was in Oklahoma City to lead the news that night and stayed there for weeks.

**PLAYBOY:** Was the experience similar to Columbine?

**SMITH:** You didn't have the smell thing at Columbine.

**PLAYBOY:** The smell thing?

**SMITH:** After the bombing there was a smell that has carried through my life. The memories are orange—orange vests like a trail of ants through mounds of concrete—and that acrid smell that initially was fuel and then was humans. That and not knowing where to put your anger. Not knowing whom you're mad at. The first day it was Middle Eastern men, remember? Soon we got an indication that it was something else entirely. It all blurs. The incredible sadness, those children in that day-care center. Seeing it is one thing. Smelling it is another. The smell brings it alive for you. On 9/11, too, I remember the smell.

**PLAYBOY:** You followed the Oklahoma City bombing story through the execution of Timothy McVeigh, which you witnessed. How did you feel when you learned you would be present at the execution?

**SMITH:** I felt really good about it.

**PLAYBOY:** That's a surprising reaction.

**SMITH:** It's so rare that you're able to follow a story from the very beginning to the very end, and that was the very end. Our government has made the decision that it is going to kill people for crimes they commit. I felt the most important

## JOURNALISM DEGREE OPTIONAL

There are more than a few ways to make it in broadcast news



**Peter Jennings** A Canadian who rose through the ranks to become the respected anchor of ABC World News Tonight. **Career Detour:** Jennings was poised to be the Canadian Dick Clark as host of *Club Thirteen*, a teen TV dance show. **Big Break:** When he joined World News Tonight, Jennings was part of a three-anchor team. He emerged as tap dog after Tom Brokaw rebuffed an ABC offer.



**Diane Sawyer** Broadcast diva who pulls double duty on *Goad Morning America* and *Primetime*. **Career Detour:** A onetime beauty queen (America's Junior Miss, 1963), Sawyer served as a press aide to disgraced president Richard Nixon, helping him write his memoirs. **Big Break:** *60 Minutes* hired Sawyer in 1984 to be the program's first female reporter.



**Keith Olbermann** Anchor for *Countdown*, MSNBC's news show. **Career Detour:** He worked as a sportscaster at CNN and as Dan Patrick's partner on ESPN's *SportsCenter*. **Big Break:** MSNBC asked him to do hard news. He did. Then he quit in a huff and went back to sports. He quit that, too, and galvanized by 9/11, gave journalism another try, winning an Edward R. Murrow Award.



**Anderson Cooper** CNN's attempt to be hip; anchor of *Anderson Cooper 360°*, the network's main news show. **Career Detour:** After a stint at ABC News, he hosted *The Mole*, a second-rate reality show. **Big Break:** Post-Mole, CNN made Cooper co-anchor of *American Morning*, but after his emotional Hurricane Katrina coverage, the network ousted anchor Aaron Brown and crowned Cooper king.



**Greta Van Susteren** Anchor of Fox News Channel's *On the Record*. **Career Detour:** The Georgetown Law grad worked as a defense attorney for almost 15 years, winning her first murder case at the age of 27. **Big Break:** A familiar legal analyst who covered the William Kennedy Smith and the O.J. Simpson trials, Van Susteren jumped to journalism at CNN before Fox stole her away.



**Mike Wallace** Now BB years old, the soul of CBS's *60 Minutes* until his retirement. **Career Detour:** During the 1950s Wallace hosted multiple game shows, most notably *The Big Surprise* for NBC. He also played the lead in the comedy *Reclining Figure* on Broadway. **Big Break:** Wallace's journalism career took off in 1956 with ABC's *Night Beat*, on which he built a reputation for hardball interviews. —David Pfister



thing I could do was to be there and tell the public exactly what had happened.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you favor the death penalty?

**SMITH:** I'm not going to answer that.

**PLAYBOY:** Why not?

**SMITH:** It's my upbringing. A very wise man called Dad once said, "Politics and sex are very interesting topics. Your own politics and your own sex. Talking about them to others will just get you in trouble." I follow that. What I will say, however, is that nothing I witnessed was cruel and unusual. After this experience, I feel that people who are for the death penalty because criminals need to be punished in that way would be less for it and that those who are against the death penalty because it is cruel and unusual would be less against it. I'm not advocating putting executions on television—far from it—or even making them available online. But I am confident that if they were, the arguments on both sides, especially the extremes, would be tempered. One extreme wants that motherfucker to pay. He pays, but there is no extreme suffering. It's like watching someone go to sleep. And the other extreme says [mockingly], "Don't do that. It's terribly inhumane." They're both wrong. We put them to sleep.

**PLAYBOY:** Were there surprises?

**SMITH:** I didn't expect to be so close to McVeigh, and I certainly didn't expect him to take over the room.

**PLAYBOY:** How did he do that?

**SMITH:** He was strapped in, and he leaned up and acknowledged each one of us. Then he decided to lie back, and only then did he give up some degree of control. It was very powerful. What happened after that wasn't so powerful. They put a drug in him and put him to sleep. There was a little bit of a twitch, and that's it. There wasn't much difference between his being asleep and his being dead. Afterward people said how terrifying and overpowering it was. I cannot for the life of me imagine how somebody could come to those conclusions. Finally they covered him up with a sheet and closed the curtains, and that was that.

**PLAYBOY:** Would it have been more difficult to witness an execution by electric chair?

**SMITH:** Old Sparky? It probably would have been difficult to watch the time the woman's hair caught fire while she was sitting there, but I guess I don't find the extremes of this job more difficult. I find them sometimes more exciting, sometimes more important, sometimes more fulfilling, depending on the situation, but you want to be there when the biggest things happen. My problem is when it's a boring news day. I'm antsy and horrible. Or when there's something big happening and I'm not there. That's difficult for me to stomach.

**PLAYBOY:** How is what you do different from what anchormen like Tom Brokaw, Dan Rather and Peter Jennings did? Is the day of the trusted anchor in the mold of Walter Cronkite gone for good?

**SMITH:** During times of crisis or celebration, viewers pick people they trust to celebrate

with, grieve with, learn from. For the 9/11 attacks, the biggest thing to happen to us in a long time, all those men were in place. Now they're gone. But the era of viewers turning to a journalist like one of them, someone they trust during the important times—whether that's over is very much up for debate. I would argue it isn't. I think that type of human-to-human contact in times of crisis and celebration is something people will still seek. So if history repeats itself, when the next big thing comes along people will choose again. By then I'm sure CBS and ABC hope to have figured out who their leadership team will be. NBC seems to have done so. On the cable side, we have some degree of stability at Fox News Channel. It seems others are trying to figure it out.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you have a current favorite network anchor?

**SMITH:** Oh, man. I love watching Bob Schieffer. I feel as if I'm learning from him. I trust the man.

**PLAYBOY:** Besides Schieffer, who are some of the best out there today?

**SMITH:** On my own network I think Trace Gallagher is a star. I love to watch

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*I hate to give too many nods to other networks, but I think some stalwarts are out there.*

*I like Jeff Greenfield on CNN. I love watching Bob Schieffer. I trust the man.*

---

him. I love Brit Hume's take on Washington politics.

**PLAYBOY:** How about beyond Fox?

**SMITH:** I hate to give too many nods to other networks, but I think some stalwarts are out there. I like Jeff Greenfield on CNN. Keith Morrison on *Dateline NBC* has an incredible grasp of his instrument. He's a wonderful storyteller.

**PLAYBOY:** Fox News Channel may be trouncing its cable competitors, but the networks still dwarf its numbers. Is your goal to take on network news, too?

**SMITH:** Absolutely. If you're making Tide detergent, you want everybody to use it. We would like to beat them all. We're not shy about admitting that losing is horrible and winning is really fun.

**PLAYBOY:** Is it unrealistic to think a cable channel can compete with the networks?

**SMITH:** I don't see a limit. Cable penetration is very high. As long as we're relevant, why couldn't we get everybody? In fact, rather than our looking to the networks, I think they look to what we're doing. They're starting to do things we've done for a long time.

**PLAYBOY:** For example?

**SMITH:** Things are quicker. There's more variety. They seem to be trying to be more personable and relatable.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you bothered by recent TV news trends, some spearheaded by Fox? Lou Dobbs said people should put a piece of tape on the bottom of their screen because of the constant annoying crawl.

**SMITH:** I like a busy screen. You can't give me too much information. I don't mind the whoosh. I don't mind the sound effects. I don't mind anything that brings people to our product. Fill that screen up. Make it yell at me. Zing me. Throughout history older people have always been nervous about whatever is new—Elvis gyrating up on that stage.

**PLAYBOY:** What impact has the Internet had on news coverage?

**SMITH:** Huge. I spend a lot of time on the Internet. I get a lot of my news from it. I know other people do the same thing.

**PLAYBOY:** Has it affected what you cover?

**SMITH:** Stories get legs that wouldn't have before. The Internet has driven a lot of the big Washington crises. People sitting at home in pajamas drive a lot of stories. At times they pick up on things before we do. A lot of people are focused on it 24/7. They chat about it, write about it, blog about it.

**PLAYBOY:** Is there a danger to that? Internet stories may be more likely to lack veracity, and we can wind up with stories about—

**SMITH:** Swift boats. Yes, some stories just live in the Internet world and lack anything resembling truth. You have to triple-check everything.

**PLAYBOY:** The Internet helped spread your most famous mistake, when you stumbled and mistakenly mentioned Jennifer Lopez and a blow job in the same sentence.

**SMITH:** Oh God. Yes, that would never have had legs if not for the Internet.

**PLAYBOY:** Looking back, were you embarrassed, or did you think it was funny?

**SMITH:** God, I was embarrassed. Mom's church was talking about it.

**PLAYBOY:** How did it happen?

**SMITH:** The copy was easy to trip over, and I did. I'm good at tripping over copy. It's one of my best skills.

**PLAYBOY:** When was the exact moment you realized you had said it?

**SMITH:** It was instantaneous. The blood rushed to my toes. I'll never forget it. I knew the end was near.

**PLAYBOY:** You immediately apologized. Would it have been better to ignore it, to pretend it hadn't happened?

**SMITH:** You couldn't ignore it. I had just said "blow job" on the air.

**PLAYBOY:** Since then, are you nervous when you have a story about J. Lo?

**SMITH:** I'm very careful.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you teased?

**SMITH:** Of course. I'll meet somebody, and he'll go, "You're the J. Lo guy." Which is certainly how you want to be identified.

**PLAYBOY:** Was it just a mistake or was it—

**SMITH:** Freudian? I don't know. I think the

(continued on page 152)



COUNT YOUR LUCKY STARS!

**JOSE CUERVO**

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TO PARTY WITH PLAYMATES,  
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# 2006: A MySpace Odyssey

Welcome to the hottest club in town, crowded with beautiful women, old friends and jammin' music. Is this the greatest new way to hook up or just a virtual blip on the screen?





**T**his may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to believe, but until a few days ago I didn't exist. Sure, I had all the vestiges, properties and trappings of someone who could pass for being real: an apartment, a Social Security number, consciousness, outstanding college loans and a truly enviable collection of Xbox 360 games. Now, maybe that's enough to satisfy anyone who wants to reside in just boring old physical reality, but on the only plane of existence that still matters anymore, the Internet, this somebody wasn't anybody until I created a profile for myself on MySpace.

With a simple blue-and-white logo resembling a line of

armless, neckless people receding into infinity and a slogan that simply promises "a place for friends," MySpace.com is the web's most wildly successful experiment in social networking, offering an environment that's sort of like an electronic Rolodex crossbred with public lice. By establishing a personal home page on the site and inviting other users to link their pages to your own, you not only create a chain of lifelong chums, fraternity brothers, ex-girlfriends, co-workers and vague acquaintances you can view at a glance, but you instantaneously connect yourself to everyone who inhabits those people's networks. With each new face you add to

By Dave Itzkoff



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES IMBROGNO



your gallery of friends, you open yourself to a new world of potential pals, hook-ups, tastemakers and creditors.

While that may or may not describe how MySpace works, it doesn't explain what MySpace actually does. When you consider all the diverse technologies that have crossed your radar screen in recent years, you'll likely find that the innovations successfully embedded in your already complicated routine are those that perform specific functions—whether the novelty is a search engine like Google, which in half a second calls up more than 30,000 web pages matching your “sexy greased midget” search, or a device like the iPod, which allows music to infiltrate every last square inch of your life that was once blissfully silent. MySpace may be the lone exception to this rule: It doesn't tell you what you're supposed to do with it; it just offers itself and lets you figure out what the hell it's for.

In the meantime, a virtual nation of MySpace cadets is hooked on it. As of this writing, the website is home to more than 64 million different profiles. Parents fear it, at least one college has considered banning it, and Rupert Murdoch liked it so much that in July 2005 he paid \$580 million to add it to his News Corporation media empire—not bad for a company that web entrepreneurs Chris DeWolfe and Tom Anderson founded less than three years ago, in fall 2003.

Still, is there anything MySpace can do for me that I didn't know I wanted it to do? Can it make my life simpler or better in any way? Can it make me a more popular, dynamic person and maybe even help me meet a few Playmates along the way? There's only one way to find out. I need a MySpace odyssey of my own.

In the interest of full disclosure, I should admit that I created a MySpace page for myself some months before this story begins. I put my name on it, attached a picture of Boba Fett, the fearsome bounty hunter from the *Star Wars* movies, and then I let it sit there. Not a single fellow MySpacehead invited me to be his electronic friend. But late one Sunday night, as I prepared to create a proper profile that truly reflects me, I realized that this humiliating lesson had taught me the most important rule of MySpace exploration: Always let your fellow users know exactly who you are—or at least who you wish you could be.

This rule is reinforced by the sheer amount of personal data the site asks you to submit when you create a profile. The requested information is broken down into eight different categories, including “Interests & Personality,” “Background & Lifestyle” and, strangely toward the end of the list, “Name.” These are further divided into dozens more oddly generic and shockingly pre-



Founders DeWolfe and Anderson, looking a lot like Hall and Oates on an L.A. stage.

cise categories—everything from your gender and zip code to your personal heroes to your sexual preference and marital status (“Swinger” is one of the options) to your religion (“Wiccan” and “Scientologist” are among the multiple choices). There's even an innocuous tab labeled “Body Type,” essentially a euphemism for “Are you fat?” The numerous requests feel tedious and intrusive until you make the same realization I did: You can answer these questions however you want, truthfully or otherwise. Want to reveal to the world that you're a five-foot-six Jew who's as slender as a washboard? Go for it. Would you rather tell everyone you're a six-foot-three Hindu who's built like an ox in springtime? No one's stopping you.

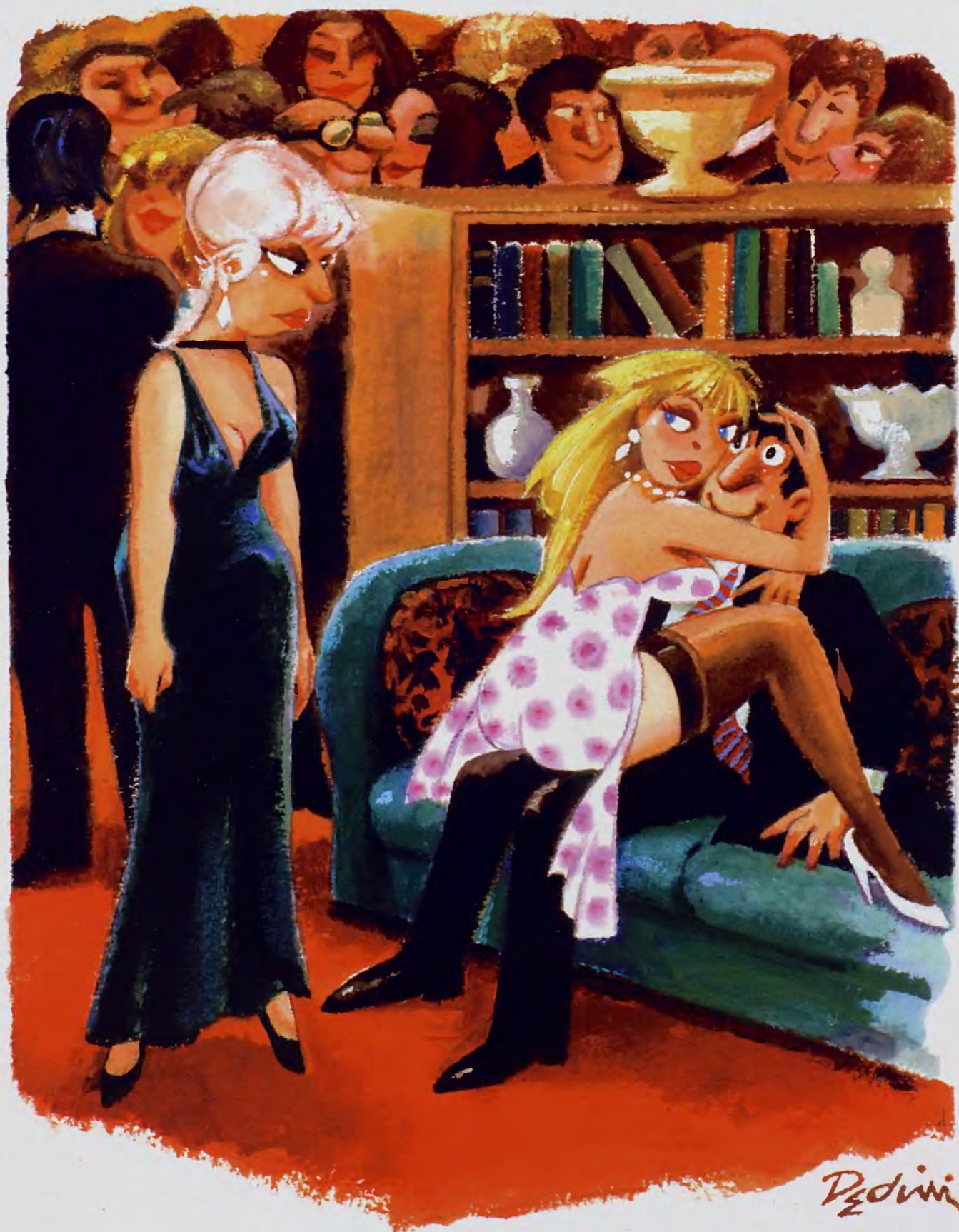
What kind  
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The bigger stumbling blocks for someone like me, who has spent the past 30 years defining himself by his cultural likes and dislikes, are the sections that ask me to codify my favorite music, films and TV shows. With every decision I make, it's impossible to avoid feeling guilty about the beloved pop artifacts I knowingly add to my roster and the ones I deliberately omit. I probably haven't watched my copy of *Taxi Driver* since Jodie Foster reached adulthood, but I like the adrenaline rush I get from telling people it's in my home video library. And while deep down I may still harbor a childlike affection for old *Scooby-Doo* cartoons, I also don't want millions of Internet surfers to think I never finished puberty.

But what kind of sadist would ask me to boil down the contents of my CD collection to fit within a box no bigger than an index card? Each addition to or subtraction from the inventory of bands that will now permanently represent me in cyberspace is more heart-wrenching than *Sophie's Choice*: Even though I've been to a dozen Phish concerts in my life, is it really a band I enjoy? Will Sid Vicious rise from the grave to hunt me down if I leave the Sex Pistols off the list? Will my MySpace neighbors think I'm over-the-hill if I confess to liking Neil Diamond? If Franz Ferdinand makes the cut, will I look like that one college kid who still hangs out at the high school parking lot?

After more than three hours of this cultural calculus, and after shedding a silent tear or two, I have reduced my roll call of (continued on page 130)





*"You told me to mingle!"*

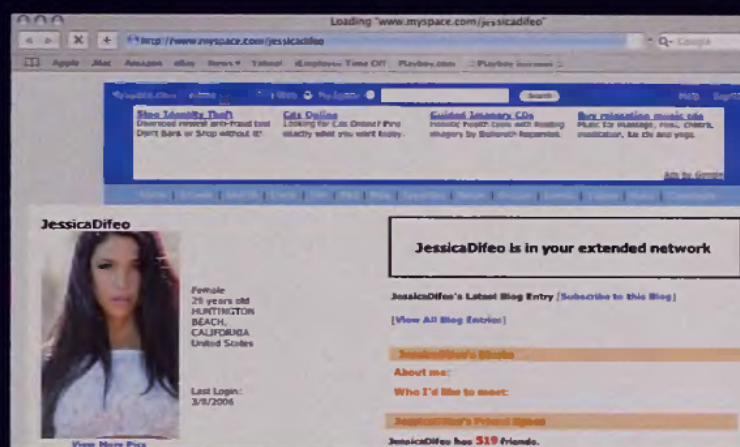


# The Women of MySpace

...minus their clothes. Welcome to electric lady land

**E**ver since MySpace.com launched nearly three years ago, offering free home pages to whoever wanted one, users have flocked to hunt for "friends." With more than 64 million profiles on the network, it's like an all-you-can-eat socializing buffet. The greatest thing about this new kind of socializing: You can hunt for beautiful, charismatic members of the opposite sex easily and anonymously, visiting home pages to your heart's content. The only thing missing: nude photos, which are a no-no on MySpace. What's

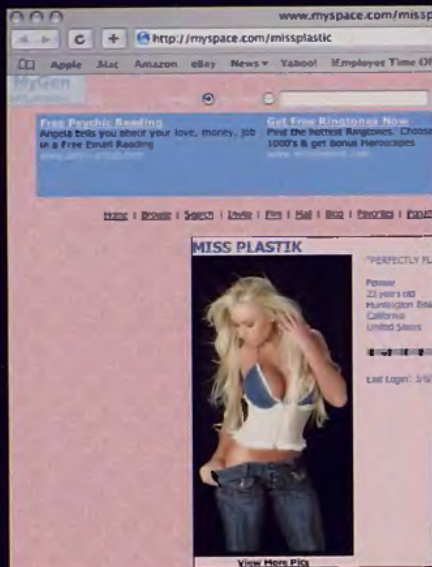
up with that? Isn't that why Al Gore invented the Internet in the first place? Naturally PLAYBOY has a solution. We went looking for females in the network who were dying to share their gorgeous bodies with the world. And what do you know? We struck gold. Women came out of the woodwork, looking for a shot at their own nude glamour exposé. We photographed beauties in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Miami, putting together what you see here: a collection of some of MySpace.com's most stunning specimens.



## JESSICA DIFEO

**Background:** This nubile 29-year-old New Hampshire native was raised in a Mormon family and homeschooled until the age of 15. "I didn't know anything about PLAYBOY until I was probably 16 or 17. I remember the first time I saw the magazine, I was amazed. I think I grew more and more intrigued with it until I finally got the nerve to send in my own photos." **Uniform:** "The killer outfit I like to wear when I go out is a pair of low-cut pants and a tight white top with no bra." **Hero:** Angelina Jolie. **Dating:** "I prefer an older man, someone who has already tasted life and can share it with me." **Favorite food:** "Spaghetti and meatballs, if he cooks and does the dishes."



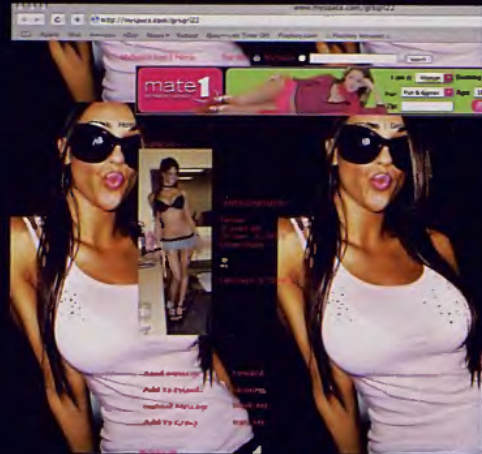


## CARRIE VAUGHN

**Occupation:** Carrie, 23, just graduated from Cal State Long Beach in May. While she figures out what she wants to do with her life (any openings at your job?), she's tending bar. **Hot property:** "I live in Orange County, and I wake up to the beach every morning. My days by the ocean are so relaxed, but my nights at the bar are wild." **Social life:** "I love O.C., and I don't think I would ever leave. But because I work in a bar, I'm essentially always on the scene, so I try to travel somewhere three times a month." Just after her photo shoot, Carrie and some girlfriends hopped a flight to Belize on a whim. **Personality:** "I get e-mails saying, 'I saw you out last night and recognized you from MySpace. But I didn't want to be a bother, so I didn't come up to you.' There is no need to be intimidated. I love being approached."







## ANA GEORGEAN

**Occupation:** This long-legged lovely is a talented 21-year-old Chicago-based exotic dancer. "I love my job," Ana says. "It doesn't feel like work to me. It's like hanging out with your friends at a big party." That's funny, no one hands us wads of money when we're partying with our friends. Maybe we're hanging out with the wrong crowd. **How she ended up in PLAYBOY:** "Some random girl messaged me that PLAYBOY was looking for girls to pose in a MySpace story. She was like, 'You should send in your pictures. You could win.' So I did. I was so shocked and excited when I got the call!" **Why we love her home page:** The first thing you notice when scrolling down Ana's MySpace site is the photos—Ana kissing a beautiful brunette. Ana kissing a gorgeous blonde. Ana kissing her boyfriend, Tony (pictured above). Ana's puckered lips popping right off the computer screen....





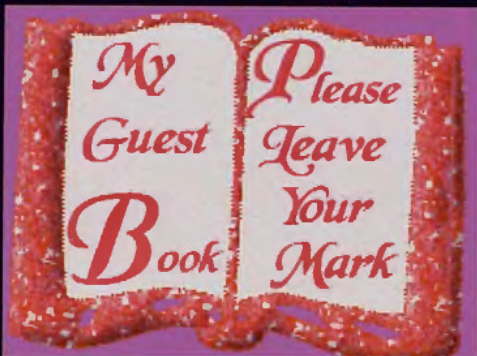
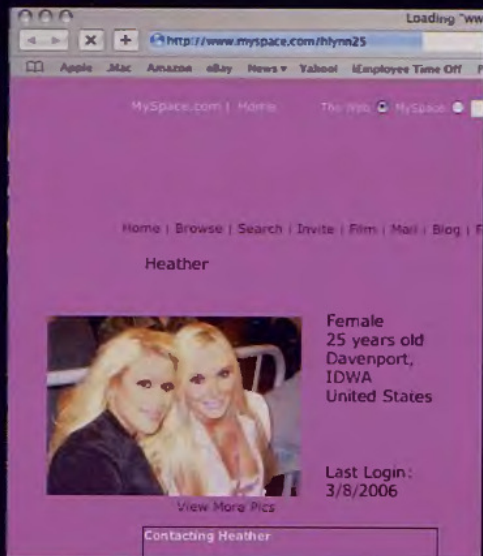


## JESKA VARDINSKI

**Fashion sense:** "The stylist for my shoot analyzed my look on my home page and picked out the perfect outfit for me," Jeska says about her PLAYBOY photo session. As for the tattoo, "it's not done yet," she says. "It's going to go all the way up my back. It's a wild-flower in the making." Just like Jeska herself. **Occupation:** The Fullerton, California 20-year-old is a budding model. She's only five-foot-three, so the catwalk isn't her thing. She does glamour modeling (see the shots at left) and nude modeling for art classes. Her PLAYBOY shoot mixed those two worlds together. Did she have a good time? "Hell, yeah. It was kick-ass. PLAYBOY's huge." **Favorite music:** Jeska is a punk-rock fiend and a fan of Bud Light (thus the Drunk Rocker code name on her MySpace home page). Her idea of a good time involves bands like Death by Stereo, the Misfits and the Ramones, plenty of volume and lots of cold beer. Nothing wrong with that.





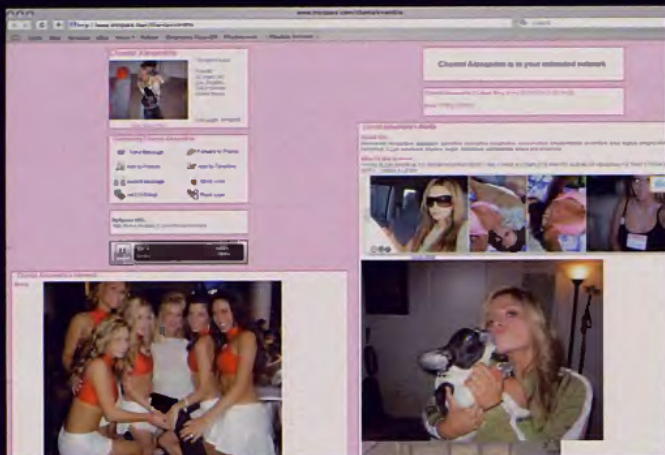


## HEATHER LYNN

**Occupation:** This Davenport, Iowa-born beauty is working as a waitress at Hooters while she earns her cosmetology license. **Favorite activities:** Heather's boyfriend is an Ultimate Fighter, and she likes to watch him dismantle his opponents in bloody King of the Cage matches. *Hmm. He's not the jealous type, is he?* "Somewhat," she says. Point taken. The 26-year-old blonde stunner also likes the outdoors and fishing. **Weaknesses:** chocolate cake, pizza with pepperoni and green olives and guys who beat up other guys for a living. **Where she sees herself in 10 years:** "I'd like to be doing makeup for models and maybe living on a farm. I'm a country girl." **Biggest fear about posing for PLAYBOY:** "I was comfortable in front of the camera, but I was so worried that the pictures wouldn't come out nice!" With a smile and body like that? Not a chance.

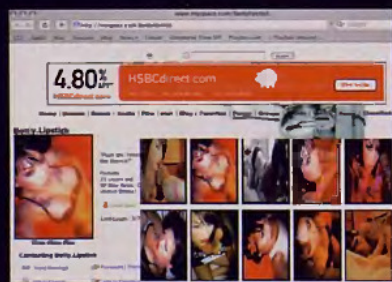






## CHANTAL ALEXANDRIA

**Study habits:** The 22-year-old psychology major confesses that she is addicted to MySpace. "I log on whenever I get a chance. Sometimes I need to do my homework, but then an hour later I realize I've just been checking my friends' profiles." **Social life:** Through her page she has become a sort of celebrity around her college campus. "When I'm at the bars, people I don't know will come up to me and say they've seen me on MySpace. It's flattering that they recognize me." **Wild life:** "I have a zoo membership. My favorite exhibit is the gorillas because they're like humans—though when it comes to men, I am not into hairy backs at all." **Book club:** She likes to read in her spare time. Her favorite book is Wally Lamb's *She's Come Undone*. As far as Chantal's shirt coming undone, we thought it was a novel idea, no?

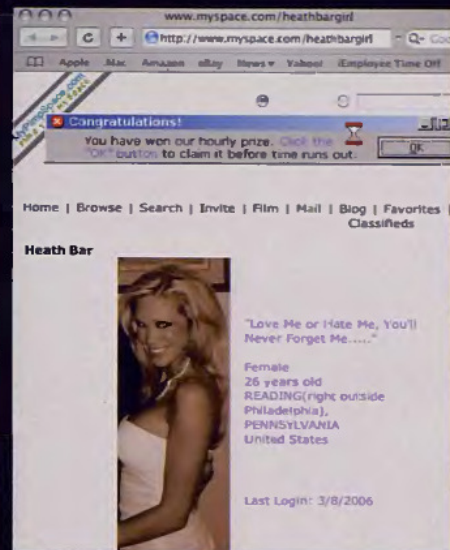


## BETTY LIPSTICK

**Hometown:** San Francisco. **Favorite hobby:** "I'm really into weapons," Betty says. "Knives, brass knuckles. I collect them." **Favorite music:** The tattooed 22-year-old marketing manager digs rock and roll. "I love it! Rock is a life-style. My favorite bands are ZZ Top, the Rolling Stones, AC/DC. The classics." **On being photographed for PLAYBOY:** "It was the experience of a lifetime. I would do it again in a second!"



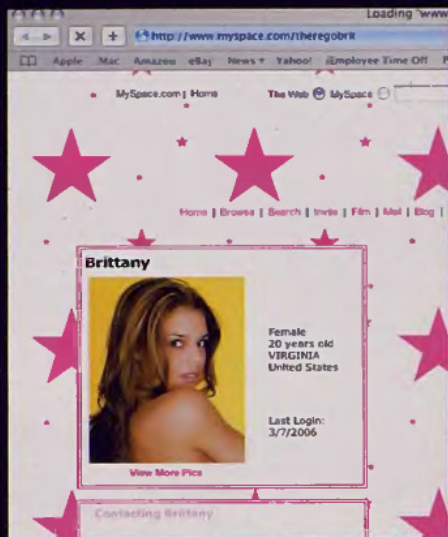




## HEATHER LUTZ

**Claim to fame:** Heather is one of the most beautiful farmer's daughters we've ever seen. She grew up on a pig farm in Reading, Pennsylvania, and she says she can "shovel manure with the best of them." We'll take her word for it. **Occupation:** The 27-year-old works as a sales account manager and bartends on the side. Make ours a double. **Favorite activities:** Heather is a workout queen (can't you tell?), and she's seen just about every movie ever made. **Romantic situation:** Yup, she's single. Suitors take note—Heather is a sucker for Philadelphia Flyers and Pittsburgh Steelers games. **Aspirations:** "In the end," she says, "I just want to have a good story to tell. This will help: 'And when I was 27, PLAYBOY magazine called and....'"





### BRITTANY FUCHS

**Occupation:** This 20-year-old Virginian juggles college, waiting tables and selling real estate. **Wardrobe change:** For class, she says, she "bums it" in jeans and a cap. Serious-minded young men are grateful, since her student body would otherwise distract from lectures. But fear not, fun lovers; Brittany does let her hair down. "When I go out," she says, "I like to accentuate my chest." **In a love-hate relationship with:** her posterior. "It is pretty big for my frame. When I was younger, people would taunt me with names like Bubble Butt." It draws a different kind of attention now. "I get a comment on it at least once a day. It's big and bubbly, and I have grown to love it." For us it was love at first sight.



See more Girls of MySpace at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com)









FICTION BY LAWRENCE BLOCK

# PROACTIVE KELLER

FOR THE PROFESSIONAL HIT MAN, THE CLIENT'S  
ALWAYS RIGHT—AS LONG AS HE'S STILL BREATHING

**K**eller's flight from New York to Detroit was bumpy. That was okay. He didn't mind a little turbulence, but the pilot kept announcing every patch of rough air over the intercom and, worse, apologizing for it. By itself the turbulence wasn't that bad, and he could have dozed through it well enough, if the son of a bitch hadn't kept waking him up with announcements.

He hadn't checked a bag, so he hoisted his carry-on and walked straight to where the drivers were waiting and scanned the signs for one bearing the name Bogart. He found it right off the bat, and when his eyes moved from the sign to the man who was holding it, the man was looking right back at him, with an expression on his face that Keller found hard to read.

PAINTING BY KENT WILLIAMS



**KELLER WAS BEGINNING TO BELIEVE THEY WEREN'T GOING TO KILL HIM. IF YOU WERE PLANNING ON KILLING A MAN, WOULD YOU START TELLING HIM ABOUT THE STAMPS YOU COLLECTED AS A KID?**

He was a short, stocky guy who looked as though he spent a lot of time at the gym lifting heavy objects. He said, "Mr. Bogart? Right this way, sir."

He followed the guy out of the terminal to a late-model Lincoln with Ontario plates. The guy triggered a remote to unlock the doors and then opened and held the passenger-side door for Keller, which was unexpected.

So was the presence of the big guy in the backseat.

Keller was already getting into the car when he saw him. He froze and felt a hand on his shoulder urging him forward.

The big guy chuckled, which wasn't what he much wanted to hear, and the short guy—he was too wide and muscular to be thought of as the little guy—told him there was nothing to worry about. "There's a gentleman wants to meet you," he said. "That's all."

His tone was reassuring, but Keller wasn't reassured.

They hadn't blindfolded him, so he could have paid attention to the route, but what good was that going to do? He didn't really know the area, and even if he did, geography wasn't likely to be a big factor here.

They got off the beltway and into a suburb and, after several left and right turns, wound up on a tree-shaded dead-end street—the DEAD END sign gave him a turn—full of large homes on large lots. The driver pulled into a semicircular driveway and braked at the entrance of an oversize center-hall colonial.

This time the big guy from the backseat opened the door for him. The driver went on ahead and unlocked the front door. The two of them escorted him through a large living room with a fire in the fireplace, down a broad hallway and into what he supposed was a den. It held an enormous TV set, on which a tennis match was being played with the sound off, bookshelves artfully equipped with sets of leather-bound books, a couple of leather chairs and, in one of the chairs, a man with a broad face, pockmarked cheeks, hair like gray Brillo, thin lips, abundant eyebrows and an expression that, like everyone else's since he'd left New York, Keller found hard to read.

But it was a familiar face, somehow. He'd never met this man, so where had he seen his face?

Oh, right.

"I don't suppose your name is Bogart," the man said.

Keller agreed that it wasn't.

"Well, I don't necessarily have to know your name," the man said. "My guess is you already know mine."

"I believe so, yes."

"Prove it."

Prove it? "I believe you're Mr. Horvath," he said.

"Alan Horvath," the man said. "You recognize me, or you just make a good guess?"

"I, uh, recognized you."

"Wha'd they do, send you a picture?" Keller nodded. "And then someone was gonna meet you at the airport, point me out?"

"I think so. The arrangements got a little vague after I was to meet up with the man with the sign."

"Bogart," said the driver, who was stationed at Keller's right, with the big man on his other side. Keller couldn't see the driver's face, but the sneer in his voice was unmistakable.

"Not a name I would have picked," Keller said.

"I always liked Bogart," Horvath said. "But I wouldn't want to be looking for a sign with his name on it, or holding one, either. You were supposed to kill me."

Keller didn't say anything.

"Awww, relax," Horvath said. "You think I've got a beef with you? You took a job, for Chrissake. You couldn't help who hired you. You even know who hired you?"

"They never tell me."

"Well, I can tell you. A little prick named Kevin Dealey hired you. Guess what happened to him."

Keller had a pretty good idea.

"The point is," Horvath told him, "you don't have a client anymore. So the job's canceled. You're no longer required to kill me."

"Good," Keller said.

Somehow that struck Horvath funny, and the men flanking Keller joined in the laughter. When it died down Horvath said, "He talked a little, Kevin Dealey did, before we fixed it so he couldn't. Told us what flight you'd be on and all about the Bogart bullshit. First thought I had, Phil and Norman here meet you at the airport, turn you around and send you back to New York. Hi there, Mr. Bogart, services no longer required, have a nice return flight, blah blah blah. Put you on the plane, wave good-bye, and you go back to your quotidian life."

Keller's face must have shown something, because Horvath grinned at him. "Quotidian. Means ordinary, everyday. I read books. Not all the ones you see, but plenty. You a reader yourself?"

"Some."

"Yeah? What else do you do? When you're not flying off to Detroit."

Keller told him.

"Stamps," Horvath said. "I had a collection when I was a kid. I don't know what the hell ever happened to it. That's a great pastime, collecting stamps."

They talked a little about stamps, and Keller was beginning to believe they weren't going to kill him. If you were planning on killing a man, would you start telling him about the stamps you collected as a kid?

"Where was I?" Horvath said and answered his own question. "Oh, right, meet you at the airport, turn you around and send you home. Thing is, why would you believe Phil and Normie? But if you meet the putative victim in his own house, that makes it clear-cut. So now I'll shake your hand because for all I know the day may come when I have to hire you myself, and I got no hard feelings against you and hope you don't resent me for keeping you from completing your job. You get paid something in front?"

"Half."

"That's what Dealey said, but he was never the kind of fellow whose word you could take to the bank. Well, that's all you get, but the bright side is you get to keep it without having to earn it. You can buy yourself some stamps."

"You say that all the time," Keller said.

"I do?"

"You can buy yourself some stamps." When you hand me my share or when you let me know the money's arrived. "Here you go, Keller—buy yourself some stamps."

"It does have a familiar ring to it," Dot allowed. "I didn't realize I said it all the time."

"Actually it's nice," he said. "And it'll echo in my mind when I'm looking over a price list and trying to decide whether to order something. I hear your voice in my head telling me I can buy myself some stamps, and it gives me permission to be extravagant."

"The roles we play in each other's lives," Dot said, "and we're not even aware of it. Who says there's no divine order to the universe?"

"Not me," said Keller.

They were in White Plains, sitting at the kitchen table in Dot's big old house on Taunton (continued on page 136)





Olivia

*"It isn't the lingerie, it's what you put into it...!"*



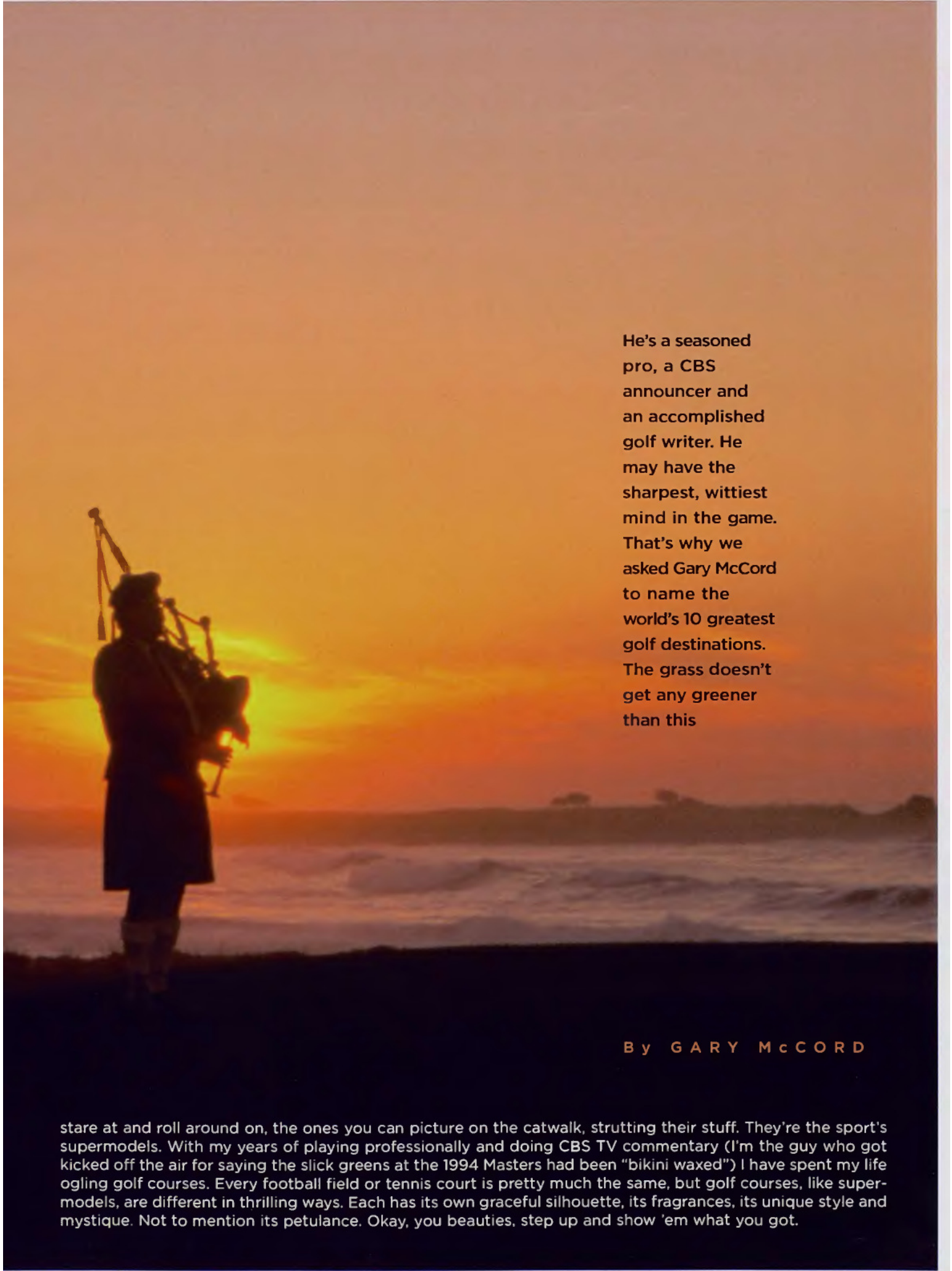


# FAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

W

hen I was asked to write a PLAYBOY story on the world's top golf courses, I flashed on years of reading the magazine—the news-making interviews, the lifestyle tips, the big-name fiction. Okay, I flashed on the pictures. This magazine isn't just read; it's consumed. It's conceived with a lens and dedicated to the proposition that we all love rapturous vistas and killer curves. So I decided PLAYBOY's list of courses shouldn't merely include the best—though they're here—but the best looking. These are the golf courses you'd love to





He's a seasoned pro, a CBS announcer and an accomplished golf writer. He may have the sharpest, wittiest mind in the game. That's why we asked Gary McCord to name the world's 10 greatest golf destinations. The grass doesn't get any greener than this

By GARY MCCORD

stare at and roll around on, the ones you can picture on the catwalk, strutting their stuff. They're the sport's supermodels. With my years of playing professionally and doing CBS TV commentary (I'm the guy who got kicked off the air for saying the slick greens at the 1994 Masters had been "bikini waxed") I have spent my life ogling golf courses. Every football field or tennis court is pretty much the same, but golf courses, like supermodels, are different in thrilling ways. Each has its own graceful silhouette, its fragrances, its unique style and mystique. Not to mention its petulance. Okay, you beauties, step up and show 'em what you got.



**10 North Course, Los Angeles Country Club, California**

As you wander hedonistic Hollywood you may pass a club that inhabits a buttoned-up, old-school world. Meet Los Angeles Country Club, a gem cut from green hills by George C. Thomas Jr. in 1921. The North Course at LACC winds through the canyons off Wilshire Boulevard on some of the choicest real estate on earth. You almost expect to see Cary Grant coming out of the white antebellum-style clubhouse. Alas, people in showbiz were never welcome here—too tacky, don't you know. Legend has it that movie star Randolph Scott applied for membership and was told, "Sorry, no actors." Scott replied, "If you think I'm an actor, you haven't seen my movies."

Sure, it's a great course, but one of the planet's 10 best? On my list it is, mainly for one great hole on the back nine. Not the famous 11th, a stunner of a 244-yard par three with Oscar-worthy views of Los Angeles. I mean the 14th, which winds past a certain Mansion. As a young golf pro, I loved trying to peek over the hedge to gaze at Playboy Mansion West, a.k.a. Hef's house. I wasn't tall

"Royal County Down is the best experience in golf. Unfortunately, Ulster has only four good days per millennium. The best time to play is May or June, when the gorse and heather are in bloom. But only a fool would pass up the chance to play here, even in a blizzard. When you walk off the third green, take the path to the back of the fourth. Don't look behind you until you get there. Now turn and feast your eyes on the game's most stunning par-three hole—a couple hundred yards over a yellow-green and lilac sea to a green the size of a pigmy's nipple, surrounded by mine-shaft bunkers, with the Mourne Mountains sweeping down to the Irish Sea in the background. You'll need a big sack of golf balls."

**8 Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, Southampton, New York**

On windswept Long Island lies a stunning course—the first 18-hole links ever built on the East Coast. Founded in 1891, Shinnecock has been home to four U.S. Opens, including the war of attrition held in 2004. What I like most about Shinnecock is how it blends its rolling fairways through the land's hollows and heights. The rough is visually stunning, cut in varying lengths. The justly famous 14th hole, a 447-yard par four, is a bear into the wind, a long drive over scrub to a fairway that looks as wide as your thumb. The hole is called Thom's Elbow after long-ago pro Charlie Thom, who liked to bend his at the local bar.

There's another reason Shinnecock belongs on this list. I'm talking about the clubhouse. It was designed by the famed architect Stanford White, who was

married but had a taste for teenage girls. White kept a love nest in Manhattan, complete with a velvet swing that hung from the ceiling. After his 16-year-old mistress married one Harry Thaw, Thaw heard about her lover and went nuts. In 1906, gun blazing, he barged into another building White had designed, Madison Square Garden, and shot the amorous architect dead.

**7 Pine Valley Golf Club, Clementon, New Jersey**

New Jersey's Pine Valley is arguably the best course in the world. It's so private that



the word *exclusive* doesn't cover it. Try *impossible*. Getting there is half the fun. You follow the smells of popcorn and fear until you reach Clementon Amusement Park and Splash World. With roller-coaster screams fading in your ears, follow the railroad tracks until you pass through a crooked chain-link fence. Give your ID to the guard at the gatehouse. If he lets you in, rejoice: You are entering golf nirvana. "Despite its unprepossessing environs," wrote golf scribe Charles Price, "Pine Valley is one of the most beautiful golf courses in the world. It has no backdrop of mountains, no craggy coastlines with waves lapping the shores. It is simply gorgeous in its own right."

The course cultivates an unkempt beauty. Think supermodel in the morning. You see bunkers that look like they've been slept in, half-wild native grass you could get lost in. These curves are worth licking your lips over. The 448-yard 13th is sort of our sport's Vampirella. One writer likened it to "the horror film, the ghost train and the chamber of horrors." Your score there will



enough to see anything, but hearing screaming toucans in Hef's private zoo fired my thoughts of partying Playmates. Long live those thoughts that lift men's spirits!

**9 Royal County Down Golf Club, Newcastle, Northern Ireland**

For my next pick I turned to a man who has roamed the world in a death-defying quest to antagonize absolutely everyone. David Feherty is a vituperative Irish lad who has played the game at its highest level and now works for CBS, dragging our commentary down to his low level. He is my friend.

"On a good day," Feherty says,



Phil Mickelson eyes his shot at the 2004 U.S. Open at Shinnecock Hills.





probably suck. Then there's the nasty par-three 10th, protected by a deep, dark, notorious bunker. How hard is it to get out of this trap? The nickname says it all. It's called the Devil's Asshole.

#### **6 Pacific Dunes Golf Course, Bandon, Oregon**

Oregon's rugged coastline is home to wandering seabirds and men fulfilling their golfing destinies. The golfers tell tales of bizarre beauty and lost balls in a rough wonderland called Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, the game's latest mecca and home to three terrific tracks: Bandon Dunes, Bandon Trails and my choice, Pacific Dunes. Tom Doak designed the course in 2001. Correction: Doak's evil mind hatched it during a nightmare. And I mean that in a good way. Pacific Dunes hides its cruelty in beauty. It looks like it sprang from a landscape painter's canvas. Every craggy nook and verdant cranny is a visual epiphany. Twelve holes come nose-to-nose with the ocean, while the inland holes sneak through the forest. While you're in there, beware the long, lean seventh hole, which is so breathtaking you don't know whether to stand there admiring it or just go ahead and double-bogey. Be sure to bring your camera—Pacific Dunes is a place for your shutter. Wherever you turn, she's posing for you.

#### **5 Straits Course, Whistling Straits, Kohler, Wisconsin**

In the heart of cheese country you'll find a course that looks like Ireland. Woven through dairy land and Lake Michigan shoreline are 560 acres of what used to be pancake-flat

wasteland. Now it's a curvaceous challenge that'll get your Irish up. This great idea was flushed from the head of toilet tycoon Herb Kohler. There are four courses at Kohler's American Club, but the Straits Course is the hood ornament. Conceived by Kohler and laid out by architect Pete Dye, it opened in 1998 and hosted the 2004 PGA Championship. This is rural beauty, the farmer's-daughter kind. You can picture elves running around this land. Eight holes are flush with the lake; 10 are intertwined with rolling dunes and scruffy bunkers—more than 1,200 bunkers in all. You'll enjoy the dogleg-left 16th hole, called Endless Bite, which dares you to take liberties with your driver. Next comes Pinched Nerve, one of the scariest par-threes this side of Hades. The green is on a shelf that looks like it hangs out over Lake Michigan. No matter how bad your score, you'll want to personally thank Mr. Kohler at the end of the day. If golf were poker, the toilet mogul's course would be a royal flush.

#### **4 Kauri Cliffs Golf Course, Northland, New Zealand**

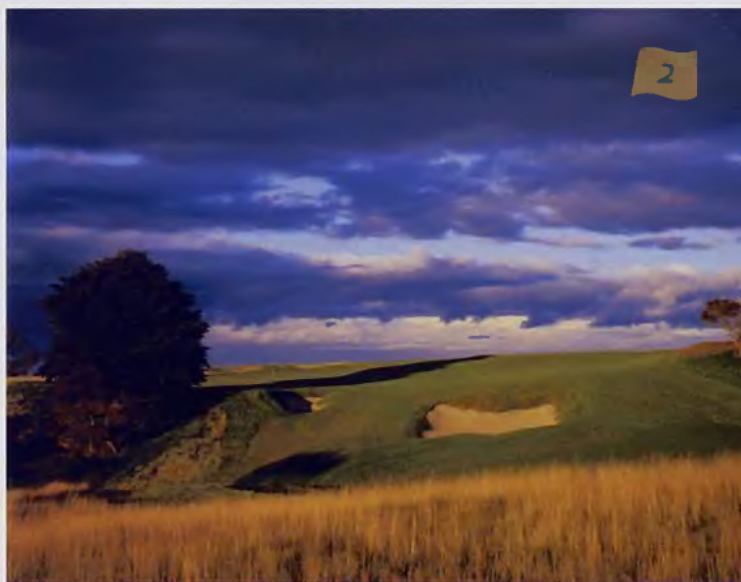
The brainchild of New York developer Julian Robertson, the 6,000-acre Kauri Cliffs is so far off the beaten track, it is still virgin territory for the most ambitious golf travelers. Standing on cliffs high above the Pacific, you feel like you could take one step and hang glide. The cliff-side holes deserve centerfolds. The seventh, a par-three as ruggedly stunning as any on earth, is a slicer's nightmare. Reload and try again; she's a harsh mistress.

Don't worry about racing back to the States after your round—the Lodge at Kauri Cliffs boasts 180-degree Pacific panoramas, plus an infinity pool, three secluded beaches and Astroturf tennis courts. Okay, it's \$600 to \$1,600 a night, but the minibar is on the house. Toss in another \$650 for a clinic with the pro, Michael Campbell, who beat Tiger Woods to win last year's U.S. Open. Before you head home, indulge in some world-class

fishing. It's all here. As ABC's Jack Whitaker said of the place, "Mother Nature had a free hand in creation here and went way over budget."

#### **3 Cypress Point Club, Pebble Beach, California**

There is only one hole I have ever stayed up all night worrying about. A hole that defines the cruel logic of risk versus reward. A hole so jaw-dropping it dissolves the ego and leaves you drooling. Cypress Point, a stone's throw from Big Sur on the coast of northern California, is a gem from start to finish, but the real diva is the 16th hole, a carry of more than 200 yards over seals, raging sea and old trees growing out of rocks. It is the most famous par-three on earth. Cypress Point is the antithesis of its gorgeous neighbor, Pebble Beach. Pebble is a resort, as famous as any in the world. Cypress is shy and wants to be alone. Pebble is always expanding to keep up with the times, while Cypress keeps contracting to maintain its heritage. Pebble is Trump (think Donald's money and Melania's looks), while Cypress is Yoda. The



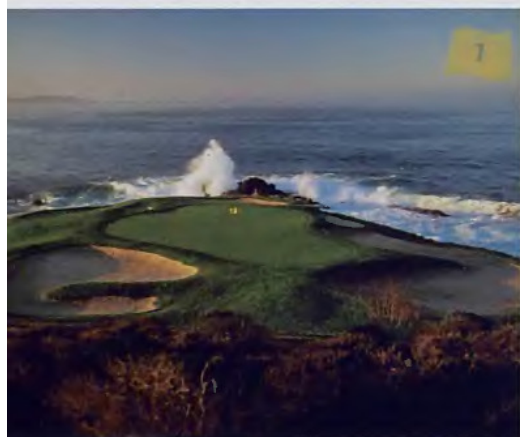
course was built in 1928 by the great Dr. Alister MacKenzie, who wrote, "There is, first, a natural beauty of surrounding found only on British seaside courses, and added to this is the fascination of wending one's way through woods, over immense dunes, to typically inland scenes. It is unsurpassed, having waited for centuries only to have the architect's molding hand to sculpture a course without peer." Yeah, baby!

#### **2 Cape Kidnappers Golf Course, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand**

If you just went and made the 40-hour round-trip to Kauri Cliffs, here



are two more words of advice: Go back! There's an even more gorgeous course in New Zealand, in a setting so sexy you can hear the sirens singing as you swing. Another Julian Robertson project, this one designed by Tom Doak, Cape Kidnappers perches on a cliff top overlooking the Pacific; many holes slope toward the ocean as if reaching for a lover. The cliffs rise more than 100 yards above the sea. Three holes force you to hit over a chasm to the next ridge. "At the sixth and 15th holes," Doak warns, "it's possible to pull your approach off the very end of the earth, though it will take nearly 10 seconds of hang time for your ball to reach the ocean below." You'll feel like a tightrope walker on the 15th, a vertiginous par five with sheer drops of 60 feet to the right and 460 to the left. Cape Kidnappers is just a few hours down the road from where the *Lord of the Rings* movies were shot. Precious indeed.



# 1 Pebble Beach Golf Links, Pebble Beach, California

Situated on the coast of northern California and sandwiched between the dreamy seaside towns of Monterey and Carmel, Pebble Beach is the end of the road. Welcome to paradise. I first played this course at the California state amateur tournament in the early 1960s. Ten of us young guys bunked in one motel room, most of us on the floor. And we loved it. We hadn't yet discovered that golf is hard.

Robert Louis Stevenson once called this bit of coastline "the greatest meeting of land and sea in the world." From the dogleg-right first hole to the gorgeous, famous par-five 18th, every inch of Pebble is perfect. And very expensive. But don't think of this course's greens fee as \$425 a round—think of it as \$23.61 a hole. May the wind always be at your back.

## PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Pebble Beach Golf Links

AGE: 87

DIMENSIONS: 36 36 72

FRONT: 6,116 yards BACK: 6,737 yards SLOPE: 142

TURN-ONS: Lawn mowers, ocean views, having Clint Eastwood as one of my owners, secret midnight trysts on the fairways and a man who knows how to swing.

TURNOFFS: Golfers who don't replace their divots, slow rounds, golf wristwatches that keep your score, rodents and anybody who dresses like Jesper Parnevik.

FAVORITE MEMORY: Tom Watson's famous 1982 chip shot on my 17th hole, which fell in for a birdie and put him in the lead by one stroke over Jack Nicklaus with one hole left to go in the U.S. Open (see photo below). Watson won the tournament. Attaboy.

19TH HOLE: There's nothing like the slow-roasted prime rib, a plate of baked oysters and a Guinness or three at my Tap Room after a round.

PEOPLE SAY I LOOK LIKE: Elle Macpherson covered in Krazy Glue and then rolled in finely cut grass.



Jack Nicklaus,  
U.S. Open (1972).



Tom Watson,  
U.S. Open (1982).



Tiger Woods,  
U.S. Open (2000).





*"So much for your attorneys."*









DOCTORS CAN CLONE SHEEP AND MAP THE HUMAN GENOME.  
BUT CAN THEY CREATE THE PERFECT VAGINA?

# ROSE BUD

BY HEATHER  
CALDWELL



Why didn't you tell me there was something wrong with my vagina?" I said with a sigh when my fiancé called. I'd just come from the office of a Beverly Hills plastic surgeon who has become famous for his work with problematic pussies, and I'd been barraged with countless before-and-after photos. Protruding labia minora sliced down to size. Asymmetrical labia majora made to measure. Slimmed-down montes pubis. Trimmed clitoral hoods. It was enough to send a girl straight home to squat over a mirror. To be brutally honest, not until I flipped through the file of Dr. David Matlock's vulvic oeuvre did I have any clue what my pussy looked like in comparison with others. And because most

women can't even tell their labia minora from their majora, I knew I wasn't alone.

Even in the days of Adam, Eve, serpents and apples, the vagina was one of the world's great mysteries—a perfect void, the murky secret of life. The men I've been with were grateful just to be in the presence of mine and didn't make a habit of strapping on a headlamp to look between my legs. Their investigative urges seemed exhausted in the delicate, tantalizing hunt for my clitoris. Until I visited Dr. Matlock and browsed his catalog of winking wonders, I'd been delighted to strip down and flaunt my Brazilian waxes. It never occurred to me that my sex organ may be flawed. It works quite nicely, thank you. What more can a woman ask of her pussy?



The answer seems to be "a lot." Which explains why erotic explorers are now venturing into areas where no man, woman or doctor has gone before. Surgeons and other medical professionals of all kinds are carving a new niche in the field of human cosmetic enhancement. It is a quest to create the perfect pussy. The list of procedures available to women today includes clitoral-hood removal, G-spot collagen injection, laser lip reduction and rejuvenation, and hymenoplasty, an operation that can render the most sexually experienced 50-year-old a veritable virgin again, ready to be deflowered. There are even new artificial

pussies out there, crafted from silicone used by NASA, that their creators call works of art.

A few months before my wedding I set out in search of America's foremost vaginal visionaries, intent on finding some meaning in it all. What will women's vaginas look and feel like a hundred years from now? I wondered. Who decides what is perfect and what is not? Let us take a closer look.

Doctors performed 793 vaginal cosmetic procedures in 2005, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. Some industry players believe that number will double this year. The frenzy for

Dr. David Matlock—the pioneering force behind the trend of vaginal cosmetic surgery—with four assistants at the Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute of Los Angeles.

fine-tuning our most private parts can be traced to surgical innovations pioneered by my new friend Matlock, who turns out on closer inspection to be an especially business-savvy impresario, a regular Ray Kroc of cooch. As the founder of the Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute of Los Angeles, Matlock trademarked the techniques of what he calls designer laser vaginoplasty (aesthetic surgical enhancement) and laser vaginal rejuvenation (tightening vaginal muscles that have gone slack from age, childbirth or just plain overuse). And while Matlock himself rarely performs more than 10 surgeries a week, he says his entire operation—including income from trademarks and patents—brings in \$12 million a year.

Business, Matlock can't stop telling you, is booming.

Other plastic surgeons I spoke with called Matlock "something of a character"—a view many of his Beverly Hills colleagues seem to share. A trim, handsome, perfectly coiffed African American who dresses from head to toe in Versace or Armani, the good doctor dates a Brazilian samba dancer, dines at the Mondrian Hotel's chic Asia de Cuba restaurant and commutes from Bel Air Crest to Beverly Hills in a CL 55 AMG Mercedes-Benz. He reserves his twin-turbo Porsche for Friday and Saturday nights and keeps a Hummer handy for errands "because with a Hummer you don't have to worry about the valet banging it up." He is the kind of man who's not afraid of going to great lengths to present himself as far more of a dandy than your stodgy, white-coated surgeon.

Matlock's office is, unsurprisingly, an extension of his personal style. The first thing I see when entering the institute, located on Sunset Boulevard down the road from the Chateau Marmont, is the bursting cleavage of the institute's administrator, Griselda. Looking like a young Salma Hayek in a plunging yellow camisole, Griselda is hard to miss. If anything, she looks like a walking advertisement for the perfectibility of the body. The office's color scheme and decor are luxe and vagina-friendly. There are peach sofas and nude walls, and framed magazine profiles of the doctor line the halls. Smiles and fingernails gleam. Buxom nurses nod. When Griselda ushers me into Matlock's personal office, I feel as if I've stepped into the headquarters of a high-tech sex cult.

Sitting behind a desk with a commanding view of downtown Los Angeles, Matlock launches right into his sales pitch. Phrases like "sexual gratification" and "female empowerment" figure prominently in the rather one-sided conversation. I detect an almost religious fervor for this strangest of callings.

"Is there really such a thing as a perfect pussy?" I interject. "And if so, what does it look like?"

"It's the idea of beauty, the *idea*—do you understand?" Matlock says. "The image. Women come in here, and they want to look like the Centerfolds you see in *PLAYBOY*." Although feeling swept along by Matlock's enthusiasm, I try to point out that *PLAYBOY* never features full-on beaver shots.

Matlock's selfless crusade on behalf of America's poor, neglected pussies brings to mind the pharmaceutical industry's knack for inventing new diagnostic names for diseases that don't exist. If America's business is business, it seems one way of going about that business is to create a demand for things we never knew we needed.

Nonetheless, Matlock claims perfect pussies do exist, and he swears he has encountered a few. "I see women with a perfect slitlike introitus, labia minora that come back at the midline," he says, putting his hands together as if in prayer and showing me his perfectly aligned index fingers. "Let's say the index fingers represent the labia minora. Women don't want them gaping apart. The same goes for the labia majora. Women don't want those lips hanging loose. They want them pert, firm and close together. So that's rejuvenation. And our next-biggest-selling procedure is laser reduction labiaplasty, because women don't want their labia minora projecting beyond the labia majora."

"Don't most women's labia minora naturally project beyond their labia majora?" I ask as I stare down at my own lap.

"Probably."

This is a brilliant business, I think to myself.

"So the laser reduction labiaplasty is for, like, when there's too much meat in the taco?"

"Yes," Matlock says briskly. "Of course, I did not create the market. The need was there all along. I discovered the market. And believe me, I know what women want. I've treated princesses, porn stars, presidents' daughters, actresses and celebrities from 50 states and 30-some countries."

Sitting in Matlock's office, I wonder if it has occurred to him that women may really just want to be left alone.

Or do they? After our interview Matlock arranges for me to meet several of his recent patients. I'm introduced to a parade of fantastically bodacious, immaculately feminine creatures, each more suggestively dressed than the last. First a 33-year-old Panamanian hairstylist from Marina del Rey, who received laser rejuvenation five months earlier, tells me, "I wasn't sure" (continued on page 128)







*"Hey! Is that a private show?"*





# ALL THE RIGHT STEPH

Don't be late  
for your date with  
Miss June

**A** full hour before our interview is scheduled to begin, Stephanie Larimore, a beautiful brunette with a heart-shaped face, is smiling and ready to go. How appropriate: This is a young woman who seems congenitally incapable of ever being late. "I was a preemie, born two and a half months early," she says. "I was one of those miracle babies and weighed only two pounds, three ounces at birth. Now every spring I do charity walks for the March of Dimes in support of

premature babies. And yes, I am early for everything."

Climbing into a classic photo booth, Stephanie says she's reminded of similar booths that are fixtures of the small-town carnivals that pass by her home in Fishers, Indiana. As she mugs playfully, it's clear the 25-year-old knows her way around an aperture. Playboy.com Cyber Club members voted her Cyber Girl of the Month last May, and she recently appeared in the *Vixens* Playboy Special Edition. "I dreamed about being a Playmate every night after

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA









becoming a Cyber Girl," she says. "Then it just happened, and I was jumping around and doing cartwheels."

Since we encourage this kind of activity in beautiful women, we ask Miss June what else makes her jump for joy. "The Indianapolis Colts," she says. "I go to every game I can, and I need a guy who enjoys that too. He should wear Colts jerseys with me, as well as paint his face and dye his hair blue for the games." She looks at us with a wide grin and waits for us to call her on it. "Okay, I'm just kidding. I may paint a number on the side of my cheek. But I love to hang and flirt with the guys." When absent from the RCA Dome, Stephanie enjoys a quiet night at a lounge with close friends. "I'm not the crazy girl who starts dancing on top of the bar," she says but then reconsiders. "Well, I've calmed down. I used to be a go-go dancer, and once I was doing a choreographed dance on the top of a bar. I was wearing little Daisy Duke shorts and a cowboy hat. As soon as I started, I slipped on some ice and fell into the ice trough. It was the beginning—and pretty much the end—of my go-go-dancing career." Stephanie has since worked in a plastic surgeon's office, for Hawaiian Tropic and as a Miller Lite girl. She's currently taking acting lessons and hopes one day to open a private spa, perhaps in Los Angeles. One place she is in no hurry to get to is the wedding altar. "I'm not ready to commit myself yet," she says. "I think it's important to know who you're going to marry, because you want to make sure it lasts forever."

















See more of Miss June at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com).







PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Stephanie Larimore

BUST: 34C WAIST: 23 HIPS: 34

HEIGHT: 5'4" WEIGHT: 105 lbs.

BIRTH DATE: 4/21/1981 BIRTHPLACE: Ft. Wayne, Indiana

AMBITIONS: To put 100% effort into anything I do, whether it's modeling, acting, fashion coordinating or owning a spa.

TURN-ONS: eye contact, good manners, intelligence, confidence, a sense of humor, nice abs and a smile :).

TURNOFFS: Arrogance, materialism, smoking, spitting, bad hygiene, drug use, shallowness and laziness.

PREVIOUS MODELING WORK: I have been modeling for about six years, doing various work for companies such as Lucas Oil, Hawaiian Tropic, Pirelli tires, Joe Pocket and Miller Lite.

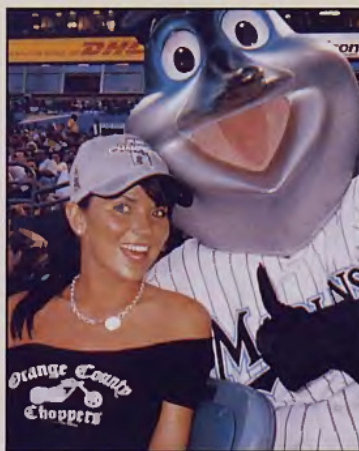
IF I HAD MORE TIME, I WOULD: Do more charity work, adopt a pet, spend more time with my family and friends & take culinary classes.

FIVE MOVIES I WATCH REPEATEDLY: Titanic, Meet Joe Black, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, Scarface & The Wedding Planner.

MY THREE FAVORITE CITIES: L.A., Las Vegas and New York City.



10 years old  
(how embarrassing).



At a marlins game  
a few years ago.



Looking good in  
Miami.







# PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

**W**hy didn't Dick Cheney get into more trouble for shooting a person in the face? Isn't that why Bill Clinton almost got impeached?

**A** group of cowboys were out on the range, branding some cattle. While they were away the new cook saw a sheep tied to a post. Thinking it was for the night's meal, he slaughtered the animal and cooked it.

Later on, after dinner, all the cowboys were sulking and ignoring the cook. He pulled one aside and asked, "Did I screw up the cooking?"

"No," the cowboy replied. "You cooked up the screwing."



**A** woman was waiting for her gynecologist with her feet in the stirrups when the doctor walked in and said, "Wow, that's the biggest pussy I have ever seen. Wow, that's the biggest pussy I have ever seen."

"Ouch," the woman replied. "You didn't have to say that twice."

"I didn't," he responded. "It was an echo."

**S**he'd planned on a murder-suicide," said the relieved widower. "Fortunately she suffered from dyslexia."

**A** guy and a girl met at a bar. They got along so well that they decided to go back to the girl's place. A few drinks later the guy took off his shirt and washed his hands. He then took off his pants and washed his hands.

The girl watched him and said, "You must be a dentist."

Surprised, the guy said, "Yes, how did you figure that out?"

The girl said, "Easy. You keep washing your hands."

One thing led to another and they made love. Afterward the girl said, "You must be a great dentist."

Now with an inflated ego, the guy said, "Yes, I sure am. How did you figure that out?"

"Easy," the girl said. "I didn't feel a thing."

**T**o thwart the spread of bird flu, George W. Bush suggests we bomb the Canary Islands.

**A** journalist assigned to her paper's Jerusalem bureau rented an apartment overlooking the Wailing Wall. Every day when she looked out, she saw the same old Jewish man praying. Curious, the journalist went downstairs and introduced herself to the old man.

"You come every day to the wall," she said. "How long have you been doing this? What are you praying for?"

The old man replied, "I have come here to pray every day for 25 years. In the morning I pray for world peace and the brotherhood of man. In the afternoon I come back and pray for the eradication of famine and disease from the earth."

The journalist was touched. "How does it make you feel to come here every day for 25 years and pray for these things?" she asked.

The old man looked at her sadly and said, "Like I'm talking to a wall."

**W**hat's better than honor?  
In 'er.

**A** father and his son were at the zoo. When they came to the elephant exhibit the boy asked, "What's that hanging down from the elephant?"

The father replied, "That's his penis, son."

The boy said, "Last week Mommy told me that was nothing."

"Well, son," replied his father, "remember that your mother has been spoiled."



**A** study reports that 70 percent of gay men were born that way and the other 30 percent were sucked into it.

**A** guy walked into a bar. The side of his face was bruised and bleeding, so the bartender asked, "What happened to you, buddy?"

The guy said, "Oh, I got into a fight with my girlfriend because I called her a cheap whore." "Yeah?" asked the bartender. "What did she do?"

He replied, "She hit me with her bag of nickels."

Send your jokes to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or by e-mail through our website at [jokes.playboy.com](http://jokes.playboy.com). PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributors whose submissions are selected.





*"Know what? This is going to look pretty darn impressive on your résumé."*




**ESPN'S BASEBALL BRAIN DOESN'T MEAN  
TO BE FUNNY. IT JUST SORTA HAPPENS**

**J**ohn Kruk says dieting is like getting a fancy present and then "eating the box." When a friend told him light beer had less fat listed on its label, Kruk said, "I didn't know beer had a label." Of the time he was too drunk to find his girlfriend's house, he says, "I got so lost, I ended up everywhere." He says that after he stopped drinking, "I was still an asshole. I am getting dumber



**KRUK 23**





# THE WIT AND WISDOM OF JOHN KRUK

BY PAT JORDAN

every year. I just don't think I've reached stupidity yet."

John Kruk says a lot of funny things, but he is not a funny man. He rarely smiles or laughs. He always looks physically distressed, constipated—even more so after he says something funny. When asked to discuss his bout with testicular cancer, he said, "Who wants to talk about their nuts in public?" People laughed. Kruk looked pained. The first time he appeared on *Late Show With David Letterman* he had the audience convulsed with laughter. It confused him. "Letterman asked me questions," Kruk says. "I just answered them."

The world is full of people who are inadvertently humorous, but few are funnier than Kruk. What really sets him apart, though, is



**"My mouth gets in the way of my brain. I can never sleep after a show. I'm up thinking, Did I say anything stupid? Any bad words? Usually the answer is yes."**



**561 JOHN KRUK**

HT: 5'10" WT: 180 BATS: LEFT THROWS: LEFT DRAFT: PADRES #3 (JUNE-JUNE, 1981)  
ACQ: VIA DRAFT BORN: 5-6-61, CHARLESTON, W. VA. HOME: KEYSER, W. VA.

**COMPLETE MINOR LEAGUE BATTING RECORD**

YR	CLUB	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	SLG	OPS	AVG
81	WALLA WALLA	83	157	31	38	10	0	1	10	7	.325	.86	.242
82	RENO	125	441	82	137	30	0	11	82	17	.400	.72	.311
83	BEAUMONT	123	409	84	170	41	0	10	88	12	.520	.88	.341
84	LAS VEGAS	115	340	56	111	25	0	11	57	2	.332	.65	.276
85	LAS VEGAS	127	427	81	142	29	4	7	50	2	.408	.57	.351
<b>MINOR LEA TOTALS</b>		<b>550</b>	<b>1854</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>.491</b>	<b>.700</b>	<b>.325</b>
<b>GW-PDR (1985): 0</b>		<b>GW-PDR (CAREER): 33</b>											

First major league Home Run: 5-10-86.

**TALKIN' BASEBALL** THE FIRST PITCHER IN PADRES HISTORY TO RETIRE 25 CONSECUTIVE BATTERS WAS BOB SHIRLEY VS. ASTROS, APRIL 22, 1977.



Clockwise from top left: A young Kruk on the Beaumont Golden Gators; as a San Diego Padre on his 1986 Donruss baseball card; his last hit, with the White Sox in 1995; chatting with the Cardinals' Scott Rolen; with the original crew of *Best Damn Sports Show Period* (clockwise from left: Lisa Guerrero, Kruk, Chris Rose, D'Marco Farr, John Salley and Tom Arnold); the back of Kruk's 1986 Topps rookie card.

brothers. When Kruk was 11, the family moved to Keyser, West Virginia, in the Appalachian Mountains. Kruk hated it at first because "it was too slow."

"Keyser was hillbilly country," he says. (In the major leagues Kruk's nickname was Hillbilly.) "People did the same things they did 20 years before: worked in the bottle factory; raised cows, chickens, whatever they needed for themselves. I grew to love it." His house was "in the middle of nowhere," but his family had a lot of acres, so his father built athletic fields. After school Kruk's friends would meet at his house to play sports. When Kruk joined organized teams, his parents would drive him and his brothers to all their different games. "Like a shuttle," he says. "I learned by my father's example. He wasn't the kind of guy to analyze things with us." Keyser influenced Kruk as well. "In New Jersey I learned to get excited about a game," he says. "In West Virginia I learned to calm down after a game was over."

Shortly after his 20th birthday, in 1981, Kruk was a good enough hitter to be drafted by the San Diego Padres organization. "Heck," he says, "I didn't think they even knew how to get to where I was." At the time, he was a lean left-handed line-drive hitter with exceptionally quick wrists. By the time he reached the Padres, in 1986, he had

that he is smart enough—or lucky enough—to have turned it into a successful career, first as a panelist on Fox's *Best Damn Sports Show Period* and now in his current job as an analyst on ESPN's *Baseball Tonight*.

Kruk, 45, played major-league baseball from 1986 to 1995 and finished his career with a .300 batting average. After he left baseball he drank beer and played golf for a few years. Finally he decided he missed baseball, so he became a minor-league hitting instructor in 2001. He quit soon after because he didn't like filling out paperwork—"It took the fun out of the game"—and because his young players wouldn't listen to him. "I guess they didn't want advice from a career .300 hitter," he says. A producer saw Kruk on *Letterman* and brought him to Fox, where he stayed until 2003. On March 29, 2004 he joined *Baseball Tonight* alongside the show's host, Karl Ravech, and two other analysts, Harold Reynolds, a former major leaguer, and Peter Gammons, a sports-

writer. "The Krukker is the star of the show," Ravech says. "Wherever I go, people ask me what he's really like. I tell them he's wild, outgoing and crazy in life, just as he is on TV."

Kruk was raised in a New Jersey suburb of New York City, where he grew up a Yankees fan. He rarely saw his father, who had to work 12 to 16 hours a day to support Kruk and his three

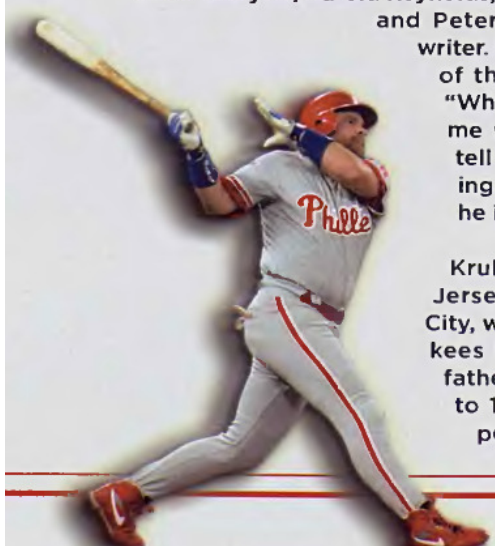
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Kruk's Padres teammate Goose Gossage once said, "He has natural instincts that can't be taught, and he keeps it real simple. See ball, hit ball." Kruk also had one other attribute: He played the game hard because for him it was always fun.

When he was traded to the Philadelphia Phillies, in 1989, Kruk felt he had gone to a "place where they sent everybody to die." He didn't mind that Phillies fans booed their team mercilessly—"I like that. It makes it easier to concentrate"—but he hated his new teammates' selfishness and complacency about losing. Finally Kruk said to himself, "The hell with it. I'll just have fun." And he did. Over the next three years he batted around or over .300, and the Phillies transformed from unsightly caterpillars into glorious (if imperfect) butterflies. Kruk was an All-Star in 1991, 1992 and 1993, and the Phillies went from being a last-place club in 1992 to the sixth game of the 1993 World Series. But more than that, the Phillies' image changed; the hapless losers (continued on page 110)





# Nobody?



JUAN ALVAREZ • JORGE G



# polo COUNTRY

BRIONI'S NEW LINE OF BLAZERS AND SHIRTS TAKES ITS INSPIRATION FROM THE SPORT OF KINGS



The designer label synonymous with Italian panache unveiled this season's best sportswear collection on an Adriatic archipelago once known as a playground for European aristocrats. No surprise, then, that its polo events are spurring a resurgence of Mediterranean elegance.

FASHION BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARRY BENSON



The perfect match: Brioni the Italian luxury brand is known for its impeccable tailoring. Brioni the island group is known for its love of polo. Above: Horacio Heguy, whose family is royalty in this game of kings, steadies Paolo Bertola's horse. Heguy is wearing a Brioni Polo Classic jacket. Opposite page, top: Brioni CEO Umberto Angeloni, wearing his label, leads players onto the pitch. Far right: Heguy models his Brioni between chukkers (polo periods).







On the resplendent main island, Brioni CEO Umberto Angeloni surveys a pristine polo field groomed specifically for his annual fashion event. Under Yugoslav and Croatian rule for the past 60 years, the Brioni islands had been virtually inaccessible. After glad-handing enough Croatian officials, Angeloni was eventually able to reconnect Europe's most elegant resort with the continent's highest fashion. Part summer fete, part sports outing, the polo event has put both Brionis back on the map. "The islands are synonymous with high style and have much in common with the heritage of the brand," Angeloni says. Following three days of backhand shooting, divot stomping and champagne sipping near Roman ruins, Angeloni takes to the field between chukkers to introduce his new polo fashions. While the CEO displays navy suede bombers, white polo shirts and sharp cropped jackets with napa leather trim, polo star Jose Bertola spontaneously jumps off his horse and glides into a striped Brioni blazer with gold buttons. Bertola is still riding high but no longer on his horse; he looks far too polished to go back on the pitch.





# SolarFLAIR

HIGH-TECH LENSES AND LARGE FRAMES—THIS SUMMER,  
FUNCTION MEETS STYLE AT THE BRIDGE OF THE NOSE

FASHION BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KOJI YANO



Making an upgrade to your appearance is as easy as looking in the mirror. That's because choosing the right pair of sunglasses to frame the face is the most crucial style decision a man can make. Aviators look best on a man with a slim jawline and strong brow; on the wrong guy these large lenses tend to resemble flight goggles. This **Dolce & Gabbana** model (\$230) broadens the face and evokes an image of jet-set cool.





From top: As tortoise frames (\$17) by **Mossimo Men's for Target** prove, stylish shades needn't be expensive. The aviators (\$255) from **Dior Homme** by **Hedi Slimane** are more *Rock Star* than *Top Gun*. Thick frames (\$48) from **Perry Ellis** complement a strong nose by drawing attention to the temples. Aviators like these (\$230) by **Prada** will get you noticed without your being recognized. **Alain Milidi**'s square frames (\$300) update the Buddy Holly look, while bold lenses (\$375) by **Robert Marc Collection** work on any face with a confident demeanor.



# metal BANDS

CELL PHONES MAY KEEP THE HOUR, BUT FLASHING A SHARP WATCH SHOWS THAT YOUR TIME IS IMPORTANT



Whether metallic watches are considered "sport" or "executive" depends on nothing more than the time of day. Clockwise from top: The Hydromax 11100 M (\$2,400) by **Bell & Ross** has liquid in its case that allows it to resist pressure to 11,100 meters underwater. The G Chrono (\$4,095) by **Gucci** is framed with 54 diamonds. Need to calculate the distance from point A to point B on a map? The Milemarker (\$400) by **Selko** has a scrolling wheel that can help. The Tournament (\$250) by **ESQ Swiss** is simple yet beautiful. The most luxurious of the steel watches is the Grande Class Grande Date (\$8,400) by **Zenith**. TAG Heuer's Carrera Automatic Chronograph Tachymeter (\$2,495) is a mouthful to say but provides a wristful of Swiss ingenuity.





These days a watch on a leather band just doesn't tick. Not only is animal skin uncomfortable on the wrist, it shouldn't get wet, and it's an unsuitable match for leisure clothes. Metallic watches are for men who need fashion as versatile as their lifestyle. They can be worn with a suit during the day, with a pair of jeans for a dinner date and, if the date progresses well enough, in a Jacuzzi later on. Above is the TTI Chronograph (\$2,425) by Oris. The Audi TT inspired the collection's curves and its vulcanized rubber (to protect the face from scratches).



# JOHN KRUK (continued from page 102)

*"John has the most tremendous lack of sensitivity for the plight of others of anyone I've known," says Ravech.*

became lovable Bowery Boy urchins. They grew famous for their reckless abandon on the field and off. Players such as Kruk, Mitch "Wild Thing" Williams, Darren Daulton, Dave Hollins and Lenny Dykstra played the game hard and partied hard. "We went out to dinner together," Kruk says. "Six, seven of us. White, black, Latin. We were always a team."

A tough team. They slid into second base with their spikes high, ripped their uniforms and drew blood—their own and their opponents'. Williams called the team a bunch of "gypsies, tramps and thieves." The Phillies fans called them Macho Row. Kruk says, "When we were dead last we were assholes; when we were in first place we were trendsetters. The media created us."

Kruk and his Phillies were suited to Philadelphia fans, who like their heroes scruffy and with a few patches on them. With his disheveled long hair flowing from the back of his cap, his unkempt beard and his dirty, ripped uniform, Kruk filled the bill. He was their hero. For a meal he would wash down four hot dogs with beer. He listened to country music, drove a pickup truck, chewed tobacco and hated the new baseball world of cute, furry mascots. "No mascots on the field," he scowled. "Shoot anything that looks like it escaped from *Sesame Street*." Some people laughed but not Kruk.

"Phillies fans love overachievers with less talent," he says. "The fans knew I had to try harder to stay in the big leagues. A guy like [Hall of Fame Phillies third baseman] Mike Schmidt might have tried harder than anyone, but he was so gifted, he looked like he wasn't trying and didn't care."

I meet Kruk in the lobby of building two on the ESPN campus, a complex of 12 modern brick buildings spread out over 100 acres in Bristol, Connecticut and dominated by 27 huge satellite dishes. "I don't know why they call it a campus," he observes. "I ain't learned anything here yet." The wall behind the receptionist's desk is a collage of photographs of famous athletes. On another wall a bank of television screens beams in baseball games.

Kruk is built like a professional wrestler from the era before bodybuilding and steroids. He stands five-foot-10 and weighs more than 230 pounds.

His head appears to be screwed onto his shoulders without the benefit of a neck. His short brown hair is plastered down as if he had combed it with the flat of his hand, like a boy on his first day of school. He sports a goatee, and his small eyes are always downcast from either wariness or shyness. Today he wears a nondescript brown suit that gives him the appearance of a very large Idaho potato.

At his newsroom cubicle Kruk checks his schedule. Over the three days I talk with him, Kruk always seems to be eating. This time he has nachos and drinks a soda.

Kruk describes his years with the Phillies as being "as good as it gets." After he retired, he missed baseball. "I didn't miss playing," he says. "I missed the clubhouse. We were a family for eight months." Kruk pauses a minute, then says, "Aw, I missed the competition, too. There was never enough winning. I see college teams win the College World Series and it brings tears to my eyes. I'm so competitive, I once screamed at my mother-in-law over a Scrabble game."

Kruk and his *Baseball Tonight* cohorts sit around a long, curved wooden desk bathed in spotlights, waiting for their cue. Ravech is a trim, handsome man in a designer suit and polished loafers, a quick-witted, caustic type A personality who had a heart attack in 1998. Reynolds, dressed in his black double-breasted pin-striped *Johnny Dangerously* suit, is an amiable man with a big smile. Gammons, wearing pink suspenders and pink socks, has a puff of blow-dried white hair and a bored expression on his pink bloodhound's face. Kruk looks like—well, like an ex-ballplayer in an ill-fitting suit. He's chewing gum nervously. Kruk says, "Wearing a suit and tie and combing my hair is the most painful part of my life."

The show begins. Ravech introduces topics. Working his gum until his jaw quivers, Kruk says he likes the Yankees' veteran pitchers in a pennant race. Gammons, a Boston native, says he likes the Red Sox. Kruk says that although Johnny Damon, then Boston's lead-off hitter, calls himself an idiot, "he's a dynamic player." Then they watch video clips of games. A producer hands them shot sheets, notes on the clips. Kruk tells me he has difficulty concentrating on the clips and

the shot sheets at the same time, and it's gotten him into trouble. Once, he laughed at a player who tripped over second base only to discover from the shot sheet that the man had torn his ACL. Another time he noticed that Marlins pitcher Jim Mecir was limping, and Kruk said Mecir was injured and shouldn't be pitching. Kruk later learned the pitcher was born with clubfeet. He felt so bad that he called Mecir to apologize.

"My mouth gets in the way of my brain," Kruk says. "I can never sleep after a show. I'm up thinking, Did I say anything stupid? Any bad words? Usually the answer is yes."

Kruk doesn't edit himself or work things too finely. See ball, hit ball. See video, comment on video. It's his talent and his curse, but it's what his fans love about him. "They think I'm honest," he says.

During a break in the show, Ravech jokes with Kruk. Reynolds comes over and introduces himself to me with a big, guileless smile. Gammons leans back in his chair.

Kruk likes his ESPN colleagues. "There's a jocklike clubhouse atmosphere here," he says. "In TV no one talks about money. That's the beauty of it. Not like baseball. It's sad, but when you talk about baseball, you end up talking about money."

Kruk describes Reynolds as "the nicest man I ever met. But Harold won't get on players because he remembers how hard it was. We argue a lot. I go off on a rant, like with Alex Rodriguez. He defended A-Rod for laying down a sacrifice bunt when A-Rod was going bad. I said it was a selfish play. He's the number-three hitter; he's supposed to drive in runs. If he wants to get out of a slump, he should hit a line drive in the gap."

Although Kruk seems to have the least in common with Gammons, a career journalist, he still admires him "for the way he works the phones to get the inside information. He always helps me get in touch with players." Of Ravech, Kruk says, "He brings out the best in me. If I say the Orioles' pitching isn't good, he'll say, 'You're an idiot,' to get me to think up a strong argument."

After the show, Ravech talks about Kruk. "He had a reputation as a ballplayer's ballplayer, and I thought that would translate on TV." He smiles. "Something always tweaks him. You'll see sweat on his forehead and think he needs CPR. Some player won't run out a ground ball and Kruk will go ballistic. He's old-school. We love it when foam starts coming out of his mouth. He doesn't worry about

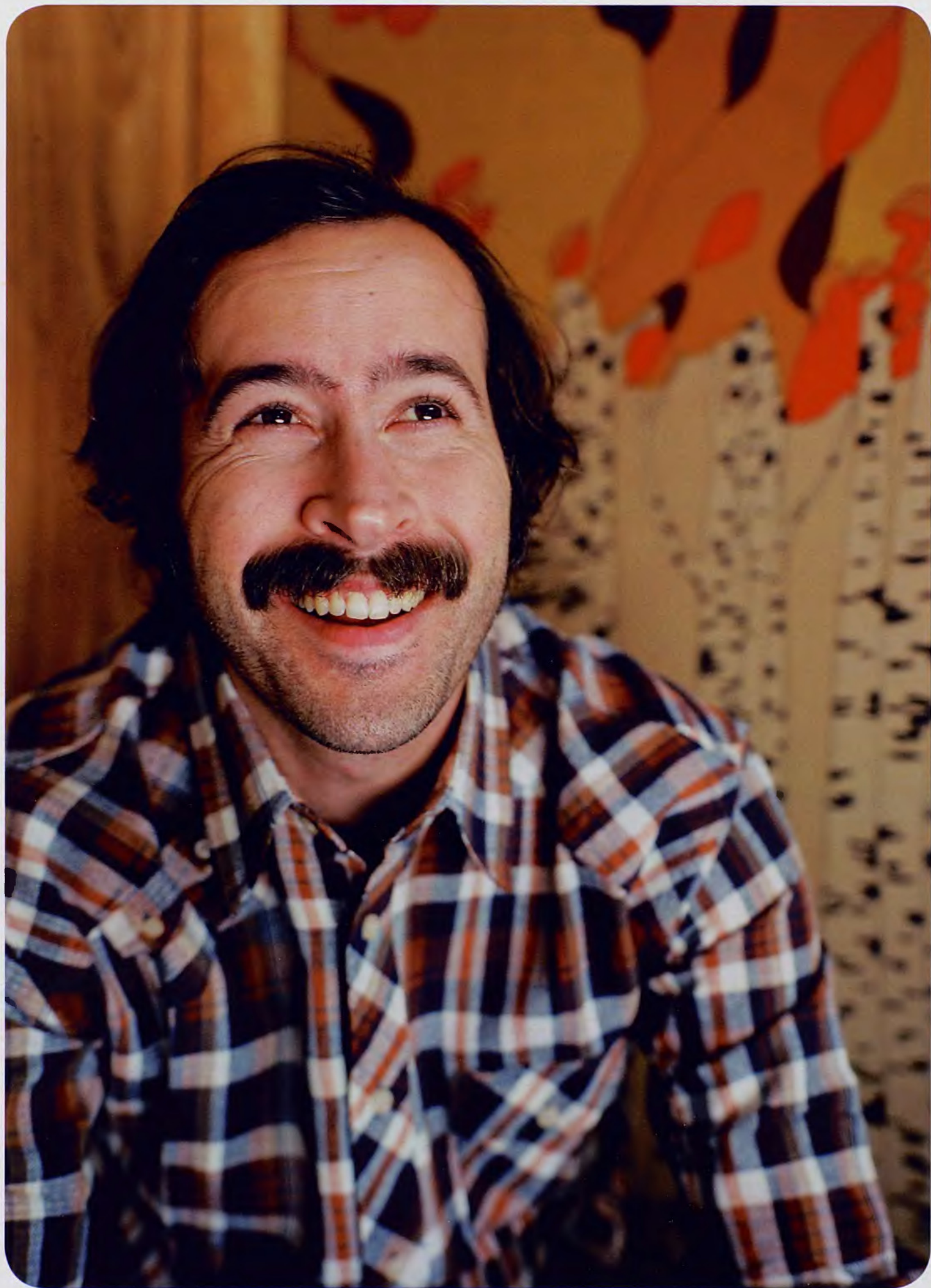
*(continued on page 146)*





*"George, we said you could watch. This isn't watching, George."*









**THE SKATEBOARDER TURNED ACTOR PONDERES KARMA, RATES CELEBRITY MUSTACHES  
AND CONFESSES HIS WEIRD FASCINATION WITH BURT REYNOLDS**

**Q1**

**PLAYBOY:** On NBC's *My Name Is Earl* you play a former criminal who discovers karma. He makes a list of 200 or so people he has wronged in his life and vows to make amends. Who's on your list?

**LEE:** Wow. Where do I begin? I'm a 36-year-old human being, so I'm sure I've made some big mistakes along the way. It's not in the 200 range, I'll tell you that much. If I had to point to one thing, it would be my family. I'm very conscious of correcting any laziness or carelessness from my past that might affect my son.

**Q2**

**PLAYBOY:** Earl's funky mustache has become his most recognized feature. Do you regret growing it?

**LEE:** Not really. I think it gives Earl some flavor. I originally tried to grow a Fu Manchu, but I looked a little too scary. NBC said absolutely no to the Fu Manchu, so I shaved it. A mustache can be a burden sometimes, especially if I haven't

trimmed it in a while and I start to get bits of food in there. But I can live with it. It's a sacrifice for my art.

**Q3**

**PLAYBOY:** When you hosted *Saturday Night Live*, you claimed to have one of the greatest mustaches ever. That's a pretty bold statement. Which celebrity mustache would rank a close second?

**LEE:** Burt Reynolds's, obviously, and Tom Selleck's is definitely on the list. I also have a lot of respect for Bill Splee's stache. He plays Willie the one-eyed postman on *Earl*, and he has the most insane handlebar mustache I've ever seen. It curls in ways that can't be described.

**Q4**

**PLAYBOY:** Speaking of Reynolds, he has been a fixation in your work. You've referred to him in nearly every film you've done with director Kevin Smith, and you even devoted an episode of *Earl* to *Smokey and the Bandit*. Is this some sort of man crush?

**LEE:** *Smokey and the Bandit* was a huge part of my youth. It was my fantasy to be the manly man with the hot rod and the cowboy hat, which is kind of funny because I turned out to be the exact opposite of the tough guy. Doing the *Earl* episode about *Smokey and the Bandit* was a big thrill for me. When I drove the *Bandit* car, I remember thinking, Man, I need to get a cowboy hat and a Trans Am and some cowboy boots, and I'm just going to drive cross-country. There's something kind of appealing about that. I want to be on the run from the law, with stolen beer in my trunk.

**Q5**

**PLAYBOY:** Do you think audiences actually sympathize with Earl, or do they just enjoy mocking a white-trash loser?

**LEE:** They definitely sympathize with him. We're not making fun of Earl, and I don't think people would like the show as much if we did. If Earl were just some redneck asshole, it wouldn't be as funny. (continued on page 124)







# KARA MONACO

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## FROM

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# PRINCESS

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## TO

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# PLAYMATE

## OF THE

# YEAR

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### CINDERELLA LOSES MORE THAN HER SHOE

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Nearly half a century has passed since Ellen Stratton, Miss December 1959, became our first Playmate of the Year in 1960. The Mississippi stunner was a legal secretary with curves, to steal Hemingway's line, like the hull of a racing yacht. In the decades since, there have been 46 PMOYs, iconic beauties like Donna Michelle (1964), Shannon Tweed (1982), Anna Nicole Smith (1993) and Jenny McCarthy (1994). In all that time, there has never been a Miss June PMOY—until now.

"I figured out the absence of Miss Junes on my own," says Kara Monaco, the 2006 Playmate of the Year. "Hef gave me a book for Christmas that lists every Playmate and her month, with a star by the



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

PMOYs. I looked through the whole book, and there were no Miss Junes. When my issue came out last year, I would chat on Playboy.com's Cyber Club, and people would post messages saying, 'Oh, June is just a throwaway month.' I couldn't believe how many readers knew about it. So it feels great to break the curse!"

Indeed, Miss June has arrived. Kara has been nothing but magic for our readers since she first appeared in our August 2004 *Women Behind Bars* pictorial featuring America's sexiest cocktail concocters. Readers were spellbound by the sun-bronzed blonde with the platinum tresses and let us know as much. The letters poured in. Turns out, Kara was







the one shaken and stirred. Moved by the response to her nudes in *PLAYBOY*, she said good-bye to her barmaid days and left her hometown, Orlando, for the City of Angels to pursue her dream of becoming an actress.

"I had an acting coach before I moved to Los Angeles and have done a couple of fun projects already," Kara says. "I played a woman at a spa who is held hostage with a bunch of other patrons on *CSI: Miami*. I also did a cool pilot with Playmates Serria Tawan and Shallen Meiers for a show about NFL cheerleaders produced by a former Raiderette."

Kara became accustomed to the spotlight at an early age. She worked at Disney World in costume as Snow White and Cinderella, danced in Disney parades and competed in gymnastics and dance before her first modeling gigs. Later she became a workout queen and the featured instructor on two *Envy* series workout videos made by the same company that put out Carmen Electra's *Aerobic Striptease*. But none of that compares to the spotlight she's enjoying now. Life as PMOY suits this petite 23-year-old, and she's the first to say so.

On a recent afternoon, Kara reclined at Playboy's photo studio in Santa Monica in a pair of tight jeans, an even tighter T-shirt and a pair of heels. When we ask how she feels about the publicity, her emerald eyes twinkle. "I love it," she says. "Sometimes guys come up to me and say, 'You look like this woman I saw in *PLAYBOY*.' People don't think it's really me! I want people to think I am approachable. If they send me letters or want me to sign anything, I always respond as long as they are respectful. It feels amazing that I have fans who voted for me."

So far, Kara has found plenty of confidantes among the beauties of *PLAYBOY*. "I have some friends in California who I knew before I moved, but a lot of my friends are Playmates," she says. "Right now I live at the Playmate House down the street from the Mansion with Jillian Grace, who was Miss March 2005. Tiffany Fallon, the 2005 PMOY, stayed with us awhile too. We all get along really well." As for nightlife, all those hours tending bar in Florida have eased Kara's thirst for the after-dark scene. "I haven't really gone out that much since moving to L.A.," she says. "I'm not a big party girl, but I've gone out with Hef and his girlfriends a bunch. It's crazy hanging out with them because now it's not just Hef getting all the attention—everyone recognizes Bridget, Holly and Kendra from *The Girls Next Door*."

The one character missing in Kara's fairy tale thus far is the handsome prince. "I'm single and just dating right now," she says. "I feel like it's difficult to meet nice men who don't just want to date you for what you've done." She says she's into spontaneity, homemade dinners and bubble baths. Another tip for would-be suitors: Suggest a night in watching reality TV. "It's my guilty pleasure," she says, biting her lip.

If Kara does hit it big someday and becomes a household name, would she pose nude for us again? She flashes that marquee smile. "In a heartbeat."

Kara Monaco doesn't just look like a princess—she played one at Disney World before she moved to L.A. Right: As a stunning Snow White (top) and Cinderella (center). In addition to receiving \$100,000 in prize money and a Honda CBR1000RR sport motorcycle (see page 32), the 2006 PMOY is enchanted by her new Dodge Charger SRT8 Super Bee (bottom). "It's beyond fast and has a Hemi engine, so boys love this car," she says. A beauty, eh? The car's pretty hot too.



























See Kara's original Playmate pictorial at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com)



# JASON LEE

(continued from page 113)

It's rare today for a comedy to try to move you on an emotional level as much as make you laugh. There's an ironic, cynical gloss to a lot of films and TV shows. But we care about Earl. We're rooting for him to succeed, and I think that's why it works.

## Q6

PLAYBOY: Before accepting the role on *My Name Is Earl*, you sat down and wrote a pros-and-cons list. What were some of the cons?

LEE: I was apprehensive about doing TV, because I didn't want to be known for a certain character. When I did *Kissing a Fool* with David Schwimmer, I realized how trapped he was by his role on *Friends*. Everywhere we'd go, people would shout out to him, "Ross! Hey, Ross!" It's difficult to get away from the shadow of a TV character. I hope I've done enough movies that I won't be pigeonholed as Earl for the rest of my life.

## Q7

PLAYBOY: Your stink-palm routine from *Mallrats*, in which you shake a person's hand after wiping your ass, has lived on among your fans. Do you care that you may never escape the scatological humor of your past?

LEE: No, I dig it. That's an admirable legacy. When *Mallrats* first came out, I couldn't walk down the street without somebody yelling, "Hey, wanna shake my hand?" It died out after a while, but it comes back every few years. Recently I've been approached by a lot of 15-year-old kids, and they'll quote lines to me: "You want a chocolate-covered pretzel?" At first I didn't think anything of it, but then it hit me: When the movie came out, these kids were six years old. That's so bizarre to me. They've grown up with *Mallrats* and made it their own.

## Q8

PLAYBOY: There's an action figure based on Brodie, your character in *Mallrats*. Do you own the toy version of yourself? And if so, do you ever take it out and, uh, play with yourself?

LEE: [Laughs] I've never really played with myself in that way. The chances are good that I've masturbated at some point, of course. It's a pretty cool action figure. Actually, I think it's technically called an inaction figure. My son has one in his room. We call it Brodie Daddy.

## Q9

PLAYBOY: You were one of the first professional skateboarders, before the

X Games brought skating into the mainstream. Do you regret retiring before you had a chance to rake in some fat endorsement cash?

LEE: No, I was never interested in that. When I decided to retire, I thought I was getting a little too old to be skating for a living. There was a lot of pressure to be at the top of my game all the time, and my heart just wasn't in it anymore. But I haven't given up skating completely. I still cruise around now and then just for fun. I'm way past my prime, so nobody expects much from me anymore.

## Q10

PLAYBOY: Unlike many other athletes, you were able to make the transition from sports to acting. What's your secret?

LEE: It might be that skateboarders aren't considered real athletes. Skateboarding was never as popular as something like basketball. But I think the real reason it worked was I went into acting with no expectations. I was just curious about it, in much the same way you might be curious about how cars are made or how to get to the moon. It was naive. My girlfriend's mother was a talent manager, and when I told her I wanted to do movies, she said, "Okay, let's give it a shot." So many people would have said, "Oh, I don't know. Let's get you into some acting classes first and see how it goes." That would have been a bit deflating, and I think I would've lost interest.

## Q11

PLAYBOY: If *Earl* continues to be a hit, would you be content doing television for the rest of your career?

LEE: Oh, sure. The best thing about *Earl* is the steady income. I can do films if and when I want, as opposed to doing a film I don't really believe in because I have to pay the bills. I've never been at a Vince Vaughn or Ben Stiller level, so I don't get offered a lot of starring roles in comedy blockbusters. I've done some independent films that I'm proud of, but it's seven weeks of work for not much money. So then you have to find as many acting jobs as you can, just to keep up financially. *Earl* came along at the right time for me.

## Q12

PLAYBOY: You still haven't achieved household-name status. Do you yearn for the day when you're finally bigger than your *Chasing Amy* co-star Ben Affleck?

LEE: Not at all. When you reach a certain

status in Hollywood, you have to play a lot of games to stay in the limelight. It becomes more about being famous than being an actor. It's a cult of personality. Who's the It person this week? Who has the hottest girlfriend and the most bling-bling? Who showed up at the MTV Video Music Awards in a Hummer limousine? For me it's always more rewarding when people come up to me and say, "I loved you in *Mumford*. What's your name again?" That's how I've always wanted it to be.

## Q13

PLAYBOY: In *Chasing Amy* your character shows off the scars from his many sexual conquests. Do you have any scars with interesting stories behind them?

LEE: I have lots of scars, but they're mostly from my skateboarding days. I have scars on my knees from smashing into the corner of cement benches. I have scars on my pelvis from jumping off my board and sliding like Superman down a hill. One time I snapped my wrist in half and had to get a cast on my arm. Like an idiot, I skated before the cast was taken off, and I fell again and broke my other arm. For the next three months I had to brush my teeth using only my thumb and pinkie.

## Q14

PLAYBOY: After Tom Cruise's outspoken comments about Scientology resulted in such a fierce media backlash, are you less inclined to be open about your own Scientology beliefs?

LEE: I've found certain things to be true for me, but that's not something I want or need to share with the world. I'm more concerned with making a good television show than putting out my personal beliefs. If you want to ask me about my thoughts on music, I'll tell you. But I won't go off on an hour-long rant about how much I hate Britney Spears. Why bother? It's not that I'm more guarded; I'm not trying to lie low about my beliefs because of a fear that I'll be judged harshly. I'm just not interested in being a spokesperson for anything.

## Q15

PLAYBOY: You played the frontman for fictional rock band Stillwater in Cameron Crowe's *Almost Famous*. Do you miss your brief career as a semilegitimate rocker?

LEE: Oh, man, are you kidding me? I miss it every day. That was probably the coolest thing I have ever done. I still remember meeting for band rehearsals before the shoot started. Every day for about six weeks we'd get together and just jam. We had cases of beer and all





*"I'll say one thing...you've taken the good cop-bad cop routine to a whole new level...."*



this vintage equipment to play with. I still get positive reactions from people about that movie. Kenny Loggins stopped me on the street once. He just walked up to me and said, "You're in one of my favorite movies of all fucking time!" All I could think was, I'm having a conversation with Kenny Loggins!

### Q16

PLAYBOY: You've been dumped by a lot of girlfriends in your movies, from Jennifer Love Hewitt in *Heartbreakers* to Shannen Doherty in *Mallrats* to Selma Blair in *A Guy Thing*. Do you have a personal favorite cinema breakup?

LEE: The *Mallrats* one is pretty brutal. You don't want to be dumped with a letter. That's about as cold as it gets. I guess my favorite was when I did the dumping. There's the friendship breakup in *Vanilla Sky*, when I'm with Tom Cruise at the police station and I tell him, "I was your only friend," and then I turn around and walk away. Sometimes losing a friend can be more devastating than losing a girlfriend.

### Q17

PLAYBOY: Be honest. Were you as confused as we were by *Vanilla Sky*'s plot?

What the hell is going on in that film? LEE: I'll give you the easy answer: It's open to interpretation. I just went along with Cameron Crowe, who wrote and directed it. It was enough that he knew what the movie was about.

### Q18

PLAYBOY: You co-star with the notoriously eccentric Crispin Glover in the upcoming indie film *Drop Dead Sexy*. Does Glover scare you as much as he does us?

LEE: Not at all. He's very professional and articulate and intelligent. He's eccentric, sure, but in a nonironic sense. He's not just putting on an act; he's genuinely like that. Everybody thinks he's psychotic and likes to collect eyeballs and stuff, but he's not a nut. He knows what he's doing. It's not like he's going to bite you and drink your blood or anything. He's actually a pretty sweet guy once you get to know him.

### Q19

PLAYBOY: You named your son Pilot Inspektor. Do people still give you flak for choosing such an unconventional name?

LEE: [Laughs] All the time. My significant other, Beth, and I just thought Pilot Ins-

pektor sounded like a cool name, but I can understand why it would baffle some people. A girl came up to me at a diner recently and asked, "Why would you name your son Pilot?" I said, "What should I have named him? Would Dan have been better? Or Brad?" I'm not trying to be self-consciously weird. But it's so easy to succumb to thoughts like, What will my neighbors think? What will my co-workers think? I think it's much braver to follow your instincts.

### Q20

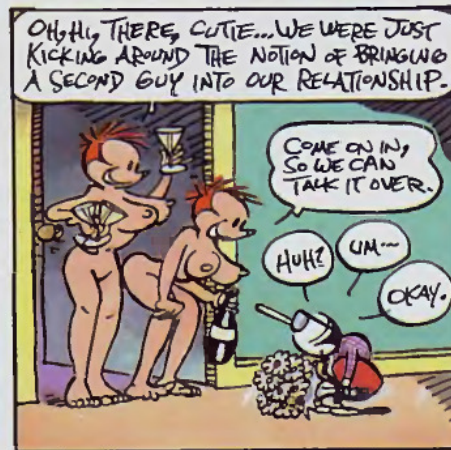
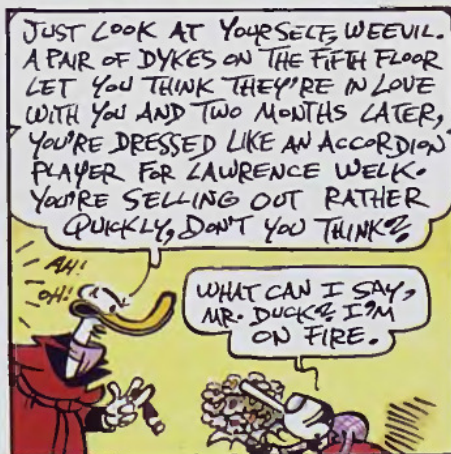
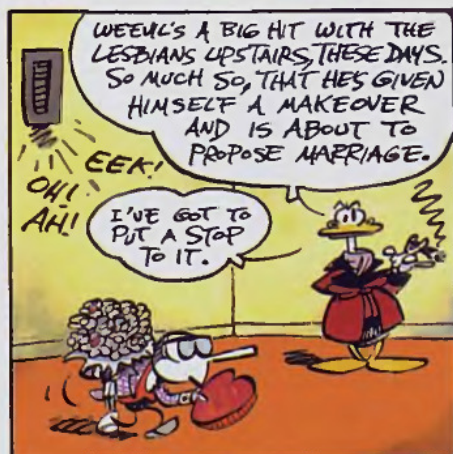
PLAYBOY: You've played characters with names like Brodie, Banky, Beaver, Puggy, Skip, Donner and Bones. Is it a coincidence that your résumé sounds like the roster of a cartoon-animal fraternity?

LEE: Not at all. I kind of like that. It makes me feel like I've done my job well. Those are characters you remember. It's just like with my son, Pilot. I'd rather have my résumé filled with names like Puggy, Bones and Beaver than Dan, Brad and John. It makes life more interesting.



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## ROSEBUD

(continued from page 84)

I needed it, but I've had two children. I didn't want to feel insecure around the younger women who haven't had kids." A 29-year-old Nicaraguan bartender has been renovated top to bottom: Her tits, now a size 36D, could provide refuge for a small marsupial, and her taut, liposuctioned thighs gleam under her miniskirt. Before her labiaplasty, she says, one of her lips was a little larger than the other. This made her feel insecure. "I always had to leave the lights out when I had sex," she says, because she didn't want men to zero in on her lopsided labia.

A divorced 34-year-old bookkeeper from Sacramento had the skin around her clitoris trimmed. "Dr. Matlock brought my vagina down to the size of a 16-year-old's," she tells me. "You can get small, medium or large." One woman reports that after she'd had a few kids, her husband told her that having sex with her was like tossing a hot dog down a hallway. And every one of these factory-refurbished beauties insists that while they may have felt guilty or nervous before getting their muffs surgically re-buffed, they would recommend the procedures to their friends. I am left wondering how long it will be before they'll be back in the office for a tune-up. Surely their skin-deep contentment has a shelf life. If so, Matlock is happy to comply.

Not that he is the only doctor fulfilling women's vaginal-enhancement needs. Physicians in major cities all over the U.S. now offer these surgeries. A doctor in Connecticut markets vacations for women living abroad to come to America. The \$11,400 package includes a vaginal makeover along with a plane ticket, a limo to and from the airport and a hotel stay. Many women learned about vaginal cosmetic surgery from Dr. Gary Alter, who is featured on the E! network's reality show *Dr. 90210*. Alter says he performs about 20 labia operations a month. A New York gynecologist who does labiaplasties recently told the *Chicago Tribune*, "We're saving a lot of couples' sex lives." Meanwhile critics of the trend nationwide have compared it to everything from Pandora's box to a Restoration comedy to *Pimp My Ride*.

Perhaps the strangest new phenomenon is hymenoplasty. For a mere \$1,800 to \$5,000 women can surgically restore their hymen, giving second-string first loves a fresh chance to redeflower them. A Texas woman who had the operation done by a Manhattan doctor gushed to the London *Times* this past winter about how worthwhile the experience was. "Now my sister is thinking of becoming a virgin again for her 45th birthday to surprise her husband," the woman said.

Who pioneered hymenoplasty? From whose fertile mind did it hatch? You guessed it: Dr. David Matlock.

Matlock's latest project is called G-spot amplification—or, more colloquially, the G-Shot. The procedure provides increased sexual arousal and sensitivity, he claims. Simply finding the G-spot isn't enough for some women, apparently. Why not supersize it with a collagen injection?

Matlock trumpets the procedure in a self-published book dubbed *Dr. Spot* and on his website, theGShot.com. Ecstatic testimonials abound. "All I have to do is think about sex and I can feel my G-spot react," a woman who has had the procedure writes. And "My toes actually curl." And "Even during my spinning class I can feel the bike seat pressing on it and I have to pretend I'm just enjoying the workout." A happy 27-year-old recipient named Rosemary burbles, "I felt aroused when I was driving and when I was in yoga class. I was able to pinpoint the exact spot after the injection. I was able to position my partner to hit the exact spot. I would love to get it again, and I would totally recommend this to other women."

Not quite ready for my own G-Shot, I ask Matlock to give me a step-by-step run-through of this admittedly weird "medical" procedure. First he instructs his patients to find their G-spot, which they do by conducting a self-exam alone in a consulting room. (Does Griselda provide candles and vibrators? I wonder.) Next Matlock inserts a speculum and performs an examination to verify the location. He takes a digital measurement, transfers it to a special speculum that indicates the G-spot, reinserts the speculum, numbs the area and injects the collagen into the vagina. The entire procedure takes minutes and costs \$1,800. "A small price to pay for such a bundle of joy," the doctor says. Sexual relations can resume in as little as four hours, and the effects last four months. Safety concerns? Since the FDA has approved collagen injections in the vagina for urinary incontinence and sphincter deficiencies, Matlock believes they've been done for 40 years with no serious side effects other than urinary-tract infection and urinary retention.

How did Matlock come up with such an idea? I ask. A lightbulb went on in his head after a three A.M. phone call from his girlfriend. It must have been quite a conversation. "I couldn't get back to sleep after we got off the phone," he says. "My mind is fertile for all this stuff. Why can't I take the woman and educate her on the G-spot, help her identify it? I started wondering if I could inject it with a collagen base."

Matlock confesses that his dancer friend participated in the testing phase of G-spot

amplification. "She helped a tremendous amount, talking about it, exploring it," he explains. "She helped me get firsthand research information intimately."

The doctor has already devised an elaborate business plan—"I have an MBA, you know. This is medicine as business!"—which involves patenting the G-Shot, licensing it to a company called InnoGyn and franchising the enterprise by training doctors in 18 countries so that women all over the world can run into a doctor's office on their lunch hour for a quick G-Shot.

Listen to Matlock long enough and it wouldn't surprise you if the smog over Los Angeles should part to reveal a giant holographic pussy hanging in the sky, the words DAVID MATLOCK, COOTER KING! wafting from its glistening lips.

Given all this, it makes sense that we should get used to looking past the limitations of the human vagina as we've (so to speak) come to know it. Who knows? The future may bring something warmer, wetter, tighter and more welcoming than anything nature can provide.

Picture, if you will, an entirely artificial pussy designed with a polymer used by NASA and attached to a life-size sex doll that has more in common with Marilyn Monroe than your run-of-the-mill, oval-mouthed oversize Barbie.

A San Marcos, California company called Abyss Creations claims to have made just that. Founder Matt McMullen picked the company's name strategically: The *A* and *b* in *Abyss* would assure him the lead stall at trade shows. The company itself is tucked away on a frontage road between a storage business and a soundproofed, smack in the middle of the suburban sprawl that runs from Los Angeles to San Diego. The only feature on the otherwise nondescript building is a sticker that reads GOD BLESS AMERICA. Yet hidden inside is the most scientifically advanced sex-doll operation in the world.

Abyss cornered the market on high-end dolls with anatomically correct asses, pussies and mouths in 1997. The company has been featured on two episodes of HBO's *Real Sex*—one of which was the series's highest-rated. The dolls sell for more than \$6,000; Abyss sells one almost every day.

When I drop by for an informational interview McMullen greets me at the door. He has multiple piercings, and seven silver rings adorn his fingers. Tattoos of matching devils and angels (complete with horns and wings, respectively) cover his upper arms. He tells me right off that he gets regular Botox treatments on his forehead and in the corners of his eyes. "I don't mind being old," he says. "I just don't want to look old." He's 37, by the way.

McMullen is fascinated by what he



calls anti-aging research, and he shows an abiding faith in technology's ability to compensate for the inevitable organic decay of the human body. Which is also to say that he's a natural heir to the long line of utopian Californians who believe the body is a poor home for the human spirit. "We have the computational power to download a person into a computer," he says excitedly as he whisks me down a long hallway and into the warehouse. Interesting—though I have no idea what he means.

Twelve years ago McMullen started building dolls in his garage. He conceived of them as sculptures—objects of pornographic art—and to a certain extent he still does. "Just because people use them for sex doesn't mean they're not a piece of art," he explains. The dolls developed as McMullen's creative and pornographic instincts merged. "I've always been really into naked chicks," he says.

The company now carries 10 dolls: Ten different types of bodies accompanied by 15 removable faces, which Velcro on and off. Each doll consists of 70 to 100 pounds of silicone and is constructed around a skeleton that can be pushed into anatomically correct positions: Arms raise and embrace, mouths open and envelop, legs spread and enfold, tongues pull in and out. McMullen's website describes the dolls as possessing "the poise and relaxed state of a sleeping girl," and McMullen tells me that, to make the sexual experience even more lifelike, some customers wrap their doll in an electric blanket for half an hour before they play with it.

McMullen is especially proud of his dolls' vaginas. Each one is perfectly shaped, with no blemishes or oddities—unless, of course, they are requested. As it happens, customers request all kinds of specifications, from fantastically pronounced labia to petite prepubescent ones. They can be made to order according to the customer's specific idea of the perfect pussy. "We had a guy who wanted an exaggerated clitoris, kind of like a small penis," McMullen says. "He was into the hermaphrodite look, so I customized a special something just for him."

The vaginas come complete with "speed bumps" to enhance sensation. They are also self-lubricating: McMullen built a reservoir inside the doll's cavity that releases liquid into the vaginal canal when pressure is applied. McMullen is always seeking innovations for his artificial vaginas, and today he's eager to show me a new material for vaginal inserts—a gel the dental industry uses to make artificial gums. He also likes a non-silicone polymer used in the aerospace industry; it feels like slime that keeps its shape—something like the green goo my four-year-old nephew plays with. "There are as many beautiful vaginas as there are beautiful women," McMullen says. "I want to have all these different vagi-

nas people can pick from. It's like food; I don't think there can be one perfect type, only base rules like symmetry and color."

Scanning the warehouse, with its rows of mannequins hanging on meat hooks like so many cow carcasses and its shelves of wigs, heads and eyeballs, I can't help but ask McMullen about his customers. He waves me off. "Believe it or not," he says, "they're just divorced normal guys who don't want to deal with dating and are intrigued by the idea of an artificial sex partner. Instead of putting a down payment on a new car, they buy a new doll. What's appealing about the artificial vaginas is in part the convenience they offer."

After all my research into the fantastically improbable things people are doing with vaginas these days, I find myself asking the question, Would I consider lasering off a chunk of my labia? The answer: Hell, no! The thought of pushing a baby through those lips is freaky enough, thank you.

The biggest change I'm willing to make is the Bare With a Flair job at the Completely Bare waxing salon. For a gal

who yearns for a little decorative touch-up now and then but doesn't want to dice and splice, there's always good old-fashioned waxing. It's a relatively tame procedure. All you have to do is lie still and grit your teeth while an attractive young woman tears your pubic hair out with strips of hot wax. Normally I stick with having the shape of Vermont, my home state, traced on my pubis. But after hours spent with Matlock and McMullen, I'm willing to experiment, to remove a bit more—everything, in fact, every last little hair—and replace it all with Swarovski crystals glued onto my pubis in the shape of a heart.

Duly crystallized, I go home for the final test. Is it hot, I ask. My fiancé takes a deep breath. "Oh, I loved your muff, your flavor saver. I'm sorry, honey, but I liked your pussy just as it was."

And Matlock? My last question to him as I leave the Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute concerns his girlfriend. Did he...does she...?

"Get the surgery, you mean?" He shakes his head. "I won't let her. Once you start, you know, it never stops."



*"That's a lot of money for a drug to increase my sexual performance. Do you have one that will lower her expectations?"*



*Her photo is simply a supertight close-up of her breasts, and her profile boasts, "I love to have a good time."*

musical surrogates to some 26 artists (including Neil Diamond). I round off my profile with a snarky, self-referential quote from Woody Allen's *Manhattan*: "He was given to fits of rage, Jewish liberal paranoia, male chauvinism, self-righteous misanthropy and nihilistic moods of despair." Now I think I am ready to blast off into MySpace—and I am probably wrong.

In return for my creating a profile on the site, the kindly folks at MySpace reward me with one token friend on my page, the same friend everyone starts with: MySpace president Tom Anderson, a handsome fellow with a cleft chin who looks reasonably happy given that he's exactly my age but probably 1.2 billion times wealthier. On his own home page, Anderson (a.k.a. MySpace Tom) says he's into, among other things, "WWI aviation," "Whitney Houston (particularly *The Bodyguard* soundtrack)" and communism (its history, though apparently not its practice). He seems like a nice enough guy and I think I'll keep him, but I don't want to depend on MySpace's charity. I want some friends of my own. Specifically, I want to meet the people I already know.

But as I type their names into MySpace's search engine, many of my known associates from the three-dimensional world don't appear to be on the site. Of my friends who are old enough to remember *Family Ties* and Reaganomics, the ones who have MySpace profiles also tend to have superhip, youth-oriented jobs; they work in public relations, run their own record label or (in the case of one lucky bastard) are employed by video game companies. I'm a bit astonished to discover how many seem to be closet Goths, their home pages decorated in jet-black color schemes with slogans declaring, "Nihilism is hot."

I'm also humbled by how polished and lived-in everyone else's profile seems when compared with my own. Whether they possessed a latent genius for creating perfect home pages on the very first try or honed their sites through months of trial and error, many of my friends—even the unemployed ones—have MySpace profiles that feel like the people behind them. One especially enterprising go-getter self-deprecatingly plugs her most recent efforts by commenting about herself, "I wrote a book, but I hate to read." (Of course there's also a link on her page to buy that book from Amazon.com.) Another thoughtful, literate pal has perfectly encapsulated his laid-back

sensibility by setting the Talking Heads song "This Must Be the Place" to play quietly in the background. And all of them have evidently put great care into selecting photographs of themselves in which they look attractive or cool or at least unself-conscious about the potential for millions of people to be looking at them this very second. I just slapped on an old picture of myself in a T-shirt that reads TIJUANA: CITY OF THE FUTURE.

What really concerns me about the minimal effort I have put into choosing my photograph is a little icon labeled "Rank User" that appears beneath it. Anytime I click on this icon, I am whisked away to MySpace's answer to *Lord of the Flies*—a kind of shooting gallery where other MySpacers' photos appear at random and I must impulsively rank them on a scale of one to 10 (10 being hot and a sad, lowly one being cold). I've spent hours on end playing around with this feature, and I don't mind telling you I am a shallow son of a bitch. I can't recall ever giving anyone a 10, and only the finest female specimens can hope to receive even a nine from my fickle trigger finger. Without so much as a second thought, I've given out fives and sixes to cheery sorority sisters in floppy college sweaters and mousy, modest types doing their best to look sexy for the camera, yet any woman in a bikini is certain to receive at least a seven from me, as is any man who clearly appears to be serving in our military (at least until I figured out one can customize the feature to avoid looking at dudes). I have also turned up some truly scary shit in the course of these random searches—photos of guys in gang colors flashing their guns, photos of people doused in what I hope is fake blood, photos with captions that read "~~~Homecoming night at Brttanyz!!!~~~"—but what scares me most is that each time I shoot down a fellow MySpacer's blurry, halfhearted portrait with a two or a three, millions of equally superficial users out there could be doing the same thing to me.

As of this writing, the woman with the site's highest average ranking—a solid 9.0, with more than 1.2 million votes—is a MySpacer who goes by the handle Laila69, an exotic, long-legged brunette of Middle Eastern ancestry whose photo depicts her in a provocative stance, dressed in a delightfully small terry-cloth bikini with tassels dangling in all the right places. The picture is so polished, a professional photographer must have taken it, yet in her profile Laila69 claims she is "working

on my Ph.D. in Epidemiology & Biostatistics, and I work for the CDC as an Epidemiologist." Though she is sorry if she doesn't answer your messages, she explains, "I AM VERY BUSY and got talked into this MySpace thing by my cousin. ☺" How many epidemiologists do you know who put smiley faces at the end of their sentences?

Just a couple of notches below Laila69 in the MySpace rankings is fineasshaylesexycaitlin (read it slowly), whose photo is simply a supertight close-up of her breasts and whose profile boasts, "Im 5'9, 125 lbs, blond, tan and i have a set of double D's. i love to have a good time, which can mean just about anything you want it to :)." And a few rungs further down the ladder is Hot Angel, whose topless bikini photo gives MySpace's no-nudity policy a healthy, well-deserved challenge and whose profile clearly states that she would like to meet "bitches that will please me." But before you get any ideas about sending her a love letter, her profile also includes this note: "FUCK OFF, GUYS! STOP WRITING ME!"

Though it may be impossible to have any meaningful communication with such ladies as Hot Angel and Laila69, and equally as hopeless to determine if they actually exist, you shan't be disappointed if you come to MySpace to see photographs of women in various stages of undress or casually flashing their goodies at the camera, because it seems to happen more frequently here than at Mardi Gras. And while MySpace's mission may be to help bring people together, I have to believe the opposite principle happily encourages these women to behave so daringly. The extra layer of protection the Internet affords—that women can put these pictures out there without ever having to interact with the people looking at them—empowers them to do all the things they'd never try even behind the protective curtain of an arcade photo booth. It may be undercutting the central philosophy of the site, but I have to say I like it.

Still, none of these side explorations has resulted in my earning any MySpace friends. It's actually a somewhat daunting process to ask people to join your network, because there's no way to communicate with them in real time. (While I was reporting this story, MySpace's instant-messaging feature was listed as "busted.") This means that the only way to bring a new companion into your virtual circle is to send him or her an add request—an electronic missive asking your prospective pal to agree to the invitation—and then hope you get a response in the affirmative or else suffer the slow, silent sting of rejection as hours and days pass without your ever receiving an answer. There's a kind of pleading desperation inherent in these requests (not to mention the short



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My ability to make these requests under a digital cloak of anonymity gives me the freedom to invite whomever I want, and if they don't want to be my friend, hell, that's their problem. In a flurry of activity I fire off add requests to people who genuinely are my friends, then to people I e-mail from time to time, then to people I haven't seen in months or years, then to people whose social circles I move in but to whom I'm too intimidated to speak at cocktail parties, then to a guy who lists Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts* as one of his favorite books, because it's one of my favorite books too. Then, summoning the kind of courage I can never seem to channel in real life unless alcohol is involved, I send out some exceedingly optimistic add requests to a few Playmates who I know are in the MySpace system. And then I sit back and wait for the responses.

Now, I could recount to you all the garden-variety associates of mine who quickly respond to my requests—about a dozen of them in a 48-hour period, which is the fastest I've ever made friends in my life—and the well-meaning if occasionally mysterious comments they leave on my profile as if they were signing my high school yearbook. ("We'll always have the Chateau Marmont," one writes, allud-

ing to a story I dare not explain here.) I reconnect with old friends, revive some dormant connections and even get invited to something called the Olympics...of Evil!

But let's not kid ourselves; things don't really get exciting until the Playmates start replying. Julie McCullough, Miss February 1986, is the first to answer my invitation, which is appropriate since she's Playboy's unofficial ambassador to the MySpace nation. Julie openly refers to MySpace as cybercrack and has been happily addicted to it since she signed up to stay in touch with friends in America while she filmed a movie in Canada. She also maintains the site's Playboy Playmates Only group (trust me, you're not getting into it). After calling me on the phone to make sure I am who I claim to be, she offers some helpful advice for electronically enticing members of the opposite sex to join my network: Don't tell them they're hot. "*Hot* is what you say to a 15-year-old," she explains. "If you say, 'You're hot,' you must be under 25, and I'm not e-mailing you back."

Courtney Rachel Culkin, Miss April 2005, is also on the site as much as an hour or two a day, responding to messages from fans and keeping up with the 1,732 (and counting) people connected to her profile. Of course they're not all really her close personal friends. As she explains to me in an e-mail, "I let people I meet along the way know that I'm on here, so some are, and some are just people requesting me. You know the deal." When you look like Courtney, guys will

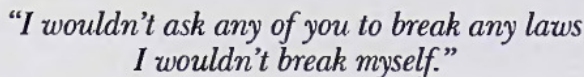
inevitably say some pretty provocative things to you, a phenomenon she says MySpace only exacerbates. "They have more balls on here! lol." But she says it's also easier for her to handle on the website than it would be in the real world, for one simple reason: DELETE.

Kimberly Holland, Miss October 2004 and quite possibly the hottest (sorry, Julie) woman alive, got involved with MySpace for a very different reason, though it's one that consistently presents problems for Playmates. She was fed up with all the women on the site who were pretending to be her. Though she still encounters imposters from time to time, Kimberly says, "I just drop them a message—not a rude one—letting them know I'm aware of what they are doing and that I have already contacted the authorities. They usually disappear mysteriously the next time I check. Ha-ha!"

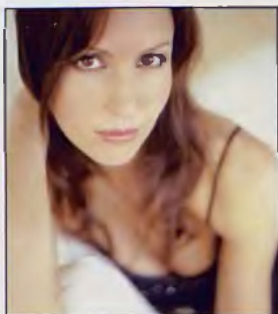
But Kimberly's strangest online encounter may have been with the current girlfriend of her ex-boyfriend, a woman the creep cheated on her with. Rather than engage in a virtual catfight, Kimberly and the new girlfriend met and actually became pals on MySpace, and Kimberly eventually invited her to a Halloween party. "She came as a good, sexy nurse in white, and I was a sexy Goth nurse in black," she says. "It wasn't planned!"

I suppose it's possible that the Playmates are responding to me out of sympathy or pity; they see a faint glimmer of innocence in the eyes of that eager boy in the Tijuana T-shirt, and they're just trying to be polite to him. But isn't it also possible that MySpace offers them an additional layer of protection, one that lets them pick and choose whom they interact with on whatever terms they want? Even if it means spending hours a day on the site—a chore they clearly don't seem to mind—they really are reading the messages sent to them, weeding out the pretenders, the players and the picture collectors and, at least in the case of one respectful, slightly awestruck fan, writing back. All I know is that I now have three Playmates added to my circle of friends, and there's probably a lesson in there somewhere.

But not everyone I encounter on MySpace is so eager to sing its praises. A longtime friend of mine who lives in Los Angeles and whom, for reasons that will soon be obvious, I'll refer to as Judas insists the site is not merely a dangerously time-consuming distraction but the end of the evolutionary process as we know it. As Judas explains in an e-mail, it all has something to do with MySpacers who casually agree to join each other's networks even though they've never met in real life. "You can't just let someone who doesn't know you add you; once the social contract breaks down and you've got ugly people mixing with good-looking people, what's







Steffanie Seaver, noted researcher and columnist, focuses on health and sexuality issues affecting today's men and women.

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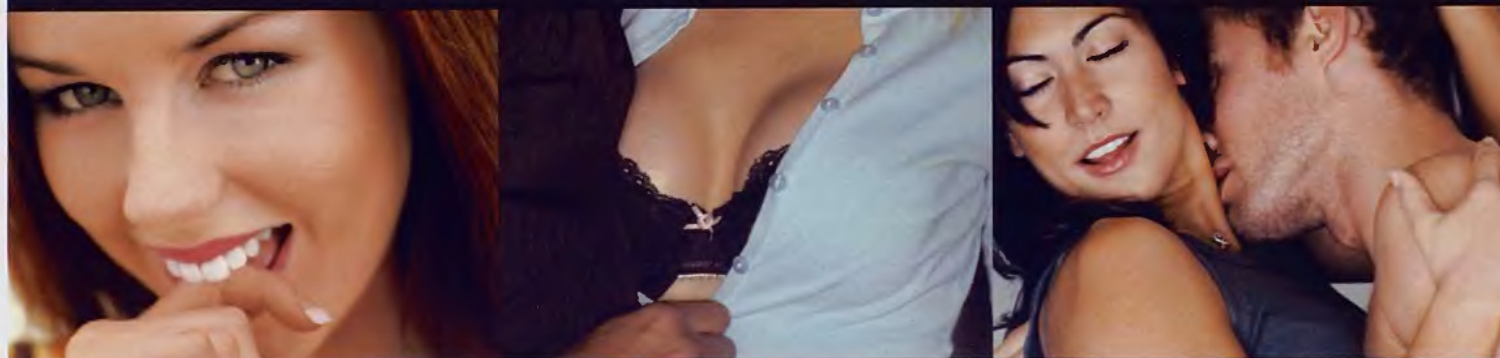
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Below is a list of retailers and manufacturers you can contact for information on where to find this month's merchandise. To buy the apparel and equipment shown on pages 28, 31-34, 106-107, 108-109 and 162-163, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.



## GAMES

Page 28: *AND 1 Streetball*, ubi.com. *Brain Age*, nintendo.com. *Commandos Strike Force*, eidos.com. *Dreamfall: The Longest Journey*, aspyr.com. *Exit*, ubi.com. *Guilty Gear Judgment*, majescoentertainment.com. *Hitman: Blood Money*, eidos.com. *NBA Ballers: Phenom*, midway.com. *PQ*, d3publisher.us.

## MANTRACK

Pages 31-34: *Distinguido*, available at liquor stores nationwide. *Hobie*, hobie.com. *Honda*, honda.com. *Inter-Continental Hong Kong*, hongkong-ic.intercontinental.com. *Palm*, palm.com. *Partida*, available at liquor stores nationwide. *Tezón*, available at liquor stores nationwide. *Toshiba*, toshiba.com. *Tour Edge*, touredge.com.

## SOLAR FLAIR

Pages 106-107: *Alain Mikli*, 212-

472-6085. *Dior Homme* by Hedi Slimane, dior.com. *Dolce & Gabbana*, available at select Sunglass Hut stores nationwide. *Mossimo Men's for Target*, 800-800-8800. *Perry Ellis*, perryellis.com. *Prada*, available at select Sunglass Hut stores nationwide. *Robert Marc Collection*, robertmarc.com.

## METAL BANDS

Pages 108-109: *Bell & Ross*, 212-758-7300. *ESQ Swiss*, esqswiss.com. *Gucci*, gucci.com. *Oris*, oris-watch.com. *Seiko*, 800-782-2510. *TAG Heuer*, tagheuer.com. *Zenith*, zenith-watches.com.

## POTPOURRI

Pages 162-163: *Comic Book Creator*, planetwidgames.com. *Ebbets Field Flannels*, ebbets.com. *French Bull*, elsewares.com. *Hand-grenade oil lamp*, piethoutenbos.com. *Left Hand Brewing Company*, available at stores nationwide. *Magic Hat*, available at stores nationwide. *Paul Mitchell*, paulmitchell.com. *Philips*, philips.com. *Nashville KnifeShop*, nashvilleknife.com. *Star Wars Chronicles: The Prequels*, chroniclebooks.com.

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left but social anarchy?" I thought the purpose of the site was to help connect people who wouldn't otherwise make eye contact with one another, but Judas predicts that casual MySpacing will one day lead to the network's downfall and that "there will come a moment when, like deer quivering and flicking up their ears toward a noiseless noise in the woods, the first adopters will suddenly realize they're spending their time blogging and adding and gawking at the same alarming photos an army of 14-year-olds are and, quick as deer, they'll dash to the next trend. And before you know it, we'll all follow."

In the few days I've spent immersed in MySpace, I've already noticed how the site has begun to permeate every second of free time that remains in my schedule. I check it first thing in the morning, a few times at the office, a few times when I get home and even when I get up to go to the bathroom in the middle of the night. My increasingly uncontrollable compulsion to see if anything new has popped up on my profile—new friend requests, new e-mails, new testimonials—has also yielded a new repetitive-stress injury to my right index finger.

I've also noticed how some potentially disturbing and just plain fraudulent people manage to cross my virtual path even when I'm not trying to find them. While I am on a completely innocuous quest to find some of my old college classmates, a MySpace search engine leads me to an alumna who now goes by the name Mistress Kalyss and is currently earning her living as a BDSM mistress in Amsterdam. I can't say I knew Mistress Kalyss at school, which is probably a good thing since her profile declares that she is "a true believer of Woman Supremacy" and, though she is currently in a relationship with a live-in slave, "a Goddess should live surrounded by slaves to obey Her every whim." Just one click away from Mistress Kalyss is her friend Fetischiska, a fetish model from Germany with 4,270 friends of her own, many of whom look like characters from Clive Barker horror movies and at least one of whom posted a picture of an actual—possibly human—heart on Fetischiska's profile as a Valentine's Day note. In cyberspace no one can hear me run screaming from Fetischiska's site.

Then there's the baffling e-mail I receive from an inquisitive MySpacer who claims to be a blue-eyed blonde named Kristen, even though it's addressed from the profile of a short-haired, bespectacled brunette named Alice. Kristen tells me up front that she's surfing the site using a friend's account and that she "enjoyed reading and looking through" my profile but what she's really looking for is "someone cool who can spend time with me, hang out, go dancing, just having fun. And sometime, maybe even sharing some intimate moments." All I have to



do is write her back at a Yahoo e-mail address, which, like a salivating dog, I do almost immediately. Then just as immediately, Kristen e-mails me back another tantalizing message saying she wishes "we could have gone on a first date on Valentine's Day. That would have really been romantic!" She also includes a link to what she claims is her personal blog but is really a shrewdly disguised solicitation to get me to sign up for a series of commercial porn sites. You may not be real, Kristen, but you still found a way to break my heart.

The more time I spend on MySpace, the harder it becomes for me to ignore all the unsubtle methods the website employs to get me to part with my money: the banner ads for external dating sites and the links to profiles and video clips that are generally nothing more than commercials for that weekend's new 20th Century Fox movie release or the latest half-baked Fox sitcom that will be canceled after four episodes—precisely the kinds of promotional opportunities that had Rupert Murdoch salivating over his purchase of the site, I'm sure. Even MySpace's much-celebrated music section, where major artists and unsigned indie bands alike can post their songs and connect to new listeners, seems like a marketplace that's heavily weighted in favor of record labels rather than musicians. How does it benefit a bona fide icon like, say, Bob Dylan to have an official MySpace page that offers only short clips of four of his most overplayed tracks and links to the profiles of such irrelevant performers as Living Colour, Journey and John Denver? And why should the official profile for a breakthrough act like Britain's Arctic Monkeys, who owe their rapid success to Internet promotions and viral marketing, carry a disclaimer that reads, "This site is not set up or managed by the band. Therefore this site should be classed as a 'fan site' and nothing more"?

The more I think about what my friend Judas said, the more I realize that MySpace will probably, eventually, inevitably undermine itself. But before I explain why, let me first tell you a story.

Way back in the summer of 2003—ancient history in Internet time—I signed up with a website called Friendster, a once wildly popular social network that was trying to do exactly what MySpace is doing today. I created a profile for myself, attached a photograph, listed my favorite movies and TV shows and connected to a few friends. Then I realized I could do nothing else with the site, and I—and what felt like several hundred thousand other people—promptly forgot about it.

Many months went by uneventfully until I received a totally random, slightly scary, slightly exciting e-mail from another Friendster user—an adorable blonde girl who wanted to know if

I'd meet her for a drink some night. For reasons I can't yet articulate, I said yes, and nearly two years later she and I are together and very happily so. And we still don't use Friendster.

None of this is a problem, of course. The problem is, now that I'm on MySpace, she is on MySpace too. And with the click of a mouse she can see when I'm logged on and when I'm logged off, who my friends are, how many Playmates are connected to my networks and whether I am a member of a MySpace group called NYC Hookupz. She can post adorable little notes on my profile at any time, and when I don't leave adorable little notes for her in return, I get not so adorable notes that read, "Someday Dave will write a comment for my page. Oh, am I giving you a guilt trip? You're dating a Jew from Long Island. Deal with it." What was once supposed to be my gateway into a universe of infinite possibility is now, in her hands, a highly sophisticated boyfriend-monitoring device.

This is ultimately my problem with and my verdict on MySpace: Not only does it not simplify my day-to-day existence, it actually complicates my life in ways I could never have anticipated. It gives vast multitudes of people—some desirable and some unwanted—instantaneous access to me without actually giving me the time in my schedule to maintain all those relationships. And as far as I can tell, it doesn't offer me any new services that my cell phone and my e-mail account don't already provide, except that it emboldens me to contact some people I would never otherwise reach out to and enables some unsavory characters to do the same to me.

After about a week of immersing myself in the site, I reach a kind of tipping point in my MySpace usage. I no longer feel the need to check my profile every minute or every hour, and when I see a new message or friend request pop up, I don't feel compelled to respond right away, if at all, and I don't feel the slightest pang of guilt for letting it gather a little dust. When my real flesh-and-blood friends need to track me down, they know how to find me, and when they post clever comments on my profile, they don't give me any grief if I take a few days to acknowledge them. And at long last, a solitary MySpacer has finally rated my profile photograph: a solid 7.0. Not the hottest of the hot by any standard, but still a score that means I'm 70 percent as attractive as a MySpace surfer can be—and a score I'm sure can only go down if I stick around much longer.

So maybe it's time to go out on a high note. Good-bye and thank you, MySpace, for everything. We had something really special together and I learned a lot about myself, but for now I think I just need my space.



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## KELLER

*(continued from page 74)*

Place. She'd made coffee for him and was herself sipping her usual glass of iced tea.

"Well," she said. "Must have been scary."

"What I was afraid of," he said, "was that there was a way out of it but that I couldn't see it. So if I got killed, on top of being dead it'd be my own fault."

"I think I see what you mean."

"But it turned out I was worried about nothing, because all he wanted to do was let me know the game had changed."

"And here you are," she said. "And I've evidently said this before, but I'll say it again, Keller: Now you can buy yourself some stamps."

"But not as many as I'd like."

"Half a loaf may be better than none," she agreed, "but it's not as good as the whole enchilada. Are you hurting for dough?"

"I wouldn't say hurting. But I was sort of counting on the money."

"I know the feeling. I wish I had work for you, Keller, but all I can do is sit back like a good spider and see what flies into the web. The jobs have to come to us."

"Maybe."

She gave him a look.

"On the trip to Detroit," he said, "I flew first-class. It's a funny thing about sitting in the front of the plane. You've got more legroom, and the seats are wider, with more space between you and the person sitting next to you. You'd think that would be a distancing factor, but people in first are much more likely to get into conversations. In coach you sit there with your knees jammed against the seat in front of you, trying to keep your elbow from pushing the other guy's elbow off the shared armrest, and you crawl in a cocoon and stay there until the plane's back on the ground."

"But in first class you turn into Chatty Cathy?"

"Not on the flight out," he said, "but on the way back, the guy next to me started talking the minute we got off the ground."

"This is when I get to relax," the man had said for openers. "When I'm in a plane and the plane's in the air. I never even think about crashing. Never even consider the possibility. Do you?"

"Not until just now," Keller said.

"What I do," the man went on, "is I leave my troubles on the ground. Except this is one of those days when I just don't think it'll work. Because I can't shake the thought that in two hours we'll be back on the ground and I'm in the same pile of crap as always."

The fellow didn't look like someone who spent much time in a pile of crap. He was a businessman, obviously, and in his early 40s or thereabouts. Keller guessed he'd played a minor sport in

college—track, maybe—and had eaten well since then. He wasn't jowly yet, but he was on his way. "I'm from New York," he announced. "Yourself?"

"The same," Keller said.

"Live in the city itself? Manhattan?"

Keller nodded.

"Me too. Moved back after the divorce."

"I was never married," Keller said, "so I never left. Manhattan, I mean."

"Right. Name's Harrelson, Claude Harrelson."

"Pleased to know you," Keller said and then realized it was now his turn to tell who he was. "Eric Fischvogel," he said, supplying the name he was flying under, the name on the ID and credit cards he was carrying.

"Fischvogel," Harrelson said. "German?"

There was a lot to be said, Keller sometimes thought, for false ID with a name like Johnson or Brooks, something simple and unremarkable. "It means fish bird," he said. "In fact one branch of the family changed it to Osprey."

"Really? Well, Eric, it's a pleasure to meet you."

"Pleasure's mine."

The flight attendant came along with the cart, and Harrelson asked for a bloody mary. Keller thought about having a beer, but something made him ask for a Coke instead. She asked if Pepsi was all right, and he said it would be fine.

"I wonder," Harrelson said, "what would have happened if you told her no, Pepsi wasn't all right and you had to have Coke. I mean, we're at what, 35,000 feet? It's pretty much like it or lump it, wouldn't you say?"

"That's a point."

Harrelson took a moment to work on his drink, then looked at Keller over the brim. "Eric," he said, "mind a question?"

Which, Keller thought, was a little like asking him if Pepsi was all right, because how could he say no?

In any event, Harrelson didn't wait for an answer. "Eric," he said, "have you ever wanted to kill somebody?"

"Now that's a hell of a question," Dot said. "I thought all men talked about was sports and the stock market."

"It shook me," he admitted, "coming out of the blue like that. What I said was I supposed everybody felt like that from time to time. When some clown cuts you off in traffic, say. But we learn to suppress those impulses, and they pass."

"Just who the hell did you think you were, Keller? Dr. Phil?"

"Well, I didn't know what to say. But he wasn't talking about getting cut off in traffic or momentary impulses. He was serious."

"My business partner," Harrelson was saying. "We've got this little company, merchandising generic pharmaceuticals.

We were both in the field, and I was a born salesman, and he's the kind of guy who makes the trains run on time. We were both itching to go out on our own, and we figured the two of us would be a good fit, Mr. Inside and Mr. Outside."

"And you were wrong?"

"No, we were absolutely right. We showed a profit the first year, and both our sales and our net have gone up every year since."

"That's great."

"Yeah, it's just peachy."

Keller looked at him.

"We were never like buddy-buddy, see. But we got along. I was on the road most of the time and he never left the city, so we didn't spend that much time looking at each other. Then he started nailing our secretary."

"A bad thing, eh?"

"I suppose it's never good policy," Harrelson said, "but I can't be too critical here because I was schtupping her myself."

"Oh."

"I'm not really clear who started first," he said, "but she was having affairs with both of us. Overlapping affairs, except that's probably not a good word to use here. Or maybe it is. She was...nice."

"I see."

"And it was okay, Eric. I mean, if neither of us knew the other was boinking her, what difference did it make? I certainly didn't figure I was the only man in her life, and anyway, I wouldn't have wanted to be. I mean, I was a married guy. I was on the road more often than not. I only had limited time for her, and what did I want with the responsibility?"

"It makes sense," Keller said.

"But then Chandra lost it."

"That was her name? Chandra?"

"That was her name," Harrelson said, "and she lost it big-time. She went public, and by the time it was over, my wife had left me, and his wife had left him, and we had two nasty divorces going on, and Barry and I weren't speaking."

"Barry's your partner?"

"My partner," Harrelson said heavily. "You can divorce your wife. You can't divorce your partner."

"They wound up stuck with each other," he told Dot. "By now they both hate each other, I mean really hate each other, and neither can buy the other out. And the company's all either of them has, and neither one of them can walk away from it."

"Couldn't they sell it?"

"I asked him that. I wasn't going to mention it just now because I figured you'd ask me who the hell I thought I was, Suze Orman? He explained why they couldn't, and the gist of it was that the business didn't have a lot of assets. It's only worth the profit it returns, and it only does that when they're running it. So it's worth far more to them than it would be to another buyer."



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"I'll take your word for it," she said. "You know, Keller, I'm beginning to see where this is going."

"I swear I'd kill him," Harrelson said. "Except there's no way on earth I could get away with it. Who's got a motive here? Besides, look at me. I don't even like swatting flies. And spiders—my wife would get creeped out when she saw a spider, and she'd want me to kill it. I'd take it outside and release it. I mean, what have I got against spiders?"

Keller, who had nothing against spiders himself, nodded encouragingly.

"Barry Blyden," Harrelson said, "is a different matter altogether."

"Strangers on a plane," Dot said. "Like the Hitchcock movie, except at 35,000 feet. I don't suppose you gave him your card, told him you worked for a first-class removal service."

"No."

"He said he wanted his partner dead, and you left it at that."

"Right."

"The plane landed, and you went your separate ways."

"Right."

She frowned. "So you're telling me this just to let me know that there are a lot of people out there who want other people dead? You want to be proactive, don't you? You want this Harrelson to hire us?"

"Well," he said.

She gave him a look. "He's met you," she said. "He knows who you are."

"He knows my name's Eric Fischvogel."

"He saw your face."

"He barely looked at it."

"He's in New York. He travels a lot, but

his partner's here in New York, right? And he's Mr. Inside; he stays put."

"That's right."

"Two things we try to avoid," she said, "are working for people who know who we are and working close to home."

"Sometimes we don't have any choice."

"But in this case," she said, "we do." She looked long and hard at him. "You want to do this, don't you? In spite of everything."

"Well, I could use the work," he said.

"And I could use the money. I want to take the next step, see where it goes."

Keller, wearing jeans and a Mets warm-up jacket, stood near a water fountain in Central Park. On the phone, he'd designated a particular park bench, and he'd stationed himself where he could keep an eye on it. He'd set the meeting time for 10 P.M., and Claude Harrelson, wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase, was two minutes early.

Keller watched him walk right to the bench and sit down. The man didn't look around at all, but there was something furtive about him all the same. Keller circled around, came up behind Harrelson and stood there for a moment.

"Don't turn around," Keller said quietly, and Harrelson started visibly but didn't turn. "I don't want to see your face, and I don't want you to see mine. I'm going to touch you, though, because I need to make sure you're not wearing a wire."

Then he talked, explaining just what was on offer here. He had a friend, an associate, who would undertake to solve Harrelson's problem. "He won't know your name," Keller assured him, "and you won't know his, and you'll never

meet him, so there'll be nothing to connect the two of you."

"I like that part," Harrelson said.

"So? Have you had enough time to think it over?"

"God knows I've been thinking about it," Harrelson said. "I haven't been able to think of anything else. For all this time I've wanted him dead, I've had fantasies of killing him in dozens of different ways. Smashing his skull with a baseball bat, stabbing him, shooting him, running him over with a car. You can't imagine."

Keller, who had done all those things and more at one time or another, figured he could imagine well enough. But he didn't say anything.

"But it was never real," Harrelson went on. "It was safe to have fantasies like that because I knew it was all they were, just fantasies. Fantasies never got anybody killed."

Keller wasn't too sure about that, but he let it go.

"Now it's real," Harrelson said. "At least I think it's real. I mean, for all I know, you could be wearing a wire. How do I know I'm not being entrapped?"

How did you answer something like that? Keller decided a solemn approach was indicated. "You have my word," he said.

"Oh."

"I think you're probably a good judge of character, Claude. I think you know my word is good."

Harrelson, who still had not turned to look at him, considered the point and nodded. "Then it's real," he said. "I have a chance at getting what I've been wishing for all this time. Just because I was indiscreet enough to get on a plane and tell my troubles to the guy sitting next to me. I don't ordinarily do that."

"I don't ordinarily listen," Keller said, "and I certainly don't ordinarily try to drum up business for my friend. But I'm a pretty good judge of character myself. I somehow sensed I could trust you."

"That's good of you to say that."

"You'll be out of town when it happens," Keller went on. "My friend's very good at making things look accidental, so the police may not even bother with you."

"The police?"

"If they ask you questions, you just say you don't know anything. If they push it, you refuse to answer any more questions without a lawyer."

"One thing I've learned, ever since my divorce, is I don't do anything without a lawyer."

Just don't bring him along to the park, Keller thought. He said, "The money. If you want to make the initial payment now, we can put this into play."

"Oh."

"Is there a problem?"

"Well, it's just that I didn't bring it,"





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Harrelson said. "Carrying cash to the park at night, well, it sort of goes against the grain, if you know what I mean."

"I know what you mean. What's in the briefcase?"

"Nothing but papers," he said. "I don't know why I brought it. Force of habit, I guess."

"All I had to do was mention the briefcase," he said, "and he was hugging it like a long-lost brother. He had the money. He just didn't want to turn it over."

"Let's hope it was just money," Dot said, "and not a tape recorder. Don't look like that, Keller. You're not a deer, and I'm not a headlight. I'm sure it was money. He brought it along, and then he got second thoughts."

"That's what it felt like."

"You figure he's searching his soul, Keller?"

"Maybe."

"I have to say it's easier when the cli-

ents come to us. Whatever soul-searching they have to do, they've already done it by the time they get in touch. Now he's going out of town again?"

"For a couple of days. I'll call him when he gets back and arrange another meeting, and either he'll bring the cash or he won't."

"Like eggplant ice cream," she said.

"Huh?"

"Either I'll have some for breakfast tomorrow," she said, "or I won't. I have to say the odds are pretty good I won't. Keller, you know what you could have done? You could have conked him over the head and walked off with the briefcase. We'd have half the money, and you wouldn't even have to kill anybody."

"I thought of that later," he admitted. "And the first thought I had—and it's kind of silly—is that's not what I do. I'm not a mugger."

"You've got your code of honor."

"I don't know about codes, and I'm

pretty sure honor hasn't got anything to do with it. But it's just not what I do. I told you it was silly."

By the time Harrelson showed up, at the same park bench they'd used the first time, Keller had been waiting almost 45 minutes. Harrelson wasn't late—if anything he was a couple of minutes early—but Keller had wanted to make sure there weren't any surprises.

While he waited, trying to be unobtrusive without looking unobtrusive, a man and woman came along and sat down on the appointed bench. Keller couldn't hear what they were saying, but from what he could see they weren't picking out names for their unborn children. The woman looked on the brink of tears, and the man looked as though he wanted to give her something to cry about.

After 10 or 12 minutes of disagreement, the woman sprang to her feet, turned on her heel and stalked off into the night. "Ignorant cunt," the man said to himself (but just loud enough for Keller to hear it) and eventually stood up, yawned, stretched and set off in the opposite direction.

Other park visitors passed the bench, but nobody else sat on it until Harrelson appeared. He looked around carefully, reminding Keller of a dog turning around three times before lying down. Then he sat, and Keller moved to approach him from the rear.

"Claude," he said softly. "How was your trip?"

"Oh," Harrelson said. "You startled me. I wasn't expecting...well, that's not true; of course I was expecting you, but—"

"Right," Keller said. "Claude, let me ask you straight-out. Do you want to go through with this?"

"Of course I do."

"Hold still." He frisked the man, wondering what he'd do if he actually found a wire. But he didn't, so what did it matter?

"What makes you think—"

"That you might have had second thoughts? Well, you didn't bring your briefcase, so I'm taking a wild guess that you didn't bring the money, either."

"The money's in an envelope," he said. "In my inside jacket pocket."

Harrelson made no move to get it, and Keller wondered if he was supposed to reach for it himself. He wasn't sure it was something he wanted to do. It was one thing to frisk a man and another thing altogether to pick his pocket.

"The envelope," he prompted.

"Oh, right," Harrelson said, as if he hadn't thought of the envelope in days. He reached for it and paused with his hand inside his jacket. "When I give you the money," he said, "it's on, right?"

"Right."

"But it has to wait until I'm out of town."



*"Well, er, I was wondering...that is, I'd like to know if...well...um, would you, er, like to...that is, er, go to the prom with me?"*



"So tell me your schedule."

"Well, it varies," Harrelson said. "I'm back and forth all the time. That's why I need a way to get in touch with you."

He didn't really, as far as Keller could see, but he thought he did, and maybe that amounted to the same thing. Keller reached into his own pocket, extended his hand. "Here," he said. "No, don't turn around. And don't unwrap it now. It's a cell phone."

"I already have a cell phone."

No kidding, Keller thought. "This is untraceable," he said. "It's prepaid, and the only thing you can use it for is to call me at the number written on the wrapper. That's the number of my untraceable cell phone, which I'll only use to talk to you."

"Like a pair of walkie-talkies," Harrelson said.

"There you go. You call me when you need to, and I'll call you if I need to, and as soon as our business is done we can throw both phones down a storm drain and forget the whole thing. Don't lose the number."

"I won't. Incidentally, what's the number of my phone?"

"You don't need to know that. I mean, you're not going to call yourself, are you?"

"No, but——"

"And you're not going to give out the number, because the only person who's going to have it is me. Right?"

"Right."

"So all I need now," Keller reminded him, "is the envelope."

"He only had half," Dot said. "Well, that was the deal, right? Half in front?"

"He had half of half. Half of what he was supposed to have."

"In other words, 25 percent of the total price."

"Bingo."

"I hope you took it."

"If it was going to be in somebody's pocket," he said, "I figured it was better off in mine. But it's still only half of what it's supposed to be."

"Call it a good-faith deposit," Dot said. "When's he going to come up with the rest?"

"He was thinking maybe never."

"Huh?"

"Cash is evidently a problem for him these days," he said, "and he made the point that raising the money might leave a paper trail that could be suspicious. If the cops take a good look at him and he's just liquidated assets and can't account for where the money went——"

"So you're supposed to do the job for a quarter of the price?"

"After it's all done," he said, "and Barry Blyden's out of the picture, he'll have access to all the company funds. At that point he'll pay everything he owes, plus a bonus if the death passes for accidental."

"What, like double indemnity?"

"Sort of. Not double, but a bonus.

I didn't get into numbers, because it seemed to me the whole business was a little hypothetical."

"I'll say. Keller, tell me you didn't agree to do it for 25 percent down."

"Tell me you got a phone call from somebody in Seattle or Sioux Falls," he said, "and we got a real offer from a real client."

"I wish."

"So do I, but meanwhile I've got an envelope full of his cash, and I figure I can get started, you know? I can get a line on Blyden, track his movements, figure out his pattern and make my plans."

"I suppose it can't hurt. What's that?"

"My phone," Keller said and answered it. "Yes," he whispered into it. "Yes. Right." He rang off and told Dot that Harrelson was leaving town first thing in the morning. "Not that he has to be away for me to do a little reconnaissance."

"You whispered because voiceprints don't work with whispers."

"Right."

"So why are you still whispering, Keller?"

"Oh," he said aloud. "I didn't realize."

Five days later he was in White Plains again.

"It felt good to be working again," he told Dot. "Getting a look at the guy, tracking his movements, starting to put a plan together. He's not going to be easy."

"Oh?"

"He seems to lead a pretty regular life," he said, "which can make things easy or difficult, depending. It's easy because you know where he'll be, but it's not necessarily easy to get to him. He's always at his office or in his apartment or on the way from one to the other. The office building has the kind of security procedures that used to be reserved for the Pentagon, and the apartment building is one of those Park Avenue fortresses with 24-hour doormen and elevator attendants and security cameras all over the place."

"How does he get from point A to point B?"

"He has a car service. The same driver every time, as far as I can see. Car pulls up in front of his apartment building in the morning, drops him at his office. Works the same way at night."

"What happens when he goes to a restaurant?"

"He eats lunch at his desk, orders in from somewhere or other. Same thing at night. Either he works late, which he does most of the time, or he goes home and orders dinner delivered."

"Workaholic, it sounds like."

"Assuming he's working. Maybe he goes to the office and puts his feet up, watches soap operas on a plasma TV."

"Maybe. Didn't he have an affair with somebody? Isn't that how all of this got started?"

"At the office. They were both having an affair with their secretary."

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"So you'd do what, lurk outside his apartment building? Or lurk outside the office?"

"I'd have to time it just right."

"You'd swoop in, catch him between the car and the door and disappear before anybody can get a good look at you."

"Something like that."

"There's an awful lot that can go wrong, Keller."

"I know."

"And it's right here in New York. I can't say I like it. Maybe we should pull the plug on this one."

"Maybe we don't have to," he said. "Our client already did."

Dot's fingers drummed the tabletop. "He wants the money back," she said.

"He said it as if he really expected to get it," Keller told her, "but he's essentially a salesman, and that would make him an optimist, wouldn't it?"

"Evidently."

"I told him I didn't think it was possible. That I'd already passed the money on and that it wasn't like a refundable deposit."

"Why did he want to call it off? Money?"

"Cold feet."

"But while he was at it, he thought he'd ask for his money back. It was interesting, everything you said a few minutes ago about how you'd make your move on Blyden, but why bother telling me? If it's all off."

"It's off until he tells me it's on again."

"Oh."

"Because he's going to call me in the next couple days and let me know. Cash flow is evidently a big consideration."

"It always is."

"He says he'll be in touch," he said, "and... Jesus, how's that for timing?"

"Timing?"

He drew the phone from his pocket, looked at the screen, frowned.

"I didn't know there was such a thing as an angry whisper," Dot said. "You were whispering, and it sounded for all the world as if you were shouting."

"He called me from his hotel," he said. "Through the hotel switchboard or whatever it is when you dial direct from your room."

"Because he lost the phone you gave him?"

"Misplaced it, I guess you'd say. He knew it was somewhere in the room, but he couldn't find it."

"So you called him back, and when it rang he found it. It's good he didn't have it set to vibrate. I gather we're back on the case."

"More or less."

"And you told him he has to come up with another 25 percent in front."

"He'll be back the end of the week," he said, "and he'll have the money then."

"And the final payment? Is he going to be able to swing it?"

"He says it's no problem. I think that means he'll deal with it when the time comes."

"In other words, stall us."

He nodded. "He knows he'll have plenty of cash when his partner's dead and the situation with the company is settled. And I suppose he figures we can wait, because what else are we going to do?"

"Clients," Dot said.

"I know."

"If it weren't for the clients, this would be the perfect business, wouldn't it? Lucrative, challenging and with enough variety built in that you'd never get bored."

"There's the moral aspect," Keller said.

"Well, that's true."

"But you get over that. And the reaction, the bad feeling, it becomes familiar, you know? 'Oh, right, I've felt like this before. I know it'll go away.' And it does."

"So do the clients, sooner or later. The guy in Detroit, he went away before you could do the work."

"Don't remind me."

"Usually," she said, "we don't even know who the client is, and that's ideal. And when we work directly, well, some clients are okay. But some are all wrong."

"Like this one," he said. "I'll tell you, the target's no bargain either."

They looked at each other.

"Keller," she said, "aren't you the naughty boy?"

"Huh? I didn't say anything."

"It was the way you didn't say it. It spoke volumes." She cocked her head. "And it makes sense. I'll see what I can do."

On balance, Keller would have liked to be going somewhere other than Detroit. Houston, St. Louis, Omaha, Cheyenne—almost anywhere, really. The flight was fine, he had to admit, but on his way out he kept looking around for a sign reading BOGART.

There was none of course. He went to the Hertz desk and picked up the car he'd reserved as Eric Fischvogel. The mall in Farmington Hills was pretty much a straight shot north from the airport. It was huge, of course, but one of the anchor stores was a Sears, and that's where they'd arranged to meet. Harrelson would park nearby and walk to the store's main entrance, and Keller would swing by and pick him up.

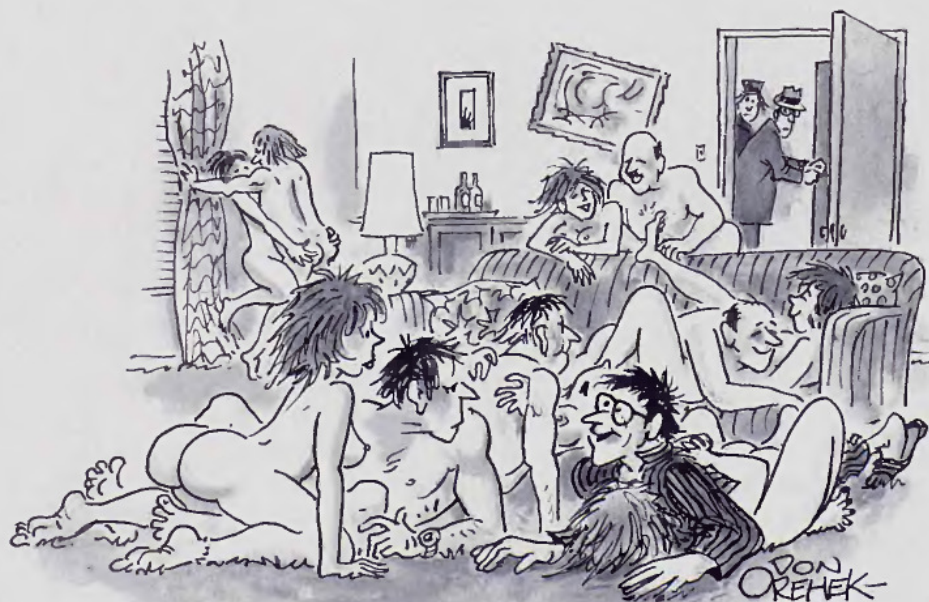
There was no one loitering in the appointed spot when Keller got there, and that was fine. He parked near the rear entrance, spent five minutes in the store, then moved the car to a spot with a good view of the front door.

Harrelson was a few minutes late, and Keller watched him for two or three additional minutes, watched as he paced, glanced at his watch, looked here and there and paced some more. If he was trying to look anxious, he was doing a good job of it.

Keller hit his speed dial.

Harrelson, looking startled now, patted his pockets until he found the phone. He said, "I'm here. Where are you?"

"Walk to your car," Keller whispered. "I'll meet you there."



*"I only came up to complain about the noise."*



"Oh. But I thought——"

Keller rang off. He got out of his car and watched while Harrelson gathered his resolve, such as it was, and headed for his car. Keller took a parallel aisle and had no trouble tracking the man.

"There you are," Harrelson said.

"Here I am."

"You know, I'd forgotten what your voice sounded like. All that whispering over the phone. Is that necessary, do you think?"

"Just a precaution. It's sort of automatic."

"For you, I guess. Me, I'm not cut out for this type of thing. I'll be glad when it's over."

Keller couldn't argue with that. He asked about the money.

"Oh, right," Harrelson said. "You know, it's a shame you had to come all this way just to pick up the money."

"You don't have it?"

"Oh, I've got it. But it would have saved you a trip to give it to you in New York."

"Security," Keller said. "Probably an unnecessary precaution, but the chance of our being seen together in the city was a risk they didn't want me to run."

"They," Harrelson said.

"Right."

"Well," he said and drew an envelope from his breast pocket. Keller took it, and there was a comforting thickness to it.

"I'm going home Friday," Harrelson said. "I don't suppose you'll be staying that long."

"I won't be staying at all," Keller told him. "I'm going straight back to the airport."

"You fly in and you fly right back out again."

That was Detroit for you. He nodded, and Harrelson said, "The thing is, I go back on Friday. Now we agreed I shouldn't be in town when it happened, and——"

"You won't be. It'll be all taken care of before then."

"Oh."

"In fact," Keller said, improvising, "I'll make the call right now. I wouldn't be surprised if it's all wrapped up before the sun goes down."

"Wow."

Keller punched in a few numbers at random, then watched as the phone slipped from his fingers and tumbled to the pavement. "Hell," he said. "Just what I needed. Get that for me, will you?" And he reached for his hip pocket even as Harrelson bent obligingly to retrieve the phone.

"I guess the English would call it a spanner," he said.

"And what would we call it, Keller?"

"A wrench." He held his hand palm up as if weighing the tool in his hand. "A monkey wrench, actually. Sears has

this line, Craftsman tools. Quality at a price. Guaranteed for life, if you can believe that."

"Whose life?"

"Well," he said.

He'd drawn the heavy wrench from his hip pocket and swung it in an arc at Harrelson, who never saw it coming and consequently never knew what hit him. The first blow probably killed the man, but Keller made sure with two more, then scanned the area for bystanders before stooping to go through the dead man's pockets. He dug out Harrelson's calfskin wallet, took the cash and the credit cards and tucked the near-empty wallet under the dead man's extended right arm. He found a cell phone and pocketed it but kept searching until he turned up a second phone, the one he'd given Harrelson. He loaded his pockets with everything he'd taken from Harrelson, used Harrelson's pocket handkerchief to wipe anything he might have touched and was in his car and on his way out of the lot before anyone walked down that aisle and spotted the body.

"There's a bridge over the Detroit River," he said, "but on the other side of it you've got Windsor, Ontario. It's strange because you actually drive south across the bridge, so you're going south to get from the United States to Canada."

"And then I'll bet you drove north to get back."

"I would have," he said, "but I decided not to take the bridge in the first place, because who knows what kind of records they keep. The Canadian border used to be like crossing a state line, but that's different these days."

"Like everything else. So you settled for a storm drain?"

"I liked the idea of the river. And it turned out there's a bridge a little ways south of the city that runs to Grosse Ile, which is an island in the Detroit River between the U.S. and Canada. The bridge is free, no toll, nobody checking license plates. And not much traffic. I drove across it, turned around, and halfway back I stopped the car and threw three cell phones and a Craftsman wrench over the rail."

"Why three cell phones? Oh, two from him and the one you used for calling him."

He nodded. "It bothered me a little, tossing the wrench. Lifetime guarantee and all."

"We've got a Sears right here in White Plains, Keller. You can always pick up a replacement."

"What for?"

"I don't know. Maybe it would come in handy when you're playing with your stamps. What's the matter, aren't you going to correct me?"

"Correct you?"

"Tell me you don't play with your stamps, you work with them."

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He shrugged.  
 "Something the matter, Keller? You in a mood?"  
 "I don't know. Maybe."  
 "What's wrong? The job's done, the loose ends are tied off, and we got paid. Got paid time and a half, since Barry Blyden paid the whole amount, and Harrelson's in no position to request a refund of his deposit." She sipped her iced tea and grinned over the brim of the glass. "Like I always say, Keller, now you can buy yourself some stamps."  
 "I guess."  
 "I'd say you're definitely in a mood."  
 "I think you're right."  
 She thought about it. "You met the guy, you got to know him, and then you had to do him. There was a personal element to it, and that's what bothers you."  
 He thought about it, shook his head. "No," he said. "I don't think so. Yes, I met him, and yes, I got to know him, but the more I got to know him, the less I liked him. I wouldn't say it was a pleasure to kill him, but it was satisfying and not just in the sense of the satisfaction of a job well-done."

"He was a pain in the neck."  
 "He was."  
 "But?"  
 "I solicited him, Dot. He ran his mouth on the plane, but he wasn't really looking to kill his partner. I put the idea into his head. That's why he kept dragging his feet and being a pain. He never would have been a client if I hadn't pitched him."  
 "You went proactive."  
 "And then, when he became difficult to deal with—"  
 "Try impossible, Keller."  
 "You went to his partner and Harrelson stopped being the client and became the target. It seems—"  
 "Strange?"  
 "Strange," he agreed. "And, I don't know. Inappropriate."  
 "I'll give you strange," she said. "But I'm not signing on for inappropriate."  
 "No?"  
 "No. He was the target from the beginning. It just took us a while to realize it."  
 "I don't follow you."  
 "You sat next to him on the plane," she said, "and he appointed you his des-

ignated psychotherapist and poured his heart out to you, and you saw an opportunity."  
 "I was looking for one."  
 "And you recognized this one when you saw it. You came home, and you got the idea of turning proactive, and you approached Harrelson."  
 "Right."  
 "And that was your mistake."  
 "Turning proactive."  
 "No," she said. "Actually that was brilliant, because we needed the money and you were going stale for lack of work. The mistake was you approached the wrong man. You should have gone straight to Blyden."  
 "It never occurred to me."  
 "Of course it didn't. But when you think about it, it becomes obvious. Harrelson met you, he sat next to you on the plane, he heard your voice and saw your face. He's got a name to go with the face, even if it's not yours. It's a risk, working for somebody who knows that much about you."  
 "I know."  
 "Besides," she went on, "Blyden's tough to kill. He's in New York all the time, which means violating the don't-crap-where-you-eat rule. And he's got this routine that makes him very hard to get at."  
 "I'd have found a way."  
 "But it wouldn't have been easy. Whereas Harrelson—"  
 "Was in a different city every week."  
 "Exactly. And Blyden has never seen your face or heard your voice, and never will. He's heard my voice, but he doesn't know who I am or how to reach me, and he doesn't seem to care. All he had to know was that the partner he hated was planning to have him killed, and he was happy to spend a few dollars to turn the tables."  
 "And he's not going to talk about it," Keller said, "because he's Mr. Inside. He won't spill the beans to the guy sitting next to him on the plane, because he's not going to be on the plane in the first place."  
 "There you go."  
 "And you're right," he said. "Going proactive was fine, but my mistake was I didn't see the whole picture. I should have gone straight to Blyden."  
 "No."  
 "No?"  
 "You should have come straight to me," she said, "and I should have gone straight to Blyden."  
 "You're right."  
 "But it came out all right," she said, "and they tell me that's all that matters. You feel better about it now?"  
 "I think so," he said. "I guess I'll go buy some stamps."  
 "Keller," she said, "you took the words right out of my mouth."



*"All Miss Burns and I are suggesting, Congressman, is that political contributions need not always be monetary."*





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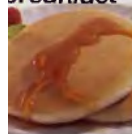
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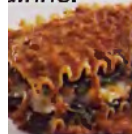
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# JOHN KRUK (continued from page 110)

*"They said I didn't hit for power. I said, 'How many guys play in this league with cancer and hit .302?'"*

offending players, but I have to be the devil's advocate, a fan of all 30 teams, and say, 'What do you mean?'"

Ravech has only one criticism of Kruk. "John has the most tremendous lack of sensitivity for the plight of others of anyone I've ever known. Cold. I say, 'You can't say that, John,' and he'll say, 'That's the way it is.' That's John Kruk. You know exactly where you stand with him. But it's refreshing." Kruk admits he's a curmudgeon—but that's not a word he would use. He says he doesn't take time to know anybody. "I act dumber than hell so people will leave me alone."

The next afternoon Kruk and I go to lunch at a Mexican restaurant. He wears a baseball cap pulled low over his forehead, a T-shirt, baggy shorts to his knees, gray sweat socks and sandals. I say, "Nice socks." He gives me the finger.

The owner of the restaurant hovers over us throughout lunch, but Kruk seems oblivious. He's lost in the story he's telling me about the Mexican League, where he played in 1986. "There's a perception in baseball that Latin players are lazy," he says. "But they're 16-, 17-year-old kids in a foreign country where they don't know the language." When he played in the Mexican League, unfamiliar with the country's customs and unable to speak Spanish, Kruk seemed aloof from his teammates too. He rarely ventured from his hotel room. "They must have felt I was lazy," Kruk says. "You have to feel bad when you hear people talking about Latin players being lazy."

The rabid Mexican fans bet on every game. When his team played for the championship, "the other team's owner offered me \$20,000 to throw the series," Kruk says. "That was a lot of money to me then, but I said no. Then one night I was in a restaurant, and this guy behind me kept bumping my back with a gun. He said, 'You play tomorrow, you die.' Then a girl called my hotel room and said she wanted to come up. I said I had a game that night. She said, 'You don't need to play.' I said, 'I do.' Then a guy got on and said, 'You play, you die.' During that game they kept me in the clubhouse until it was my turn to hit."

"In another game I was at bat and the umpire called two strikes on pitches nowhere near the plate. I said, 'How much you gettin'?' He said, 'Fuck you, fat boy.' I went nuts. I threw my helmet and hit him with my fist. The next day our owner told me I had been suspended for life. A few years later my

wife said she wanted to go to Mexico for a vacation. I said, 'We'd better not.'"

The restaurant owner appears at our table with a tray of rich desserts. Kruk digs into chocolate cake smothered with syrup and ice cream. He is quiet for a minute, then he looks up and says, "You know, those Phillies teams were special." No matter what Kruk is talking about, his conversation invariably circles around to his years with the Phillies, as if he's deliberately picking at the scab to keep the wound fresh.

"I was so pissed when they let me go in 1994," he says. "They said I didn't hit for power. I said, 'How many guys play in this league with cancer and hit .302?'"

In a 1993 game in Los Angeles, Mitch Williams fielded a bunt and threw to Kruk at first base. The ball bounced in the dirt and hit him in the testicles. He thought nothing of it for months until he noticed a lump, which was diagnosed as cancerous. When Kruk learned Williams's errant throw hadn't caused the cancer but only revealed it, he said, "The best thing that ever happened to me was getting hit in the nuts." After his operation, in the spring of 1994, Kruk underwent radiation treatments. "The radiation made me sick to my stomach," he says, "because the cancer had spread there. After each treatment I'd go outside the hospital to a street vendor, get a soft pretzel and walk back to my hotel."

In 1994 Kruk went to extended spring training at the Phillies' camp before joining the team for its home opener. He calls that day "the most unbelievable experience of my life." He went directly from his radiation treatment to the ballpark and got three hits to the thunderous applause of more than 58,000 fans. (Those same fans had earlier booed Pennsylvania governor Bob Casey, who, after having recently undergone a heart-liver transplant, threw out the first pitch.)

"After my first hit, a double," says Kruk, "I was standing on second base, and the fans were going crazy. I didn't know what to do. The other team's shortstop said, 'Hey, stupid, tip your fucking hat.' So I did."

After the season, Kruk expected to be rewarded with a new three-year contract, but the Phillies didn't re-sign him. "I accepted it," he says. "But I didn't talk to anyone in the organization for five years. I was so disappointed, I just wanted to quit baseball." But the next season the Chicago White Sox hounded him to sign, and he said to himself, "The

hell with it," and signed. Kruk played for the White Sox for a few months in 1995, hitting over .300, but his heart was no longer in the game. "They made me shave and cut my hair," he said. He confided in teammate Ozzie Guillen that he planned to retire. Guillen formulated one of the greatest exit plans in sports. When Kruk hit a single in his last game, he waited for a pinch runner, then jogged toward the dugout, up the runway and out through the clubhouse to a waiting car while still in his uniform and rode out into the real world. Not until later did he find out his final hit had pushed his career average up to .300. "I didn't know that," he says. "I know nothing about my stats."

For the next few years he hung around Keyser, getting drunk and playing golf, until he got divorced from his first wife, Jamie, a West Virginia girl. "I lost half my money to her in the divorce," he says, "and half of the rest in the stock market crash after 9/11." When he remarried, to a Philly girl named Melissa, he told her, "I gotta make some money." At the time he was coaching the Phillies' minor-league hitters for "no money." Then Fox TV called to ask if he'd audition for a new sports program. "They asked me who I wanted to work with," he says. "I said, 'I don't care, as long as it's not Tom Arnold'—he was brash, loud and obnoxious. Then they called and told me I was working with Tom. I had to remind myself that my family had to eat. Funny thing is, Tom and I became friends."

*Best Damn Sports Show Period* was hosted by Chris Rose, who was described as the ringleader of an irreverent crew—Arnold, Kruk, John Salley and D'Marco Farr. The show featured outrageous comments, jocklike camaraderie, audacious and often sexist puns and an occasional hot chick in skimpy clothes. "Your brain can work at half speed with us," Rose has said of the show, "and maybe we'll catch up to you at some point." According to Arnold, "it was like needling your buddy." What Kruk liked best about the show was that it allowed him to say anything. "I could call Tom an idiot, and he called me a fat slob," he says.

The show's only female panelist was Lisa Guerrero. Kruk tried to be nice to her, but, he says, "she didn't like me. Maybe I was too gritty. But Lisa was the hardest worker on the show." When asked about Kruk, Guerrero says, "Oh, he's just crazy." Kruk's inability to connect with Guerrero still bothers him.

When flying to L.A. became too much for Kruk and he discovered he could drive from Philly to ESPN's Connecticut headquarters in less than three hours, Kruk jumped to ESPN. But his new job wasn't much like his Fox gig. ESPN didn't tolerate the outrageous tomfoolery that Fox did. Furthermore, ESPN tightly edited what its analysts could say. "On Fox," Kruk says, "I ripped baseball



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commissioner Bud Selig. I called him a puppet of the owners." Fox loved such outrageous comments. ESPN didn't.

"We were looking for a fan," says Jay Levy, senior coordinating producer of *Baseball Tonight*. "He filled the bill on *Best Damn*, but I think the person he is on *Baseball Tonight* is who he is. I'm sure on many occasions he has said things we wish he hadn't. John tells it like it is. There's complexity in his simplicity."

Kruk's comments are insightful. It's just that he uses the language of the clubhouse—he'll call players lazy or selfish, jerks or morons—cleaning it up a bit for popular consumption. This causes some people to overlook his insights and dwell instead on his word choice. But Kruk is all about content, not at all about form. During one show his colleagues criticized Phillies slugger Pat Burrell for not bunting a runner to second base in a crucial situation. Kruk disagreed adamantly: "He's an RBI guy; he's supposed to drive in runs. Besides, he probably hasn't bunted in years."

Being on the show has taught Kruk a lot of things about himself, baseball, TV, the media, athletes and fans. Despite his earlier protestations that "image is bullshit," he has learned that he owes his present career to his image. But, he says, "I never went out of my way for my image. I don't say things just to be controversial. I made a career out of being me. I mean, why would they want me?"

It's about eight P.M., a few hours before *Baseball Tonight* will air. Kruk, Ravech and a few other ESPN staffers are sitting around a long, rectangular table in a conference room, watching a bank of TVs broadcasting various baseball games from around the country. Kruk, his tie loosened, looks disheveled as he studies some notes. Ravech, looking slick, rocks back in his chair

with his small, polished loafers on the table. On one of the TVs Manny Ramirez, the Red Sox left fielder, jogs after a single hit in front of him, kicks it, then walks after it.

"Geez, Manny! You idiot," says Ravech. "If the Red Sox are supposed to have so many leaders, why can't they do anything with Manny?"

Without looking up from his notes Kruk says, "Cause they don't have any leaders."

A staffer takes orders for dinner. Kruk asks for a cheeseburger with french fries. Ravech says, "Attaboy, Kruk. Grease it up." Ravech orders a chicken salad.

Kruk says, "You know, I made the All-Veterans Stadium team in Philly."

"Yeah, every time the Phillies win," Ravech says, "Kruk goes out to the parking lot and turns on his radio to 'Oh, Happy Day.'"

Kruk says, "You know, we were lousy too, but we were more interesting to watch than these guys."

Kruk doesn't think much of the way today's players play the game or live their life away from it. He disagrees with the reverence for baseball statistics, which try to make the game a mathematical problem to be solved. Baseball today is too cerebral—also not a Kruk word—compared with the simpler days of see ball, hit ball. "I don't agree that you live and die by stats, like Cardinals manager Tony LaRussa thinks," he says. "Nobody plays the game by feel anymore. They try to make players robots and not athletes. They always try to come up with a gimmick that makes it seem as though they invented something new for the game, like middle relievers and closers. If I couldn't hit a starting pitcher, I'd beg them to bring in someone else." He remembers a time with the Padres when an opposing team's best hitter came to town having recently fanned nine times in a series against Houston, mostly missing inside fastballs. So the Padres

staff threw him inside fastballs, and he hit three home runs. "He'd fanned against Nolan Ryan and Mike Scott in Houston," Kruk says. "They threw 98-mile-an-hour fastballs. Our guys threw 85. I wasn't that bright, but I thought there was something wrong there. When I was in the minor leagues, my coaches told me the dumber you are, the better you are. Today's players have too much information." In 2003 Pat Burrell was undergoing a terrible yearlong slump. He grabbed Kruk at a game and asked, "What am I doing wrong?" Kruk said, "That's exactly what you're doing wrong—asking everybody. You gotta dumb down."

Kruk goes off on one of his rants now, unable to stop. He says that years ago players were not superstars but workmen with salaries closer to their fans'. "I was in a golf tournament with Hall of Famers Robin Roberts and Al Kaline, and Roberts told me how he had to get a winter job one year," he says. "Geez, he won 28 games that year."

Kruk thinks no athlete or movie star is worth \$15 million a year. A fan once called him an idiot when he said acting wasn't work. "I mean, they do a film for two months for \$20 million, then they gotta take time off to cleanse their soul," he says. "If you do something you love, it's not work. Anyone who says, 'I made \$20 million, and I earned it,' is full of shit. Guys who say they can't feed their family on \$12 million better stop having kids. People need to get over the fact that they think they're more important than what the fuck they are."

Ravech says to me, "Did Kruk ever show you his fans' salute?" Ravech tips back his head and raises an imaginary beer bottle to his lips.

"Dunks love me," Kruk says.

Kruk stopped drinking in 1999. No 12-step program, no whining about how hard it was to stop drinking. "I just stopped," he says. "I had no problem stopping."





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He started drinking in the minor leagues because bars were the only places still open where players could get something to eat after a night game. When he reached the majors, he began to drink more to blunt his fear of flying. After a while it became habit. "As a player, I just worried where my next beer was coming from," he says. "I drank to get as drunk as I could get." Then he began to have blackouts. Before one such incident, he was driving to see his future wife Melissa in Philly, and he got so lost, he says, "I ended up in four states," none of them Pennsylvania. When he finally reached her he blacked out on the floor. When he woke up he told her, "I'll never have another drink again." And he hasn't.

The following afternoon, Kruk and I have lunch at Chili's. I wait for him in a booth while he stands outside in the parking lot and calls his wife to check on his two children, Kyle, who is now four, and Keira, who is one and a half. Before he retired from baseball he never wanted to have children, because "as a player I would have been a horseshit father," he explains. When he got cancer and lost a testicle, he assumed he would never be able to have children. Then one morning Melissa showed him her pregnancy test. "I was shocked she'd gotten pregnant after a year and a half," he says. "That's why I'm so

overprotective now. We have sensors in the kids' rooms to monitor them. My kids, to me, are a miracle."

When his son was born, Kruk stood behind the glass partition that separated him from all the newborn babies and insisted that the nurse pull down his son's diaper so he could make sure he had two testicles.

Kruk's cancer and his family have been the most profound influences on his life. "Now if I feel a lump, I see a doctor," he says. "I'm preparing for death by making sure my family is taken care of." He's already started to put money aside for his baby daughter's wedding, even though he says,

"I'm never gonna let my daughter date, especially anyone like me."

He adds, "When people come to my house, they want to see all the baseball stuff in the basement. But there's nothing there. You wouldn't know that the person who lives there ever played baseball. I'm keeping the basement empty so I can fill it up with my kids' interests. You know, I once said baseball was as good as it gets. But now my family is as good as it gets."

After Kruk polishes off a steak and fries, he orders another obscene triple-chocolate dessert. I ask him if his wives ever complained about his weight. He says no, except every once in a while Melissa makes cracks. He digs into the

him increasingly angry as he tells it.

In December 2004 Kruk was told Keyser was building a new baseball field that would open in March 2005 and that the town wanted to call it John Kruk Field. Would he show up for the first game to dedicate the field? Kruk says, "I was so excited, especially for my kids. I said, 'Absolutely.'" Then he called a friend who had served in Iraq. Kruk told him he wanted to put up a plaque, at his own expense, that would read, "I rededicate this field to the men and women of the National Guard. If it weren't for them, we would not have the freedom to play this game we love." He asked his friend if he could get together an honor guard for opening day. His friend said yes.

"Then nothing for months," Kruk says. "They never called me in March. I heard they opened the field with a temporary banner that read 'Welcome to John Kruk Field,' and then the next day they took the banner down. A reporter called to tell me they were looking for more-deserving candidates. I felt foolish, dumbfounded. I had to call my National Guard friend and tell him he couldn't do it. I just thought it would be so neat to take my son back to the field named after his father."

Kruk browses the CD racks at Wal-Mart on this hot, sunny afternoon. No one notices him. In his shorts, socks and sandals, he looks like a construction worker on his day off. He picks

up a CD and shows it to me: David Allan Coe. "He lives in a cave," says Kruk, as if in admiration. Then he shows me a Dolly Parton CD. "She's my favorite," he says. "She sent me a picture of herself in a low-cut dress and wrote on it, 'John, I hope the mountains of West Virginia are as pretty as these.'" Kruk says he has three things left that he wants to do in life: act in a movie, have his own TV sitcom and record a country album. But one problem with his music dream is that he gets stage fright. When a country band asked him to join in for a song one night at a club, he couldn't do it. "I saw all those people and said, 'Fuck that,'

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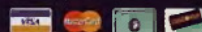
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After lunch Kruk and I drive to a Wal-Mart so Kruk can pick up some country-music CDs. Along the way he tells me about taking his son to the doctor recently. Kruk waited in the lobby while Kyle went into the doctor's office. When the boy emerged, he ran to his father and said, "Daddy, you're my best friend." Kruk tells me, "I almost lost it right there." His eyes tear up. Then he scowls, remembering something. "I wanted to take him back to Keyser one day when he was grown to see where his father grew up and played ball," he says. He shakes his head, disturbed. Then he relates a story that makes





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and ran off the stage," he says. A friend told him he should record some "rogue songs" about sitting in bars, drinking and getting in fights, but now that he has a family he's reluctant. "I'd rather sing stuff that matters to kids growing up," he says. "You know, Dr. Phil songs."

Though Kruk is on TV, he isn't on a sitcom, even if some people think he was when he was on *Best Damn Sports Show Period*. He has, however, acted in a movie. He was in *The Fan*, starring Robert De Niro and Wesley Snipes, who played a baseball player. Kruk says all the younger actors on the set would always watch De Niro work. "He's a great actor, I guess," Kruk says. "Maybe I'm stupid, but I didn't see De Niro do anything different from anyone else." He says it was comical the way Snipes's legs shook when he had to bat in a movie game in front of

thousands of extras as fans. "Actors can't play athletes," Kruk says. "Why don't they just get athletes to play athletes in movies? Hell, we can act. We're entertainers. And we won't need any do-overs."

On the way back to Kruk's hotel, I ask what he'd be without baseball. He says, "What would I be? Same thing as the other guys in Keyser. Work in the bottle factory. Get drunk. I wouldn't know any better."

We drive in silence for a while, Kruk thinking. Finally he asks, "How many words is this article gonna be?" I tell him 6,000. He looks across at me. "Six thousand? That don't seem hardly enough to capture the essence of a man." Then for the first time in three days John Kruk smiles.



"Looks like someone forgot his launch codes."

## SHEPARD SMITH

(continued from page 58)

combination of *J. Lo*, *curb job* and *block party*, which were the words in the script, was ripe for this. It might have been *J. Lo*-specific. I don't know. But as I said, I trip over words all the time. We're going fast, and I try to get the facts right, but I mess up. I feel bad for our writers. They write good stuff, and I destroy it. It is both embarrassing and humbling.

**PLAYBOY:** Did anything good come out of the mistake?

**SMITH:** For the PR department. It said we got a lot of young eyes. But I didn't find anything good about it.

**PLAYBOY:** Was your mother really upset?

**SMITH:** She certainly asked about it. "What are you saying on TV?" She's 76. It was everywhere—and then Howard.

**PLAYBOY:** Yes, Howard Stern had a field day. He invited you on his show.

**SMITH:** Which I respectfully declined. I thought, What do I want to focus on that for? We do some decent work day in and day out, and to focus on a gaffe is not a smart thing to do.

**PLAYBOY:** It wasn't your first mistake to garner lots of attention. You announced the death of the previous pope, but he hadn't yet died.

**SMITH:** That was a little more complicated than messing up a word or two. A system was in place at the time. The word was, If you hear it from Vatican TV or radio, it's like hearing it from God. I was hearing lots of things in my earpiece, and I thought I heard from Vatican radio that the pope had died. I was wrong. It was horrible. Sometimes you make big mistakes on big stories. It would have been a much worse thing had he not been on his deathbed, but it was still bad.

**PLAYBOY:** You also caught flak for what seemed to be a crude, insensitive statement you made when IRA leader and MP Bobby Sands died after his hunger strike. You said the moral of his death was "Eat more often." Was that scripted or off-the-cuff?

**SMITH:** It was just stupid. I didn't mean it. There are many mistakes on live TV, and that was one of them. I've always made lots of mistakes, but in the past no one would notice. Now lots of people are watching. That's the price of being on the news.

**PLAYBOY:** Was the news important in your house when you were a child? Did your parents talk about current events?

**SMITH:** A little bit, but we talked more about what happened for me at school and for Dad at work than we did about what was happening in D.C. Ours was a relatively simple life. Northern Mississippi is disconnected from the rest of the country. We were kind of in our own world.

**PLAYBOY:** Were you studious?

**SMITH:** I was a bad student. I was always talking, cutting up. I wanted to go outside. I loved sports. I ran a little track, played a lot of tennis. Never was very good at baseball but played some. Same with football.



Mostly I ran around the neighborhood and threw dirt clods, went to the candy store, crossed the road where I shouldn't.

**PLAYBOY:** When did you know you wanted to be a television journalist?

**SMITH:** Not until college. I found I liked to dig up a story. I did it at the TV station on campus at Ole Miss. You did it all there—directed, produced, wrote, shot camera, edited tape. That was the only reason I got my first job. I was this geeky, horrible-looking, weird thing. Too skinny, a horrible accent. But I knew how to do everything, which was what I needed for my first job, in Panama City, Florida. I had a marriage coming, and I had to eat and make car payments.

**PLAYBOY:** What happened to your accent?

**SMITH:** I had a summer job at a Hardee's in Destin, Florida. I was put at the drive-through, on the speaker. My accent was so bad they stopped me. They wouldn't let me work the speaker at the drive-through, and I knew right then, All right, you've got to mainstream a little bit.

**PLAYBOY:** How did the reporting job lead to Fox?

**SMITH:** Coming out of Panama City, I got jobs at small stations, where I made a lot of mistakes, which was okay because nobody was watching. Then I went to Fox in Miami and Los Angeles. I worked on *A Current Affair*, something I really didn't want to do. It was the middle of O.J. I liked the story. I still think O.J. was a defining moment in our history. But *A Current Affair* was pretaped, which I didn't like. I was miserable, and they hated me. Then Fox needed someone to go cover the Montana Freeman standoff for the news service. I was like, "I'll go." Sixty-nine days later I was still there, living in a farmhouse with no heat. There wasn't even talk at the time of a news channel. I'd heard of Roger Ailes but didn't really know much about him. One day he called and said he liked something I had done. He hired me, and it just kept going. One day Fox asked me to go to New York. I think the network saw something in me. Part of it may have been a sort of quirky, poorly dressed, long-haired Southern weirdness.

**PLAYBOY:** How long was your hair?

**SMITH:** Not that long, but I was an unkempt kind of guy. I hadn't figured it all out yet.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you now comfortable in a suit, with makeup and hair groomed for TV?

**SMITH:** It doesn't bother me. It's a uniform. I wore brown and orange at Hardee's, and here I wear a suit. They fix you up, make you presentable. I don't care.

**PLAYBOY:** When Ted Turner owned CNN, he famously said he would squish Fox News Channel like a bug.

**SMITH:** Well, we all know how that turned out.

**PLAYBOY:** As Fox News Channel's ratings have grown and CNN's have shrunk, what has Fox done right and CNN done wrong?

**SMITH:** We haven't talked down to our viewers. We recognize there's a center of

the country, places outside San Francisco and New York. And we make the screen interesting. We have a good time. We don't hate each other.

**PLAYBOY:** You're suggesting they do at CNN? Does CNN talk down to its viewers?

**SMITH:** I think there was a time when some of that may have been absolutely true. CNN was also a little boring. As you can see, it has co-opted some of our ideas. And good for them. I want them to do well because the more competition we have, the more money we spend, the better we are at our craft. CNN is behind, so it's trying things. It's throwing things against the wall and seeing what sticks. When you're behind, you can do that.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you still consider CNN the only serious competition?

**SMITH:** As I said earlier, I don't look only at cable news as our competition. I look at all the competition in my time slot. Ours is a rough one. My competition is *Access Hollywood* and *Entertainment Tonight*. It's *Wheel of Fortune*. It's *Jeopardy*. It's *SportsCenter* on ESPN. It's movies on TNT. It's *SpongeBob SquarePants*. But *Entertainment Tonight* viewers are sometimes going to look for news. They've proved that over time. When there's a big news event, they're going to come, and we want them to come to us. If they find us, we want them to stay with us.

**PLAYBOY:** *ET* viewers can also find celebrity coverage on your shows.

**SMITH:** I've never been much of a celebrity hound. I've never been very interested in celebrities.

**PLAYBOY:** But you cover them.

**SMITH:** We've been guilty of reporting on celebrities more than we should, but you make those judgment calls every day.

**PLAYBOY:** Who are you tired of? How about Tom Cruise? Would you like to have him on your show to jump on your couch?

**SMITH:** Oh, that's ridiculous sideshowishness. Some people just get too big. He's just pathetic.

**PLAYBOY:** Angelina Jolie?

**SMITH:** I don't care.

**PLAYBOY:** When Ailes gave you *Fox Report*, what changes did you make?

**SMITH:** It was a traditional evening newscast with a bunch of packages, pretaped everything. There was no way to update anything. We blew it up.

**PLAYBOY:** You have been criticized as being too manic.

**SMITH:** Some people don't like the speed. Some people like Chips Ahoy!, some like Oreos. You can't be everything for everybody. It seems to be working, but, that said, you have to keep reinventing yourself because, like everything else, you get stale.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you worry that quick-bite news is dumbing people down?

**SMITH:** On Fox News Channel, if you begin at six and get Brit Hume's taped pieces and political analysis, then our headlines of the day's news and something for the water cooler, then Bill O'Reilly bloviating about whatever he bloviates about for

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the day, you get a pretty good slice of the news. I'm not worried about it. People can always go to the Internet and newspapers. I hope they do.

**PLAYBOY:** Supposedly many people, especially young people, get their news not from you or your competitors but from *The Daily Show* and other comedy broadcasts. Does that concern you?

**SMITH:** I find that silly and disingenuous. I don't disrespect the younger generation to the point where I think it's seriously getting the news from Jon Stewart. I love his show, by the way. We are acquaintances; we live in the same building. But *The Daily Show* is not a news show.

**PLAYBOY:** Who decides what you can and cannot have on your reports regarding violence or sex? Was it your call to display dead bodies on the bridge during Hurricane Katrina?

**SMITH:** We may have been the first. I'm not sure. It's part of the story, but I don't make the ultimate decision. People upstairs do.

**PLAYBOY:** How about sex?

**SMITH:** We have nothing against sex here. This is the home of the *New York Post*, which doesn't shy away from sex. Remember, we have a conservative audience. It doesn't want to see that. Isn't that right? We do try not to show animals having sex, though. It bothers children.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you get more irate viewers when you show violence or sex?

**SMITH:** Politics.

**PLAYBOY:** What about verbs? You rarely use them.

**SMITH:** Verbs are optional. Our writers have gotten very good at leaving them out. Sometimes you need them, sometimes you don't. They're just not necessary for com-

municating. "Two dangerous criminals back behind bars." Sometimes I might say "are back behind bars," depending on what feels right. Next we're going to eliminate the nouns. Adjectives are fine when not overused.

**PLAYBOY:** What's your life like outside of work?

**SMITH:** I don't talk about it. I don't talk religion, I don't talk politics, and I don't talk sex. Other than that, we're good to go.

**PLAYBOY:** You're not currently married.

**SMITH:** I'm divorced.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you date?

**SMITH:** Sure, whatever. Not much.

**PLAYBOY:** Do you have a girlfriend?

**SMITH:** I don't talk about those things. I won't tell you what church I go to or whether I go.

**PLAYBOY:** Are you a night owl?

**SMITH:** I like nights. A lot of times I go home and watch baseball. When baseball is over, there are dinners and drinks and sports bars. Occasionally I go to a club.

**PLAYBOY:** How about the morning? What's the first news you read?

**SMITH:** I hit the blogs.

**PLAYBOY:** Which blogs?

**SMITH:** I move around based on where the news is that day—New Orleans sites, Washington sites. I always go to the Hotline. If you go to the same place every day, you start thinking like everyone else, which is dangerous. I love the industry sites and the newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*.

**PLAYBOY:** What do you look for when you read them?

**SMITH:** I never want to allow any newspaper or any other organization to set the agenda. Everybody knows what's above the fold, so I look for other stories—smaller ones, local ones. You learn a lot from the in-depth reporting happening across the country. Then when I've read enough, I figure out a way to focus the day.

**PLAYBOY:** What happens when a story breaks while you're on the air?

**SMITH:** Some days it comes to me through my earpiece; someone will tell me about a breaking story. More often it comes across the computer screen. I like those days best when we throw out the rundown and see if the train's going to come off the track.

**PLAYBOY:** How important is it to be first on a breaking story?

**SMITH:** There's a rush to be first, but I don't want to be first and wrong. When a big story comes through, you just go with it, but you try not to get ahead of yourself. We have to be careful because we move quickly around here. We're going full-steam, trying to give you a roundup of what happened today and a little bit of analysis, maybe some food for thought. If I accomplish that, I go home and sleep well.



Dana Gojane

"I told you this was a stupid idea in this little car!"





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# PLAYMATE NEWS



## CENTERFOLDS REVEAL IMPRESSIVE FIGURES

Most of us have fantasized about what we'd say if a Playmate wandered up to us. Few have imagined phrases like "What do you like in industrials?" or "Where do you think Google will peak?" leaping to our lips. Perhaps it's time to rethink that. In a stock-picking contest sponsored by the financial website Trading

Cyber Girls Amy Sue Cooper and Amy McCarthy, to select their five favorite stocks. Their picks ranged from high-profile blue chips like Microsoft and Disney to under-the-radar small caps like Terax Energy and Sky Petroleum. After a recent closing bell sounded, Amy Sue was ahead, with an



Christine Smith, Jillian Grace, Lindsey Vuola and Pilar Lastra (left, from top); and Courtney Rachel Culkin, Pennelope Jimenez, Deanna Brooks and Kara Manaca (right, from top) are the financially savvy Centerfolds competing in Trading markets.com's 2006 stock-picking contest. The winner at year's end gets \$50,000 for the charity of her choice.

markets.com, several of our sharpest Centerfolds are showing surprising business moxie.

At the beginning of the year, the website asked Playmates Deanna Brooks, Courtney Rachel Culkin, Jillian Grace, Pennelope Jimenez, Pilar Lastra, Kara Monaco, Christine Smith and Lindsey Vuolo, along with

18.78 percent return (even Warren Buffett would be impressed). Deanna (up 8.07 percent) and Christine (up 4.96 percent) were also outpacing the S&P 500's 2.78 percent rise. At the end of the year the contestant who finishes with the highest gain will earn \$50,000 for her favorite charity.

## 20 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

When she posed for *PLAYBOY* Miss June 1986 Rebecca Ferratti already had 25 beauty-pageant



wins to her name and had just relocated from Phoenix to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career. The move was well-timed: She was soon cast in the Martin-Chase-Short classic *iThree Amigos!* and would go on to compile a lengthy list of movie and TV credits.

## LOOSE LIPS

"It's very expensive to be me. It's terrible the things I have to do to be me."

—Anna Nicole Smith



## CODE RED



From chic East Coast fashion shows to hip West Coast hot spots, velvet ropes unhook and doors fly open for our Playmates. From left: Shauna Sand at Camden House in Beverly Hills; Jenny McCarthy at the VH1 Big in '05 Awards in L.A.; Serria Tawan at the *Into the Blue* premiere in L.A.; Victoria Silvstedt at the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show in New York City; Lauren Michelle Hill at the Lobby in L.A.



## WHO'S IN...

### The Playboy Photo Booth



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## MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By Tony Little

—personal trainer and spokesman

Miss October 2002 Teri Harrison is someone I have worked with. She is awesome because she's not only the all-American, blonde-haired

girl next door, but she also keeps herself in great shape. I had the chance to do a workout session with her, and I can tell you she looks just as good with her clothes on!



## POP QUESTIONS: JULIE MCCULLOUGH

**Q:** So how was your play, *Pajama Tops*, in Calgary?

**A:** It was fun. We got five stars out of five, and our show was usually sold out. Theater is thriving in Canada. I think the community there really supports it, much more than here in Los Angeles.

**Q:** Did you start acting in high school?

**A:** When I started out doing theater as a kid in high school I usually worked on the production end because I always thought I'd be an artist. So I'd work on makeup, hair, wardrobe, stage sets and design. I decided I wanted to become an actress afterward.

**Q:** What do you like about comical parts?

**A:** I prefer comedic acting over dramatic because I like to be laughed at and I like to make people laugh. I probably found my niche with comedy when I did a movie of the week titled *Arly Hanks*. It was set in Arkansas, and my character was the town slut who had slept with everybody from the farmer to the mayor.

**Q:** What attracted you to that role?

**A:** I enjoyed doing that character so much because I'm Southern and that was the first time I got to play an over-the-top Southern character. I found out I was great at Southern shtick. Before that I'd always played the pretty girl next door.



acter. I found out I was great at Southern shtick. Before that I'd always played the pretty girl next door.

## FLASHIN' WEEK

Pam Anderson was truly New York Fashion Week's girl-about-town: She threw a MAC cosmetics party (at which she hid in the coat check until the mob dispersed and prevented a fur-clad Angie Harmon from entering), then co-hosted a PETA event and adorned the Sean John soiree.



## PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Miss September 2004 Scarlett Keegan (pictured below) followed the Playboy Exposed photo show to the Emerald Isle for its last stop, at Harvey Nichols in Dublin, where she helped celebrate the successful run of this historic—and certainly sexy—exhibit.... The New York *Daily News* reported that Miss April 1997 Kelly Monaco, the first-season winner of the surprise hit *Dancing With the Stars*, feels the show has lost its "innocence." Wasn't she the star whose dress was literally falling off during the competition finals?... PMOY 1994 Jenny McCarthy held an open casting call for her TV movie *Mary Christmas*. She was seeking elfin extras between four-foot-10 and five-foot-three to fill in as Santa's pointy-eared work-force.... PMOY 2001 Brande Roderick can be seen on Fuel TV's alternative-sports show *The Daily Habit*, on which she doles out dating advice to men.... Miss August 2001 Jennifer Walcott was named Hottest Significant Other in a Sportsline.com "tournament" that pitted her against beauties Eva Longoria, Elsa Benitez and Elisha Cuthbert.... Miss August 1998 Angela Little (pictured left) was spotted cheering on competitors in a pie-eating contest at the DVD launch for *American Pie Presents Band Camp*, in which she plays camp counselor Sherri.... In last month's *Playmate News* we wrote about Miss April 1966 Karla Conway Sachi's art. Inquiries can be made through her website, sachiart.com.



Picture-perfect Scarlett Keegan gets Exposed.




Angela says, "Stuff your piehole."

## MORE PLAYMATES

See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at [cyber.playboy.com](http://cyber.playboy.com), or download her to your phone at [playboymobile.com](http://playboymobile.com).



A woman with dark hair is leaning against a brick wall. She is wearing a black, form-fitting, mesh dress. Her right arm is raised, and her hand is near her head. The scene is dramatically lit, with strong, parallel shadows from an unseen object (likely blinds) cast across her face, body, and the wall. The overall mood is sensual and mysterious.

# NOT SHY?

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## In a Sentimental Mood

**A.** Relive PLAYBOY's first 50 years with this sweeping retrospective of the groundbreaking magazine that grew from Hugh Hefner's pet project into a cultural icon recognized all over the world. As you thumb through this handsome updated and expanded version of the *Playboy 40 Years* book, you'll visit the Playboy Mansion, canoodle with Hef's delectable Bunnies, tour the DC-9 *Big Bunny* jet, experience the sizzling atmosphere of the Playboy Clubs, and—of course—admire every Playmate of the Month since the first issue (all 600 of them!). Featuring an introduction by Hugh Hefner. Hardcover. 9" x 12". 480 pages. 10375 Playboy—50 Years \$50

**B.** Beginning with Marilyn Monroe and including more recent legends like Pamela Anderson and Anna Nicole Smith, this history of PLAYBOY Centerfolds profiles every Playmate from the 1950s through the newest beauties of the new millennium. Includes fantastic nude photos as well as updated personal information about their lives—just enough to spark your memory or pique your interest to see more. Hardcover. 9" x 12". 464 pages. 10376 The Playmate Book: 50 Years \$50

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# Playboy On The Scene

WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN



## When Designers Attack

Welcome to the weirdest high-end hotel you've ever seen. May we take your bags?

Is it a hotel? A sculpture? The cacophony of the world's top designers vying for your attention? Actually, it's all of the above. Madrid's Hotel Puerta América is a bizarre, ultra-chic hotel that began with a grandiose idea: Gather the biggest-name architects and designers in the world, load them up with cash and order them to turn their wildest fantasies into reality. In the end, the 19-member team, headed by French architect Jean Nouvel, had its way with the 12 floors and all 342 rooms. British architect Norman Foster took a floor. So did Iraqi-born modernist Zaha Hadid, the first woman to win the Pritzker Architecture Prize. Her

white rooms, with nary a right angle to speak of, will make you feel as if you're sleeping in a glass of milk. Some of the funkier bits include Australian Marc Newson's sixth-floor hallways with red lacquered wood so shiny it resembles mirrors and Scottish-born Kathryn Findlay's sci-fi, all-white eighth-floor lobby (pictured). Frenchman Christian Liaigre, who did New York's Mercer hotel, designed the restaurant, called Black Tears. Some \$90 million later, the hotel is ready for business. The rates, you ask? Between \$250 and \$1,800 a night. Or you can just show up, sneak into the elevator and commence wandering for free.



## Rocky Road

It's a long way to the top...especially on a bus

For 16 years Dane Cook has been steadily building a cult following on the underground comedy circuit with observational gems like "My dad bought us a Slip'n Slide. They should have called this ride Slip'n Bleed From the Anus." He approaches comedy, he says, like a musician. "When I started out, I thought, How cool would it be to have a fan base of diehards?" All went according to plan until recently, when Cook's reputation began to take on entirely different, larger proportions: HBO handed him a live stand-up special and bought his self-produced nine-part documentary, *Tourgasm*, which premieres this month. The project follows Cook and comic buddies Gary Gulman, Robert Kelly and Jay Davis on a rollicking and frequently raw tour on the college circuit. "We rented a beautiful tour bus, but after a few days it was our traveling prison," Cook says. We're guessing next time he'll spring for the Gulfstream, or at least his own bus, Madden style.



# Grapevine

## Studies in Scarlett

Pardon this foray into *Us Weekly*, *People* and *In Touch Weekly* territory, but here's the scoop: In Hollywood, cleavage is *hot, hot, hot!* Leading the charge is SCARLETT JOHANSSON, whom we commend for flaunting her prodigious talents at every movie premiere and awards show she attends. Somewhere up there Jayne Mansfield is looking down and smiling.



KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES



DAVID M. BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES



DAVID LIVINGSTON/GETTY IMAGES

## Holy Torino

It's our understanding that ice dancing is like figure skating, only worse. But lovely Russian bladestress OKSANA DOMNINA will draw many new fans to the sport with this trick costume.



AP PHOTO/KEVIN MAZUR



JAMIE MCELROY/GETTY IMAGES

## Tune in, Tokyo

Now-defunct girl group Mis-Teeq never quite made it out of the U.K., but lead singer ALESHA DIXON is plotting world domination as a solo artist. We wouldn't bet against these lungs.



## Exhibit A

The website Bodyinmind.com is "dedicated to fighting for beauty," by which it means that gorgeous naked ladies such as mainstay MARIA are a boon to society. Hear, hear.



## Get an Eyeful of This, Evildoer!

In the *X-Men* movies HALLE BERRY plays Storm, a mutant who thwarts bad guys with weather. In *Catwoman* she fights like a feline. Here she rehearses for her next hero flick, in which she stops foes cold with fantastic natural breasts. It's based on a true story.



## Peter Griffin Fans, This Caption's for You

As France is to cabernet, as Belgium is to lace, as Afghanistan is to opium, so is the Czech Republic to underwear models. The long line of Victoria's Secret panty stuffers includes Pestova, Herzigova, Kurkova and this one, PETRA NEMCOVA. As Peter Griffin, TV's *Family Guy*, would so eloquently put it, "Look at that side boob."



# Potpourri



## CUBA LIBRE

Before the revolution Cuba was a cross between Vegas and St. Barts, famous for gambling, beaches, cigars, women and a baseball league full of wickedly good players. Those days ended, however, when a onetime aspiring pitcher turned guerrilla, halting the gambling and leaving us with only glimpses of the rest.

Ebbets Field Flannels recalls the island paradise with Cuban-league baseball T-shirts (\$24, ebbets.com) representing the Cienfuegos Elefantes, Marianao Tigres, Almendares Alacranes and the Habana Leones (pictured). The pin-up images are replicas of team posters by Andres Garcia, the Cuban Vargas, and include such fightin' words as "The red bat may be late, but it arrives." *Tu madre.*

## HAIRY SITUATION

Paul Mitchell's Tea Tree line of hair-care products is fantastic for several reasons: (1) Tea tree oil is a natural astringent, antifungal and antiseptic, so it's good for your scalp. (2) Harvesting tea tree is environmentally friendly because the plant is self-renewing; it literally grows like a weed. (3) Paul Mitchell co-founder John Paul DeJoria is the husband of Miss April 1988 Eloise Broady, which means he has great taste and kicks ass.



## STAR POWER

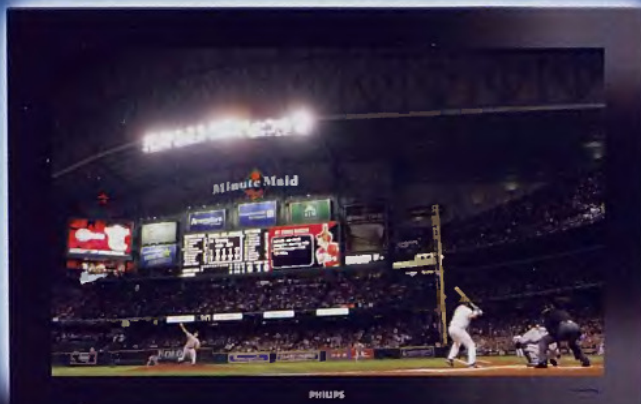
A long time ago in a galaxy uncannily like our own, a man named George Lucas made a cute little movie about a whiny teen, an old man, a ballbusting princess, a space pirate and a giant fuzz ball. He called it *Star Wars*, and after a few people saw the movie, it disappeared from theaters. But did you know that several sequels and prequels were made as well? It's true! And what's more, you can buy merchandise! *Star Wars Chronicles: The Prequels* (\$150, chroniclebooks.com) is a treasury of fanboy info about episodes one through three, featuring a wealth of arcana on droids and Jedi. You know, this Lucas guy may just make it big one day.

## WHATEVER ALES YOU

Big news for ale fans: Vermont-based Magic Hat's new India pale ale, HI.P.A., balances an enormous hops flavor with a vaguely fruity finish. The company's lighter Circus Boy is an American Hefeweizen. The slightly sweet Chainsaw Ale from Left Hand Brewing Company packs a nine percent wallop. All are available in stores nationwide.





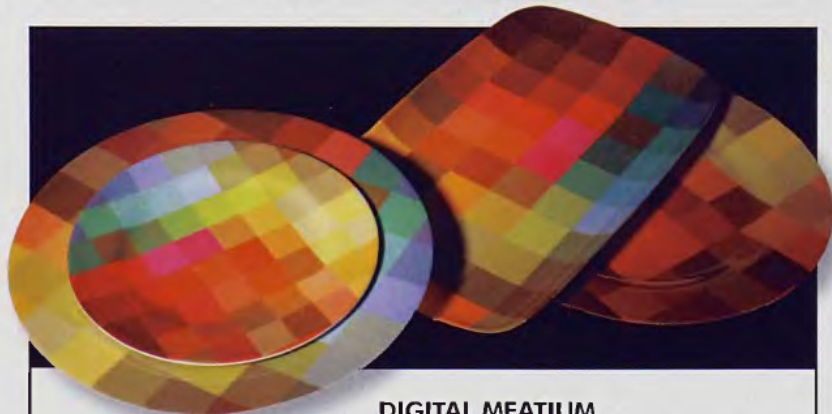
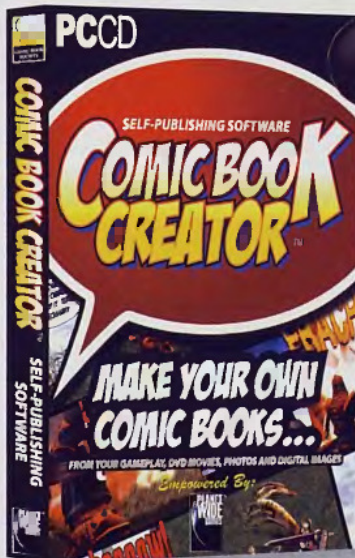


### SPECIAL EFFECT

Backlighting a TV helps your eyes handle contrast better, but Philips's original backlit Ambilight TV was boring, and Ambilight 2 was only marginally better. Philips should have just started with the Ambilight Surround (\$3,000 and up, [philips.com](http://philips.com)). The lighting around the TV changes color to match the edges of the image on the screen, pleasingly extending your viewing experience onto your walls.

### COMIC RELIEF

Deep down, all men are superheroes. Tragically, however, not all of us have our own comic book that recounts our exploits. Comic Book Creator (\$20, [planetwidgames.com](http://planetwidgames.com)) lets you make a graphic novel out of your vacation photos (or anything else). A cinch to master, the program comes with hundreds of panel-layout templates. Drag and drop your photos, add some speech and thought bubbles, toss in some titles and your last trip to the convenience store becomes an Adventure! Beyond! The Slusheeee!!!



### DIGITAL MEATUM

We like these plates because they're perfect for a poolside barbecue. More substantial than limp paper or fly-away plastic, French Bull's Digital plates (\$39 for a set of four, \$18 for a serving platter; [elsewares.com](http://elsewares.com)) are made of sturdy melamine, so they won't shatter if dropped. Why are they pixelated, you ask? They're postmodern statements about hamburgerdom in an electronic age. Make ours rare.

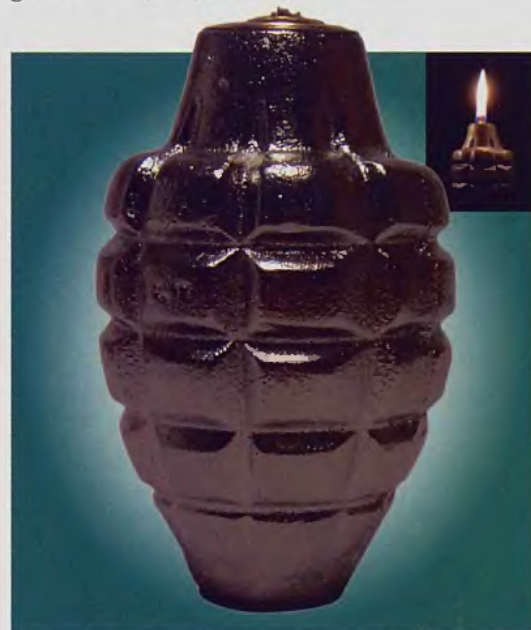
### BARBERSHOP SEPTET

The safety razor was a bona fide men's grooming innovation, as was the double-blade cartridge. But now that we're up to, what, five blades, maybe it's time to get back to fundamentals. Nashville KnifeShop's seven-piece straight-razor set (\$400, [nashvilleknifeshop.com](http://nashvilleknifeshop.com)) has a Dovo razor, strop and dressing; a Mühle-Pinsel badger-hair shaving brush, chrome-plated stand and porcelain shaving mug; and a Norton sharpening stone. It may be just the thing to halt the blade-proliferation madness.



### AN OLD FLAME

Piet Houtenbos's hand-grenade oil lamp ([piethoutenbos.com](http://piethoutenbos.com)) follows the tradition of ready-mades and found art. Basically he takes a surplus training grenade, stuffs a wick in the cavity and fills it with paraffin oil. Voilà, a functional sculpture that will at once bemuse designheads, set the mood for love and get you tossed off an airplane. The lamps are available in silver finish (\$60), gold finish (\$60) and natural (\$40).

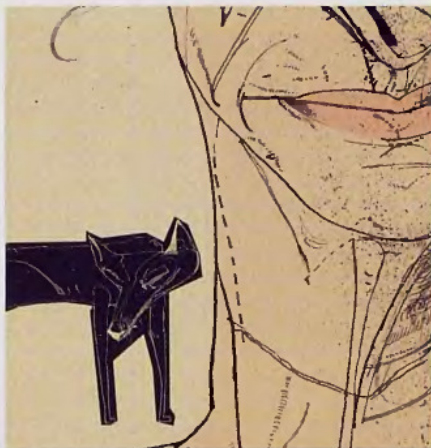




# Next Month



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**VIDA GUERRA**—YOU'LL LIKE IT WHEN SHE'S HERE, BUT YOU'LL LOVE IT WHEN SHE WALKS AWAY. SHE CLAIMS TITLE TO THE WORLD'S GREATEST ASS. WELL, YOU BE THE JUDGE. THE QUEEN OF GUERRA FIRMA HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN LIKE THIS.

**JERRY BRUCKHEIMER**—DESPITE HAVING AN UNPRECEDENTED 10 SHOWS ON THE AIR THIS PAST SEASON AND RANKING AS ONE OF THE HIGHEST-GROSSING PRODUCERS IN HOLLYWOOD HISTORY, HE HAS SHUNNED THE SPOTLIGHT. AT LAST THE PRODUCER NONPAREIL OPENS UP TO **STEPHEN REBELLO** IN AN ILLUMINATING *PLAYBOY* INTERVIEW.

**MY LOVE MACHINE**—ANTIMAGICIAN, DOCUMENTARY FILM-MAKER, CO-HOST OF *BULLSHIT!* AND NOW A PATENT-HOLDING INVENTOR, **PENN JILLETTE** WRITES ABOUT DREAMING UP A DEVICE THAT MAKES WOMEN ORGASM WITHIN SECONDS.

**THE BAD NEWS**—A WOMAN FEELS THAT THE MODERN WORLD IS SO MENACING, IT PAINS HER EVEN TO TAKE IN THE MORNING NEWS. BUT A GLIMPSE AT LIFE IN ANOTHER CENTURY SHOWS IT HAS EVER BEEN THUS. FICTION BY **MARGARET ATWOOD**

**THE NEW HUMAN**—ADVANCES IN GENETICS, ROBOTICS AND NANOTECHNOLOGY HAVE SOME SCIENTISTS BELIEVING THAT THE FIRST IMMORTAL HUMAN MAY ALREADY BE AMONG US. **JOEL**

**GARREAU**, AUTHOR OF *RADICAL EVOLUTION*, DETAILS OUR BRAVE NEW WORLD. PLUS: **MARY MIDGLEY**, **MARGARET ATWOOD** AND **RAY KURZWEIL** ON WHAT IT WILL MEAN TO BE HUMAN.

**DANA WHITE**—THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP IMPRESARIO CLAIMS THAT JOHN MCCAIN SAVED HIS SPORT AND THAT JOE ROGAN CAN KICK YOUR ASS. *20Q* BY **JASON BUHRMESTER**

**GO SIDEWAYS OR GO HOME**—THE LATEST JAPANESE AUTO IMPORT IS A SPORT CALLED DRIFTING. THINK OF IT AS CONTROLLED FISHTAILING AT 100 MPH. **CRAIG VETTER** STRAPS HIMSELF INTO THE PASSENGER SEAT FOR A U.S.-VS.-JAPAN EVENT AND BREATHES IN ENOUGH BURNED RUBBER TO CLOG HIS LUNGS.

**BEACH FASHION**—WITH HELP FROM *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* SWIMSUIT SIREN MICHELLE LOMBARDO, WE DISPLAY SHORE WEAR THAT WILL SURELY HAVE YOU SWIMMIN' IN WOMEN.

**WORLD CUP WOMEN**—AS THE MOST TALENTED STRIKERS IN THE WORLD KICKED THEIR WAY TO GERMANY, OUR INTERNATIONAL EDITIONS SENT THEIR MOST STRIKING TALENT FOR A SHOOT-OUT AT THE MANSION.

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