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GALA
CHRISTMAS
ISSUE

BOOGIE NIGHTS!
JOANNA
KRUPA

WORLD
EXCLUSIVE
VLADIMIR
NABOKOV
THE
ORIGINAL
OF LAURA

DANCES WITH
THE STARS

R. CRUMB
SLAYS THE BOOK
OF GENESIS

GORE
VIDAL
BROTHERS
IN ARMS

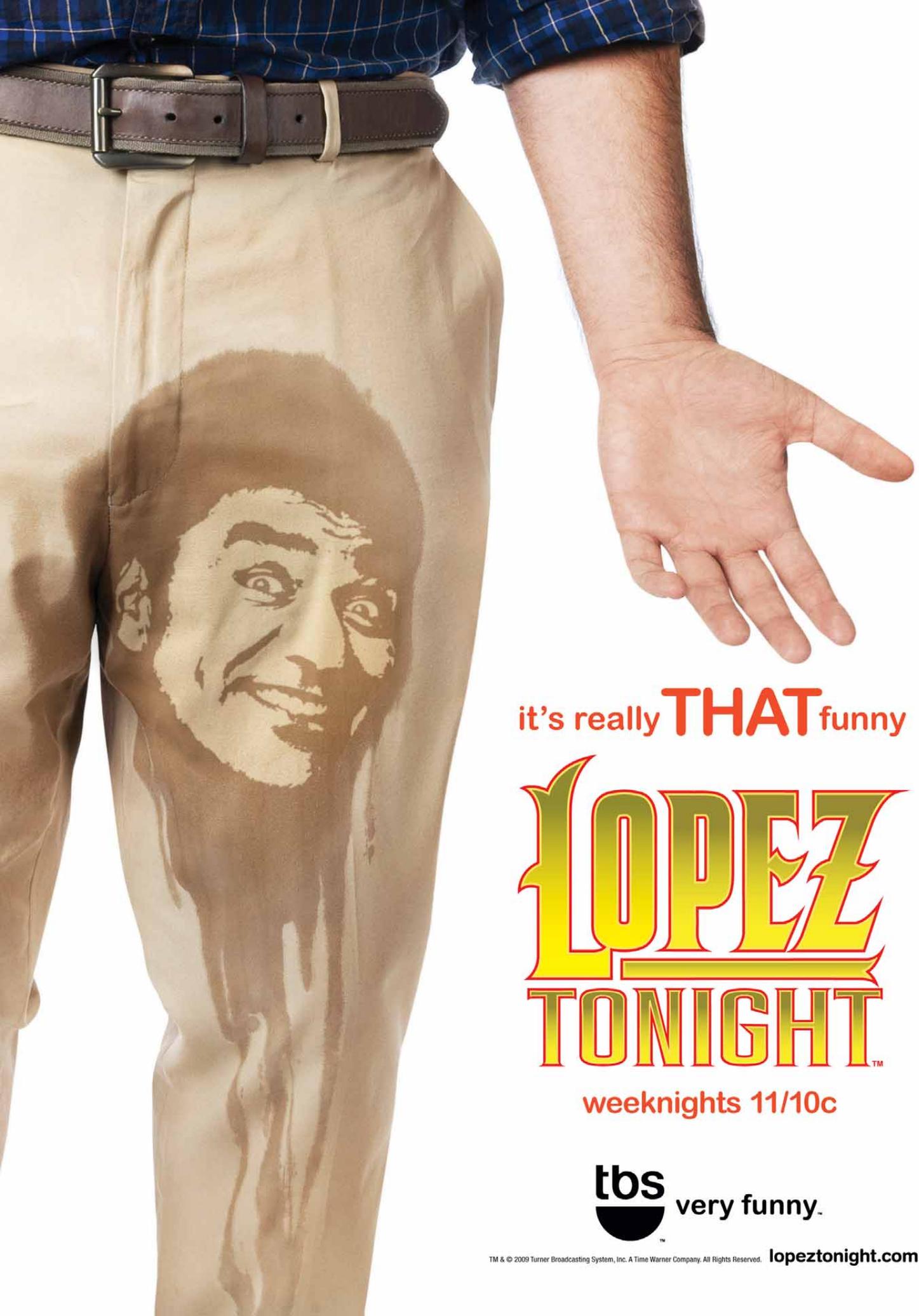
GLENN
BECK
TAKEDOWN BY
THOMAS
FRANK

SASHA
GREY
UNLEASHES
HER INNER
LOLITA

THE
INTERVIEW **JAMES**
CAMERON

HO! HO! HO!
CHELSEA
HANDLER
SCREWS UP A
XMAS PARTY





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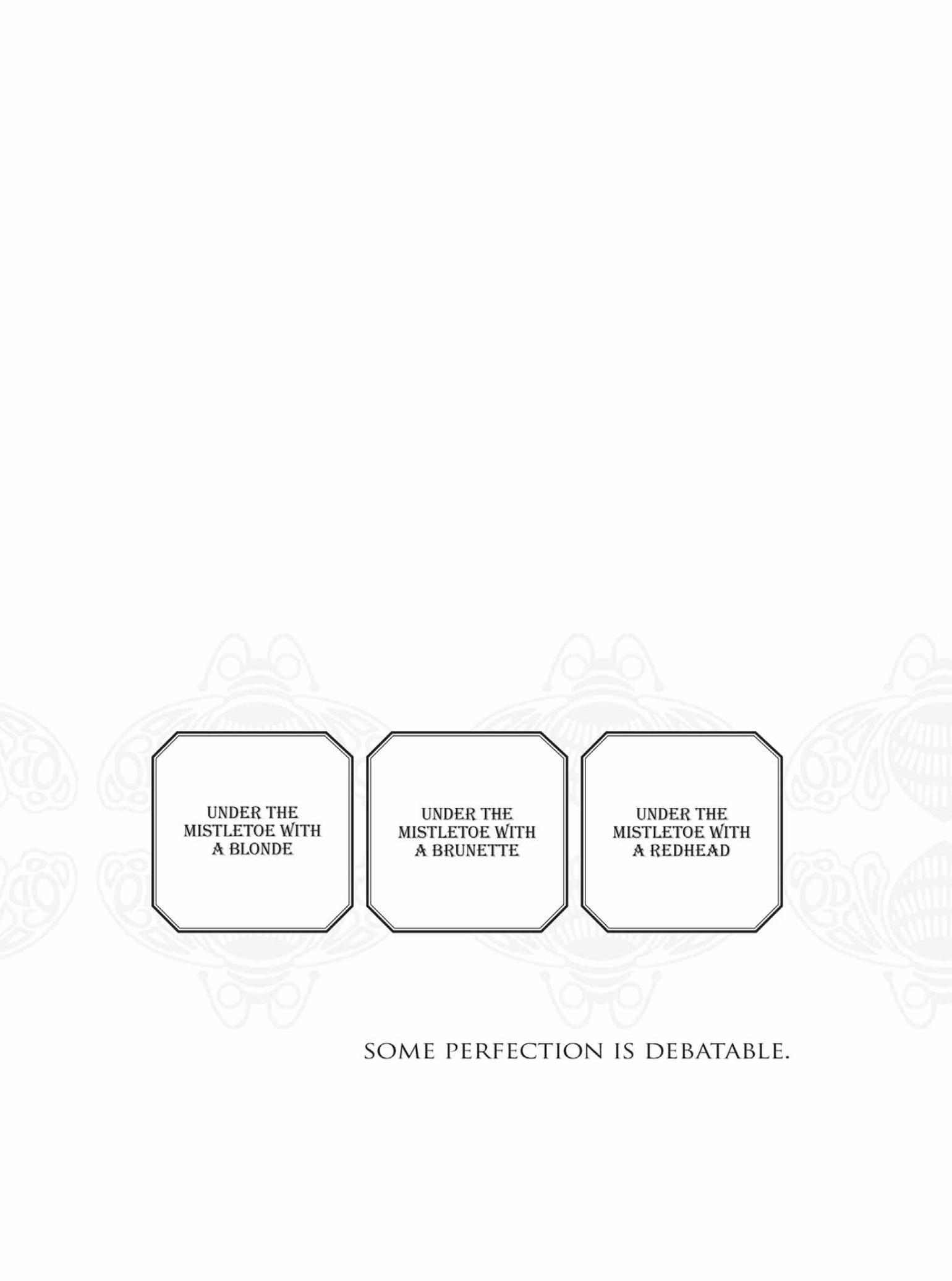
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JACKSON
IS READY TO
RUMBLE

GLENN
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FRANK





UNDER THE
MISTLETOE WITH
A BLONDE

UNDER THE
MISTLETOE WITH
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UNDER THE
MISTLETOE WITH
A REDHEAD

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Electrifying Safe Sex

Once again December is here and you're holding our gala holiday issue. Fittingly, we've included a chunk of the Bible. By that we mean **R. Crumb's** profound and juicy version from his new *Book of Genesis Illustrated*. The world's most endearingly perverted storyteller takes on the greatest story ever told. Speaking of religiously fueled rabble-rousers, in *The Triumph of the Conservative Underground*, *Wall Street Journal* columnist **Thomas Frank** takes a Menckenesque look at Glenn Beck, the man at the vanguard of the powerful and paranoid conservative outrage that began to bubble up last summer. You'll also find *Dust in the Wind*, a meditation by **Paulo Coelho** (author of *The Alchemist*, one of the best-selling novels of all time) on the strange peregrinations books make over the course of their lives. When **Vladimir Nabokov** died in 1977, the perfectionist literary giant ordered his unfinished work destroyed. His wife and son didn't have the heart to burn his final manuscript, so it sat in a Swiss bank vault. Until now. *The Original of Laura*—an excerpt from his newly published novel—finds Nabokov in fine form. As a companion piece, the crossover movie actor **Sasha Grey** poses as Lolita, with commentary by **Roger Ebert** on the controversial Stanley Kubrick adaptation of Nabokov's most famous work. Also in this issue: Master erotic photographer **Rankin** screams with a libertine's abandon in a pictorial excerpt from his new book, *Rankin's Cheeky* (which has an introduction by Hugh M. Hefner). Speaking of movies, what do you get the director who has everything? *A Playboy Interview*. **Stephen**

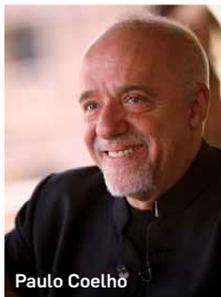
Rebello gets the goods from **James Cameron** on the astonishing *Avatar*, his upcoming CGI epic. Similarly jaw-dropping is *Dope*, **T.J. English's** investigation of rock-star undercover DEA agent Lee Lucas, who fell from grace when the rampant damage he inflicted on the innocent came to light. From the drug war we turn to actual war, with *Brothers in Arms*, **Gore Vidal's** reminiscence of his stepbrother Brigadier General Robin Olds, a bona fide Air Force legend and World War II ace. How he and the antiwar Vidal ended up in the same family (not to mention on friendly terms) is a study in tolerance, respect and intellect. Then we offer you the amazing **Joanna Krupa**—the *Dancing With the Stars* phenom and world-class model poses without a bikini. As a final antidote to the holidays, spend a little time with **Chelsea Handler** (seen here with photographer **Matthias Clamer**) and her advice on why you should stuff your turkey with Vicodin. *L'chaim!*



R. Crumb

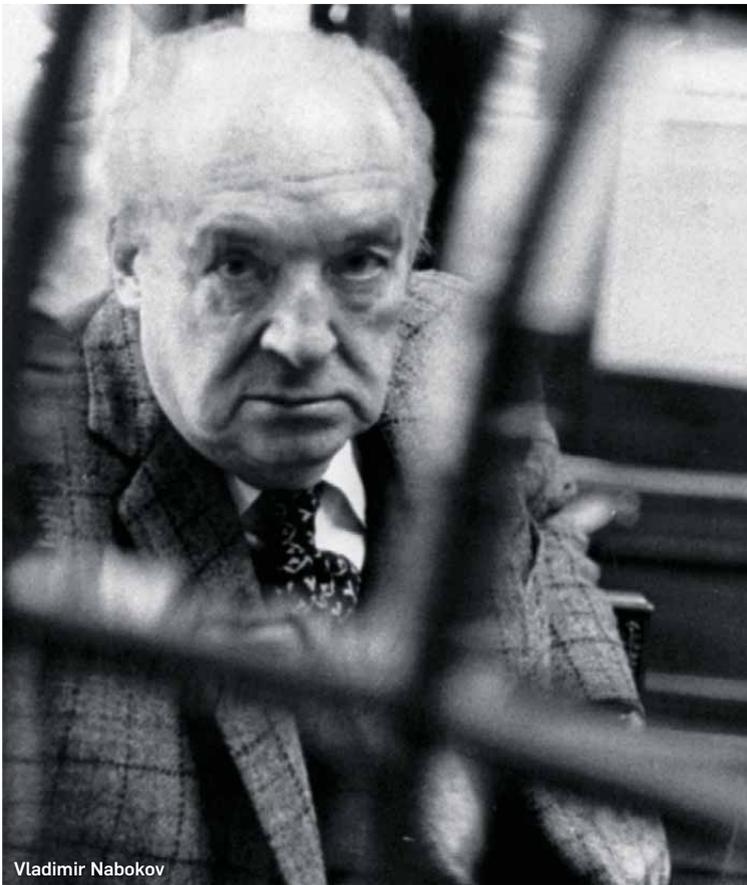


Thomas Frank



Paulo Coelho

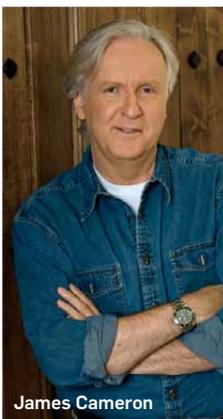
PLAYBILL



Vladimir Nabokov



Chelsea Handler and Matthias Clamer



James Cameron



T.J. English



Gore Vidal



Rankin and Joanna Krupa

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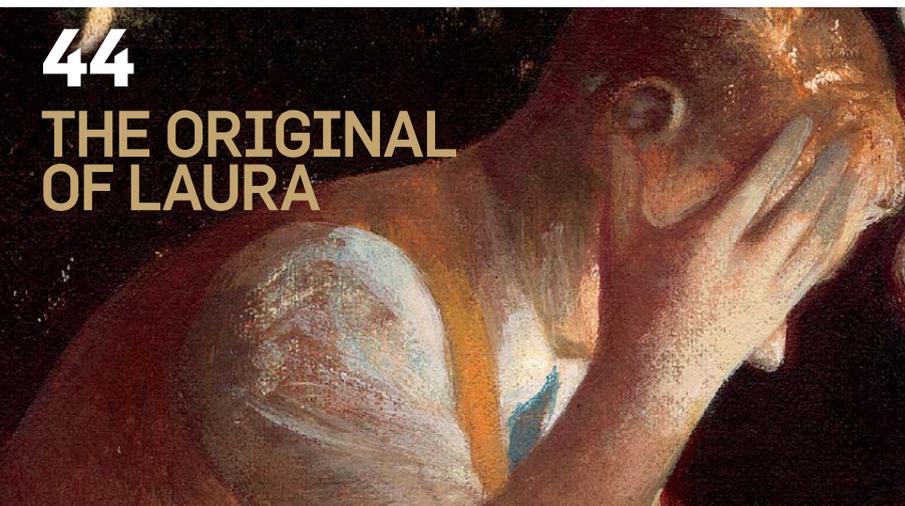
PLAYBOY

CONTENTS



44

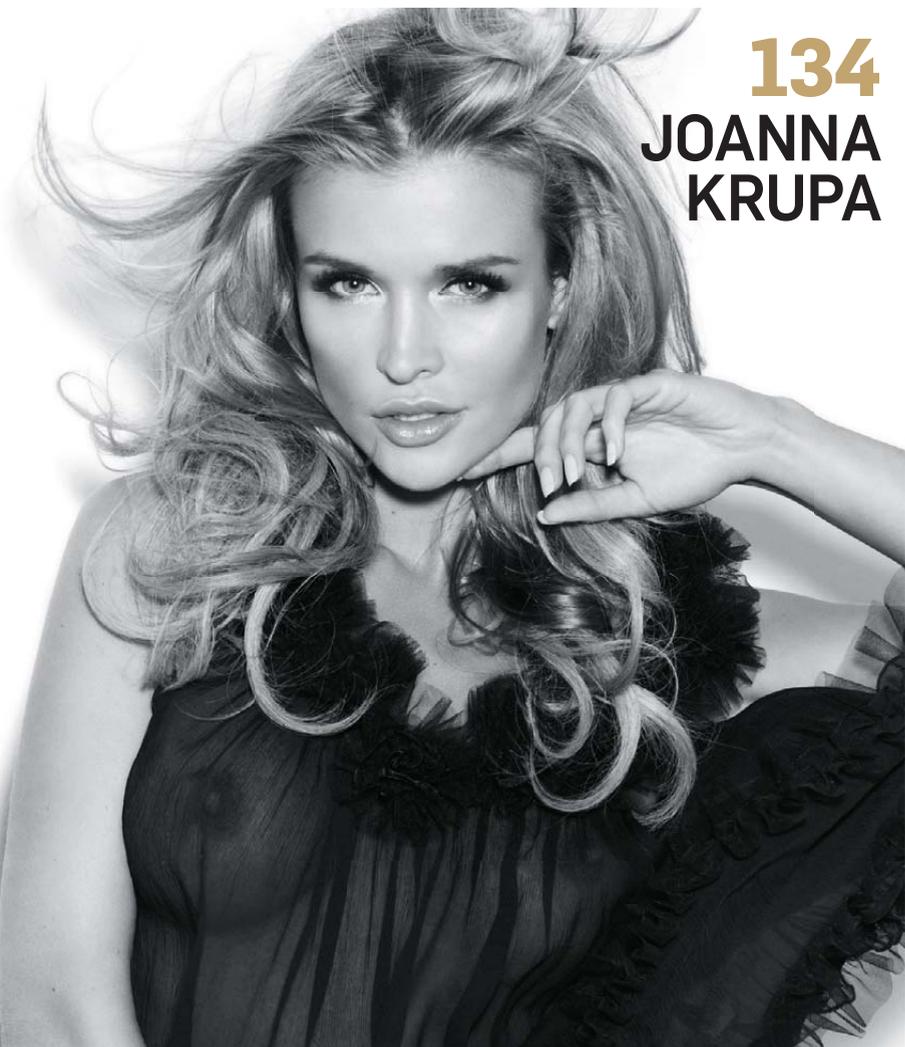
THE ORIGINAL OF LAURA



It has been called the holy grail of higher lit. The last written words by **VLADIMIR NABOKOV** sat in a Swiss vault for 32 years while his son wavered between burning the work and publishing it. Here, before the novel hits bookstores, we offer an exclusive excerpt.

134

JOANNA KRUPA



FEATURES

58 BROTHERS IN ARMS

GORE VIDAL remembers his hero, his stepbrother.

62 CHELSEA HANDLER'S GUIDE TO THE HOLIDAYS

Our favorite comic on hosting a good yule time.

66 DOPE

T.J. ENGLISH discovers that one DEA agent's smoke and mirrors put scores of innocent people in jail.

71 PLAYBOY'S 2009 MUSIC POLL

Cast a vote for your favorite music.

82 TIP-OFF '10

DAVID KAPLAN and **ROCKY RAKOVIC** provide full-court coverage of the NCAA basketball season.

98 NO RESERVATIONS

The tasty digs of Chicago restaurateur Jerry Kleiner. A Playboy Pad by **STEVE GARBARINO**.

102 DUST IN THE WIND

If you love a book, let it go, says **PAULO COELHO**, whose *The Alchemist* has sold 65 million copies.

110 THE TRIUMPH OF THE CONSERVATIVE UNDERGROUND

THOMAS FRANK notes that the ultra-right wing is back—and its leader is Glenn Beck.

118 THE BOOK OF GENESIS

An illustrated cartoon from the Bible of **R. CRUMB**.

124 THE GREAT SOUTH FLORIDA PYTHON SCARE

Writer **PAT JORDAN** tracks snakes on a glade.

130 PLAYBOY GIFT GUIDE

Cool toys for older boys by **SCOTT ALEXANDER**.

INTERVIEW

39 JAMES CAMERON

The big-money director of *Avatar* and *Titanic* raps with **STEPHEN REBELLO**.

20Q

128 QUINTON "RAMPAGE" JACKSON

JASON BUHRMESTER goes 20 scary rounds with the volatile MMA champ and actor.



COVER STORY

You've known about Joanna Krupa for a few years, but many didn't meet her until *Dancing With the Stars*. After receiving mail from her devotees (old and new), and with her dancing nude through our minds all season, we brought her back. Photographer Rankin captured Joanna on center stage; our Rabbit is also in the spotlight.

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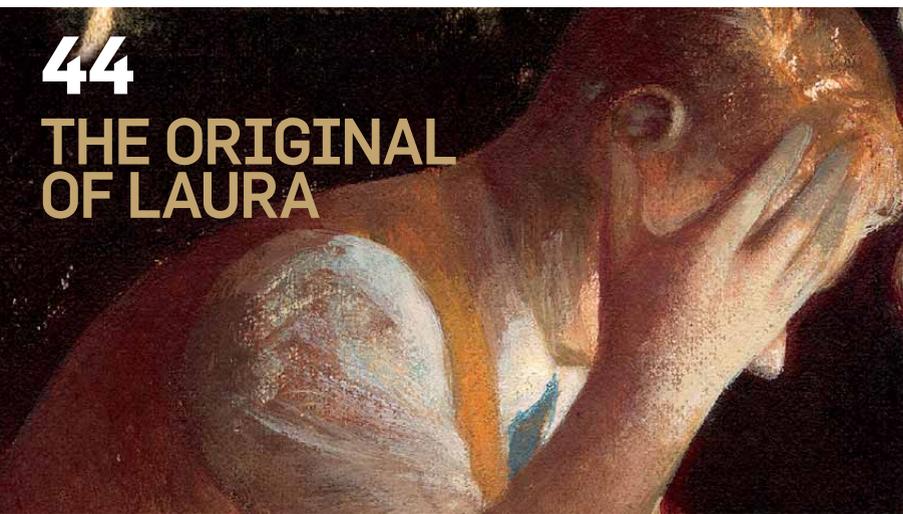
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PLAYBOY

CONTENTS

44

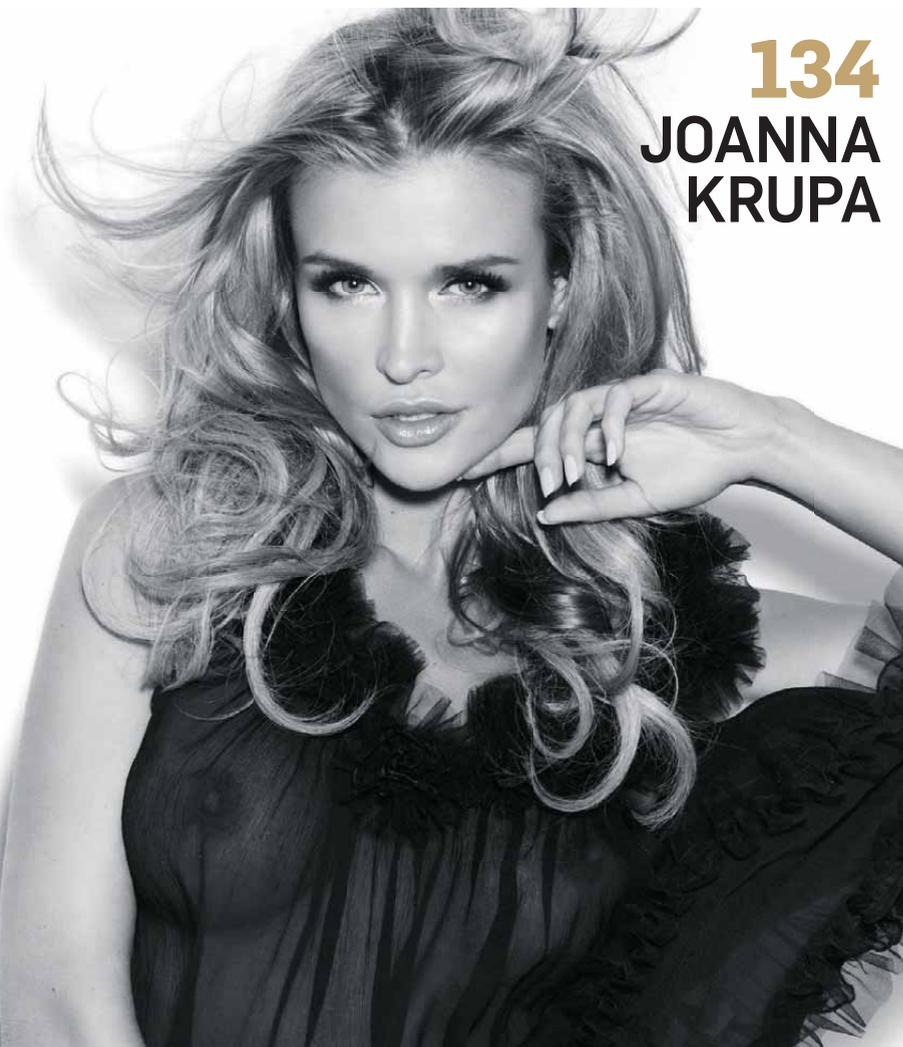
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JASON BUHRMESTER goes 20 scary rounds with the volatile MMA champ and actor.



COVER STORY

Move over Martha Stewart—Chelsea Handler knows how to throw a holiday bash. The *E!* host eschews the Christmas goose for Grey Goose in her *Guide to the Holidays*. Photographer Matthias Clamer caught Santa's helper trying to pull Chelsea into a reindeer game (spin the vodka bottle?) while our Rabbit enjoys the view.



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★★★★★
**5-STAR RATING
FRONT-IMPACT
CRASH SAFETY**

PLAYBOY

CONTENTS

PICTORIALS

50 LOLITA

ROGER EBERT tells us about the film they said could never be made. And we recast **SASHA GREY** as you know who.



76 SEX IN CINEMA

Jennifer's (Megan Fox's) *Body* and other hot scenes from the big screen.

86 CRYSTAL HARRIS

Hef's playmate is the Centerfold.

104 CHEEKY

Select shots by the randy **RANKIN**.

123 HOW TO UNDRRESS FOR YOUR MAN

Last-minute gift idea, ladies: Take off your packaging—slowly.

134 JOANNA

The showstopping Miss **KRUPA** gives you a private dance.

86 PLAYMATE CRYSTAL HARRIS



THE PLAYBOY FORUM

169 THE CONFIDENCE MAN

After the recession we won't get fooled again, right? Don't be too sure, explains **JACKSON LEARS**. We have blindly been giving away our money to financial hucksters long before and after 1929. It's the sorry downside of the American dream.

THIS MONTH ON PLAYBOY.COM

NABOKOV'S LEGACY Read more of the literary lion's works for *PLAYBOY* in our online archives.

PLAYBOY FITNESS Our girls keep your blood pumping with nude yoga and massage videos—it's good for you.

PLAYBOY U Join the party, read the latest news in sex on campus or play our coed Strip-Tac-Toe game.

THE A-LIST Forget the chain cutters—you're a man: Check out our list of the country's best barbershops.

UNCOVERED More bands pay homage to musicians who inspired them.

NICE TWEETS Get the day's best by following us at twitter.com/playboy.

NEWS AND NOTES

11 WORLD OF PLAYBOY

Hef and 11 Playmates shoot *Guitar Hero 5* commercials with superdirector Brett Ratner; for the premiere of *Hugh Hefner: Playboy, Activist and Rebel*, the Man and his girlfriends travel to the Toronto International Film Festival; the good times keep rolling during the Mansion's 1970s roller-skating party.

12 DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

Midsummer Night's Dream is the hottest pajama party on the planet. See stars like Shannon Elizabeth, Shaquille O'Neal and our girls in their sleepwear.

166 PLAYMATE NEWS

DeDe Lind gets flown to the moon and back; Pam Anderson debuts her fragrances; Jennifer Walcott and her fiancé on *E!'s THS: Football Wives*.

DEPARTMENTS

3 PLAYBILL

13 DEAR PLAYBOY

17 AFTER HOURS

20 REVIEWS

31 MANTRACK

35 PLAYBOY ADVISOR

96 PARTY JOKES

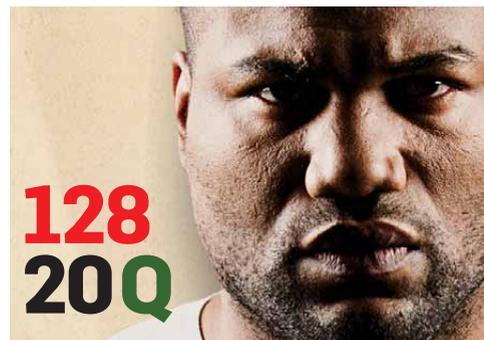
174 GRAPEVINE

FASHION

114

"SUIT UP!"

NEIL PATRICK HARRIS and the bros from *How I Met Your Mother* give our fashion editor **JENNIFER RYAN JONES** a single-breasted high five.



128 20Q

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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

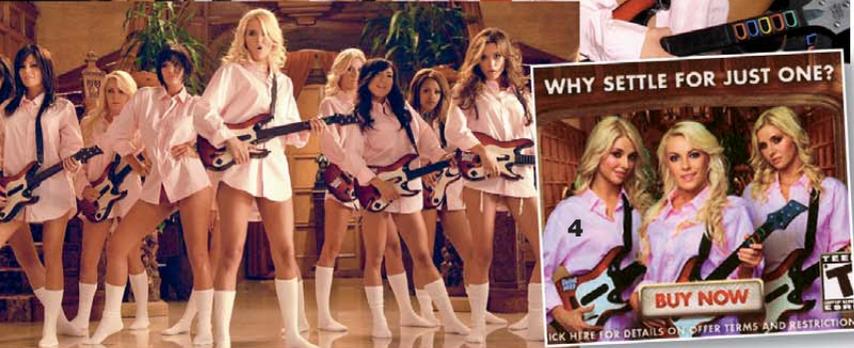
GUITAR HERO AT THE MANSION

Hef and his merry band of Centerfolds filmed commercials for *Guitar Hero 5*. In the spots, directed by Brett Ratner, 11 Playmates parody Tom Cruise in *Risky Business* by playing *Guitar Hero* axes to "Old Time Rock and Roll." Hef delivers the kicker, selling the fifth version of the game by saying, "I like variety."



HUGH HEFNER: PLAYBOY, ACTIVIST AND REBEL

Hef and his girlfriends went to the Toronto International Film Festival's premiere of *Hugh Hefner: Playboy, Activist and Rebel*, directed by Oscar winner Brigitte Berman. "The film is concerned with another side of me," Hef says, "that most people don't know."



LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL

The Mansion grounds turned into a roller disco one fabulous summer Sunday. Here's Hef with heaven on wheels—topless roller girls. The 1970s are back: Hef's former girlfriend Barbi Benton visits with her daughter Ariana. Current girlfriends Karissa and Kristina Shannon, Crystal Harris and Melissa Taylor cool off with snow cones.

Family Guy's Seth Green and his girlfriend, Clare Grant, take a turn on the tennis court. PMOY 2009 Ida Ljungqvist demonstrates a fun way to cool off without a snow cone.



**DREAM A
LITTLE DREAM**



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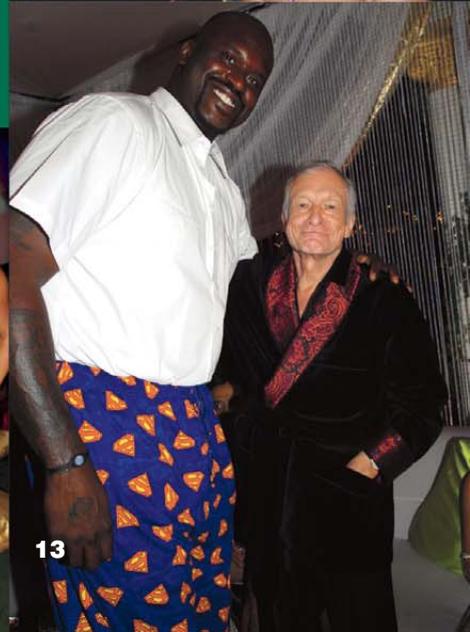
Do you know which night is the hottest of the summer every year? Whichever one Hef chooses to throw his Midsummer Night's Dream Party. (1) Here Hef is in his pajama party getup (also his work attire) with his three Grecian goddesses: Miss July 2009 Karissa Shannon, Miss August 2009 Kristina Shannon and Miss December 2009 Crystal Harris. (2) *ER*'s Shane West with two heart-stoppers. (3) Bill Maher and Hef. (4) Craig Robinson from *The Office* and *Miss March* with Cyber Girl of the Year 2009 Sharae Spears. (5) Jon Voight channels the Man amid a bevy of Painted Ladies. (6) Shannon Elizabeth and *Dancing With the Stars*' Derek Hough. (7) Academy Award winners Three 6 Mafia perform. (8) Hef and Bridget Marquardt. (9) Director Brett Ratner with Hef and Crystal. (10) Miss September 2004 Scarlett Keegan, Jack Osbourne and actress Jenny Dixon. (11) Adam Archuleta with fiancée Miss August 2001 Jennifer Walcott. (12) Miss November 2004 Cara Zavaleta in nipple tassels with PMOY 2007 Sara Jean Underwood. (13) Shaquille O'Neal wearing the biggest pair of Superman pajama pants we've ever seen.



8



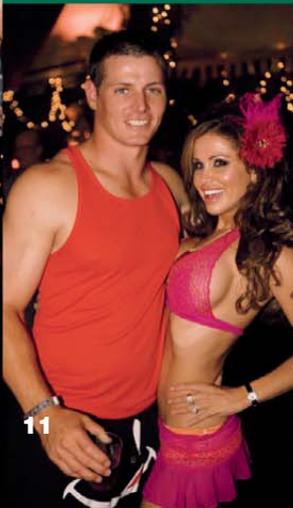
9



13



10



11



12

WHO BENEFITS FROM PIRACY?

Shashank Bengali's brilliantly reported *Pirates of Somalia* (October) makes it clear economic desperation drives most of those who take up the illegal pirate trade. The U.S. response, however, has been an increasingly military one, which does nothing about the core problem of relentless poverty. In September pirates fired on a U.S. surveillance helicopter, the first attack of its kind, according to the Navy. The helicopter wasn't hit that time, but what happens when one is? My fear is that a pirate strike will be used to justify a full-scale intervention whose real agenda will be to prop up Somalia's weak, Western-supported government and hunt down Al Qaeda supporters. By lumping piracy, the Al Shabaab insurgency and Al Qaeda into a single threat and applying the same policy—guns and more guns—the Obama administration is making the same mistakes as its predecessor. I hope Bengali's article helps halt what appears to be an inexorable slide into another disaster to add to those of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Karen Rothmyer
Nairobi, Kenya

Rothmyer, a former editor at The Nation, teaches at the University of Nairobi.

Bengali captures the mixture of desperation and ruthlessness that characterizes Somali pirates. Although Farah Ismail Eid doesn't fit anyone's idea of a role model, his story shows the level of privation these men can tolerate and the risks they are prepared to take. We shouldn't underestimate these people, but neither should we feel sorry for them. Somalis don't do weakness. They don't expect pity and don't extend it in return. A part of the story Bengali alludes to but cannot tell because it remains shrouded in mystery is where the money came from to turn piracy into an industry. Some of those who reap the largest rewards almost certainly now live outside Somalia: in the Nairobi suburb of Eastleigh, in the Gulf states (Dubai in particular) and in expatriate communities in Europe and North America. But the largest shares have probably always gone to politicians in Puntland.

Martin Murphy
Washington, D.C.

Murphy is author of Small Boats, Weak States, Dirty Money: Piracy and Maritime Terrorism in the Modern World.

THE RENAISSANCE RAIDERS

Kevin Cook does a great job in *Bad to the Bone* (October) of capturing the zaniness, intensity, controversy and excitement that was the Oakland Raiders of yesteryear. The "Raidahs" of the 1970s left a social legacy many overlook. When owner Al Davis was the AFL commissioner, the league recruited African American players while the rival NFL was reluctant to integrate. The Raiders were the first modern NFL team to hire an African

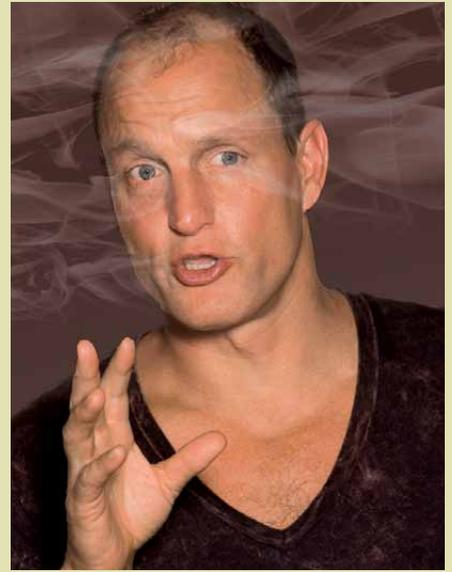
DEAR PLAYBOY

Living the High Life

Woody Harrelson's honesty about his use of marijuana is refreshing (*Playboy Interview*, October). Had he been imbibing alcohol rather than cannabis during the interview [at right] it is unlikely anyone would have batted an eye, yet our laws and culture arbitrarily embrace the former while condemning the latter. Last year 847,863 Americans were arrested for marijuana offenses. It is illogical and irrational to continue to waste taxpayer resources to punish people who, like Harrelson, relax with weed.

Paul Armentano
Washington, D.C.

Armentano, deputy director of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, is a co-author of Marijuana Is Safer: So Why Are We Driving People to Drink?



American head coach (Art Shell), a Latino head coach (Tom Flores) and a female CEO (Amy Trask). Raider Nation is also a haven for outcasts who love football. Fans who label us the criminal element are often in denial about their own team's contradictions. They still want to believe in the purity of a game that long ago became a corporate gladiator trade.

Michael Leon Guerrero
San Pedro, California

Guerrero, a community organizer, blogs at The Astute Recorder (astuterecorder.com).



We suggest you not take her out for a bite.

A PICTORIAL WITH TEETH

As a female fan of both PLAYBOY and vampires, I was stoked to see your October cover, but I'm disappointed *Love Bites* isn't more daring about showing the results of blood lust. I was left feeling much like the undead myself—cold and lusting for more.

Anna Edwards
New Orleans, Louisiana

I don't get turned on seeing nude women sucking blood, especially since I have family members who were victims in the 15th century of Vlad "the Impaler" Dracul, a.k.a. Dracula. Be careful—you never know whom you might offend.

Mike Rindos
Chula Vista, California

MORE ABOUT WOODY

Woody Harrelson is a great actor, but when he claims in his *Playboy Interview* that "the most egregious of all man's activities" after wars over oil is mountaintop mining, he seems not to understand the issues surrounding mining in Appalachia. Like Harrelson, coal miners love the environment. That's evident in the care we take to restore the land. Much like building a road, a shopping center or a home, surface mining requires us to move earth. But when the job is complete, we restore the site to its approximate original state. In fact, we recently won acclaim from the UN for using our sites to reintroduce the near-extinct American chestnut. We also create land that can be developed, and little economic growth would be possible in Appalachia without it. In September, for example, we presented Mingo County with a paving-ready former mine site to build an industrial park and airport, saving taxpayers tens of millions of dollars.

Bill Raney
Charleston, West Virginia

Raney is president of the West Virginia Coal Association (wvcoal.com).

That's two interviews in a row—first Seth MacFarlane in September and now Harrelson—in which your subject

Explore ten corners of the globe, one sip at a time.



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10 EXOTIC BOTANICALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD GIVE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE A REFINED, BALANCED TASTE.

thespiritofexploration.com

BOMBAY  **SAPPHIRE**
THE SPIRIT OF EXPLORATION

spouts off about the “evil” Fox News or compares Rupert Murdoch to Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels. Why do so many lefties get their panties in a twist because one major media outlet won’t kiss Barack Obama’s ass?

Cory Sheppard
Decatur, Georgia

It’s time to put aside the petty name-calling on both sides and together deal with the concerns that face us all.

FAN MAIL

After years of searching for the perfect magazine, I have settled on PLAYBOY. You have everything the lad mags lack: intelligence, substance, cracking interviews and stunning photos.

David Inglis
Edinburgh, Scotland

Although I’ve been a subscriber since I was 18, I’ve now started to look forward to the articles as much as the pictorials. Thank you for producing the best magazine on the stands.

Daric Ford
Winchester, Virginia

I’ve been browsing PLAYBOY’s early years on microfilm at my university’s library and am up to volume five. I’ve noticed PLAYBOY from the beginning has been a classy magazine that just happens to treat readers to photos of beautiful women.

Jennifer Olson
Lincoln, Nebraska

I have been reading PLAYBOY for only 18 months but already find myself appreciating many of the finer things in life (most recently Silver Patrón tequila) that I learned about in your pages.

Mark Dean
Brisbane, Australia

FEMLIN MISSTEP?

Anyone else notice that the Femlin in September’s *Party Jokes* kicks the football with her left leg but then rubs her right foot in pain?

Dennis Kraft
Buellton, California

Good eye. She landed badly.

WINNING TRIFECTA

The exquisite blonde in *Lounge Acts*, a southern California girl (Kimberly Phillips) as Playmate and a great Kurt Vonnegut story (*Confido*) make September my favorite issue so far this year.

Aaron Losey
Fullerton, California

LEGAL DRUGS 101

You say in *The Golden Age of Pills* (October) that you believe in personal freedom, so altering your brain is okay as long as you’re not hurting anyone. But where do you think most readers will get these pharmaceuticals? For most of the situa-

tions you describe (e.g., taking Ritalin to improve focus), no reputable doctor will write a prescription. Lacking a script, a person has limited options: stealing the pills or buying them on the black market. The physician’s credo is “First, do no harm.” I wish PLAYBOY followed it as well.

Philip Barnett
Scottsdale, Arizona

SPOT THE BUNNY

I own property on a scenic river in central Montana where we’ve discovered historic Native American pictographs. A number of these rock paintings closely resemble your famous Rabbit Head.

Curtis Thompson
Great Falls, Montana

For more Rabbit Heads found in nature, search playboy.com for “Spot the Bunny.”



The original Rock the Rabbit.

TOUGH TIMES

I found a copy of the December 1968 issue while cleaning out a foreclosed home (my job) and became engrossed in *Wealth Versus Money* by Alan Watts. Unfortunately, given our current economic situation, it’s still timely. “Remember the Great Depression of the 1930s?” Watts wrote. “The physical resources of the country—the brain, brawn and raw materials—were in no way depleted, but there was a sudden absence of money, a so-called financial slump. What wasn’t understood then, and still isn’t really understood today, is that money is a way of measuring wealth, but it is not wealth itself. A chest of gold coins or a fat wallet of bills is of no use whatsoever to a wrecked sailor alone on a raft. He needs real wealth, in the form of a fishing rod, a compass, an outboard motor with gas and a female companion. But this ingrained and archaic confusion of money with wealth is now the main reason we are not going ahead full tilt with the development of our technological genius for the production of more than adequate food, clothing, housing and utilities for every person on earth.”

Lloyd Jones Jr.
Richmond, Virginia



Discover a SAPHIRE Ultimate Martini Cocktail.

3 PARTS BOMBAY SAPHIRE® GIN
DASH NOILLY PRAT® ORIGINAL
FRENCH DRY VERMOUTH

Pour ingredients into a shaker filled with ice, stir thoroughly and strain into a chilled martini cocktail glass. Garnish with green olives or a twist of lemon if desired.



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SURGEON GENERAL WARNING: Cigar Smoking Can Cause Cancers Of The Mouth And Throat, Even If You Do Not Inhale.



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“I like the new rules that protect the quarterback today.”

“Oh, come on. You can’t hit him high, you can’t hit him low, if you wrap him up, that’s ‘in the grasp’ — why don’t they just change the name of the position to ballerina?”

Spirited conversation brings friends together. So does a Macanudo cigar. Like the attributes of a good friend, the unrivaled smoothness and quality of a Macanudo becomes more valued over time. That’s what inspires the passion that makes Macanudo America’s best selling premium cigar.

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PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS



BECOMING ATTRACTION

Elisabetta Canalis

Since the days of Chaucer, people have traveled to Italy to be enchanted. The food, the mountains, the seaside, the fashion and, more recently, the Ferraris—there's no place on earth like it. Did we mention the women? This month we salute Elisabetta Canalis, who tops our list of the hottest females from the most exquisite of countries. Elisabetta rose to prominence in 1999 when she landed a starring role on *Striscia la Notizia*, a satirical news show. Since then she has become a TV, film and magazine-cover staple across Europe. If you didn't catch her last film—*La Fidanzata di Papà*—you may have seen her more recently, on George Clooney's arm. George sure can pick 'em.

The hottest beauty from the most exquisite of countries.

Classic Look of the Month Dressed to Kill

The movies are all about fantasy. Only on the big screen would a police detective on a murder case look and dress as sharp as Glenn Ford playing Dave Bannion in Fritz Lang's 1953 noir masterpiece *The Big Heat* (just out in a new DVD format; see page 21). If you're in need of formal-wear for the holidays—and a gorgeous dame to kneel at your altar—here's how to replicate this look: blue two-button Fitzgerald suit by Brooks Brothers, \$898; white cotton Enzo shirt by Boss Black, \$95; blood-colored Churchill plain woven tie by Thomas Pink, \$95; white linen pocket square by Ralph Lauren, \$30; black leather Air Jarvis oxfords by Cole Haan, \$178. Not pictured: snub-nosed Colt .38 tucked in the sock, locked and loaded.

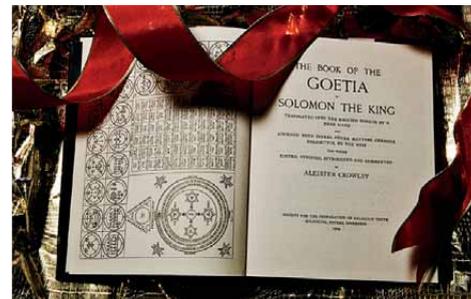
Against the Wall The Art World Fights Back

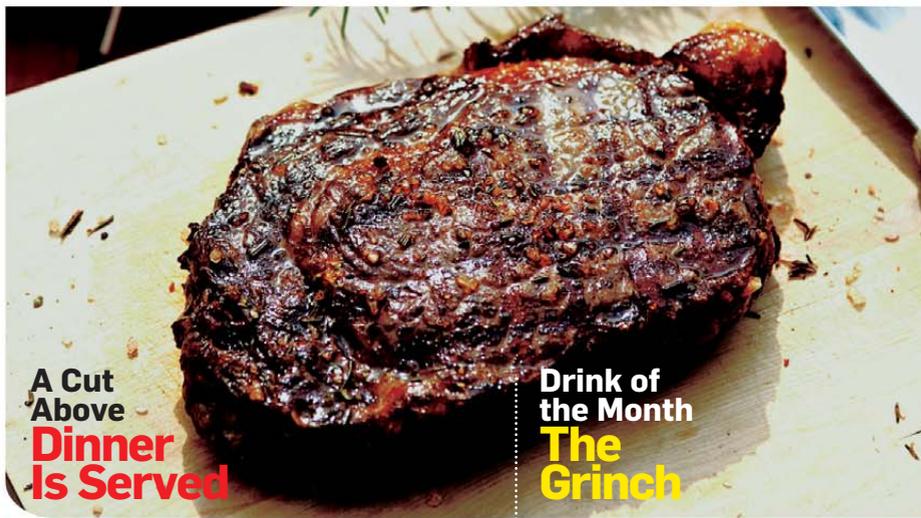
The recession hit the art world like a sledgehammer to a sculpture. But fear not: The art gallery is not dead as some critics were saying. There's new energy radiating from the art scene. Some 30 New York galleries have opened since last year, most with an emphasis on young artists. "I'm heartened by the recent boom in younger galleries," says Pascal Spengemann, who recently moved his gallery, Taxter & Spengemann, into Frank Stella's old studio on 12th Street. "The breadth and quality of work from young affordable artists today is unprecedented." Pictured: *Cold 1* (mixed media on paper) by Ben Tour, represented by the new Joshua Liner Gallery at 548 West 28th Street (joshualinergallery.com).

To Give Is Better

The Mantique

Most guys are terrible gift givers, especially when shopping for other guys. "Another bottle of Cuervo? Thanks!" This year, avoid the mall crowds and get your dad or your brother a mantique. On the Internet you can find unique manly collectibles such as World War II Geiger counters, old taxidermy and antique guns. Example: In the 1970s, Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page started his own publishing company called the Equinox, specializing in satanism and the occult. Pictured: a rare first-edition facsimile of *Goetia*, by Aleister Crowley, the king of occultists, which Page published in 1976. (We found it at mwbooks.com for \$431.)





**A Cut Above
Dinner
Is Served**

**Drink of
the Month
The
Grinch**

The Ethiopia-born and Sweden-raised chef Marcus Samuelsson (New York's Aquavit and Riingo) makes a point with his new book *New American Table*: America is a melting pot, and thus American food by definition can be anything as long as it's delicious. Here's what we're having for our Christmas dinner: Samuelsson's rib-eye steaks with chive butter (serves four).

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 10 oz. boneless rib eyes | 2 tbsp. olive oil |
| 2 tsp. salt | CHIVE BUTTER |
| 1 tsp. chopped rosemary | 4 cups heavy cream |
| ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper | 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped |
| ½ tsp. freshly ground white pepper | 2 shallots, finely chopped |
| ¼ tsp. paprika | ½ cup chopped chives |
| ¼ tsp. garlic powder | 1 tsp. salt |
| | freshly ground black pepper |

Heat a grill or pan on high heat. Bring steaks to room temperature. Toss herbs and seasonings together. Brush steaks with olive oil, then coat with the dry mixture. Grill for five minutes on each side for medium rare. Let rest for five minutes. For chive butter, use an electric mixer with a whisk attachment to beat the cream until butter forms (about 15 minutes). Discard excess liquid. Heat one tablespoon of this butter in a pan over medium heat. Sauté garlic and shallots until soft. Rewhip butter, adding garlic-shallot mixture, chives and salt and pepper. Serve steaks with a dollop of chive butter on top.

With a holiday cocktail called the Grinch, you'd imagine a sloshy glassful that gets you so drunk you wake up the next day having no recollection of December 25. Actually this little number—which comes courtesy of Kevin Jaszek at Smith & Mills in New York—is a cold-weather concoction you'll want to take your time consuming. We'll take it over processed out-of-the-carton eggnog any day.

- 2 oz. bonded applejack brandy**
½ oz. velvet falernum
¼ oz. lime juice
½ oz. simple syrup
2 hits Regan's Orange Bitters
3 hits Fee Brothers Whiskey Barrel-Aged Bitters

Shake ingredients with ice, then strain over ice with a lemon and orange twist back to back. The apple notes in the brandy blend well with the aged bitters to make the perfect glass of warming holiday hooch.



**Employee of the Month
Tiffani Shipman**

PLAYBOY: Where do you work?

TIFFANI: I work at South Central Sport-Chassis, which sells trucks.

PLAYBOY: What do you do exactly?

TIFFANI: I sell trucks, and I do everything from going to events like the Barrett-Jackson car auction with them to getting dirty in the shop working on them.

PLAYBOY: Wow.

TIFFANI: Yes, that's the reaction I normally get. [giggles]

PLAYBOY: What type of clientele do you have?

TIFFANI: We have sold trucks to Chris "Birdman" Andersen, Leonard Davis of the Cowboys, Shaquille O'Neal and a few other celebrities.

PLAYBOY: Shaq Diesel?

TIFFANI: Yep, we sold him a P2.

PLAYBOY: What's your favorite model?

TIFFANI: I love the P4XL. It's just a big, sexy truck.

PLAYBOY: Does size matter?

TIFFANI: Definitely—that's what we print on the back of our pit shirts.

PLAYBOY: Do you have a shop shirt with your name on it?

TIFFANI: You know it.

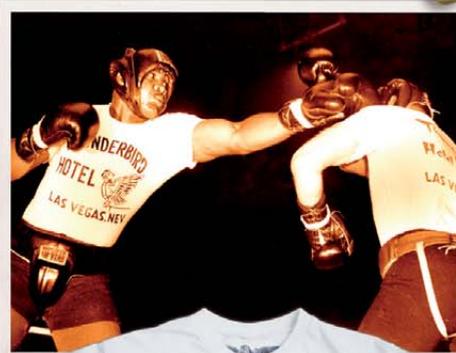
PLAYBOY: Now that's a turn-on. Can one have sex on a creeper?

TIFFANI: There's a lot that can go on under the hood....



**In This Corner
Fistic Fashion**

The heroes and villains of boxing's yesteryear—from Sonny Liston to Rubin "Hurricane" Carter to Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini—are still some of the greatest of masculine icons. Now a NYC-based T-shirt company called No Mas is paying homage. The company takes its name from the two words Roberto Duran uttered after he quit during the eighth round of his 1980 bout with Sugar Ray Leonard. Pictured: No Mas's slim-fit Thunderbird Hotel tee, which gives a shout-out to the Vegas landmark that hosted Liston's workouts before his classic bouts with Muhammad Ali. The Thunderbird had Mafia ties—as did Liston. Check out nomas-nyc.com for more shirts replete with pugilistic lore.



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

Movie of the Month

Avatar

By Stephen Rebell

An army of human invaders in avatar form is up against 10-foot-tall residents of a bizarre faraway planet in director James Cameron's *Avatar*. The immersive, photorealistic 3-D and CGI innovations in this new sci-fi movie have been hyped as Hollywood's most colossal quantum leap since...well, Hollywood's last most colossal quantum leap. Sigourney Weaver, one of the stars, has called *Avatar* "a serious film about serious issues—but it's in 3-D," which means Cameron had to resist shots of cool stuff coming straight at the audience, right? Well, not exactly. The director likes being behind the lens for 3-D work and personally shot a sequence in which a stuntman fired a machine gun right at the camera. "I knew where to stand safely, but I have to admit there's a bit of a twitch in the camera move," says Cameron. "I wanted to put the audience right there."

CRU/
CONTROL

Pedro Almodóvar's *Broken Embraces*, starring Penélope Cruz, is loaded with nods to older movies. See if you can find hints to *Voyage to Italy*, Audrey Hepburn in *Sabrina* and Marilyn Monroe in *Some Like It Hot*. In a movie within a movie, Cruz has a role much like Carmen Maura's in *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*.

Now Showing in Theaters



Did You Hear About the Morgans? Hugh Grant and Sarah Jessica Parker aim for some holiday giggles. The duo play an estranged city couple who witness a murder and are shipped off to rural Wyoming through a witness protection plan.



Brothers Things get tense when marine Tobey Maguire, missing and presumed dead, resurfaces and returns home. He finds that his wife (Natalie Portman) has become *this close* with his younger brother, played by Jake Gyllenhaal.



The Twilight Saga: New Moon In this installment of the teen vampire soap, Kristen Stewart survives a near-fatal attack that prompts her fanged boyfriend, Robert Pattinson, to skip town. On the rebound she rediscovers pal Taylor Lautner.



Nine Rob Marshall's movie is an adaptation of the musical inspired by Federico Fellini's *8½*. Daniel Day-Lewis stars as a womanizing director juggling his relationships with Marion Cotillard, Penélope Cruz, Nicole Kidman and Sophia Loren.



Invictus Clint Eastwood's latest has Morgan Freeman playing Nelson Mandela. After the 1995 fall of apartheid, he joins with the country's underdog rugby team captain (Matt Damon) to try to bring together the racially divided country.



The Lovely Bones From her own private afterlife, a slain teenager (Saoirse Ronan) watches over her survivors, including her parents (Rachel Weisz and Mark Wahlberg), her grandmother and the criminal who raped and murdered her.

DVD Gift Guide

By Greg Fagan

This holiday season is heavy on landmark films in archive-ready editions. **North by Northwest 50th Anniversary Edition** is the first Alfred Hitchcock film available on Blu-ray, and it arrives fully restored in a handsome book-bound case. The velvet-covered box that houses the newly restored **Gone With the Wind 70th Anniversary Ultimate Collectors Edition** doesn't give a damn about subtlety. And don't look for any



gewgaws along with all six films in **Rocky: The Undisputed Collection**; its main events are Blu debuts for *Rocky II* through *Rocky V*. The *Jay & Silent Bob Strike Back* BD is already available, but *Chasing Amy* and *Clerks* appear in their richest iterations yet in **The Kevin Smith Collection** (BD only). Martin Scorsese and

other auteurs contribute to **The Collector's Choice: Samuel Fuller Collection**, a box of DVD debuts that includes *The Crimson Kimono* and *Underworld U.S.A.*, which are the set's gritty highlights. **Columbia Pictures Film Noir Classics I** packs five 1950s gems anchored by Fritz Lang's masterpiece *The Big Heat*. *Murder by Contract*, *5 Against the House* and the others all make their disc debuts here. Don't pitch that VHS player, though. In addition to DVDs or BDs of last year's episodes, **Lost: The Complete Fifth Season**



Dharma Initiative Kit includes a VHS tape of bonus material. For most of this holiday season's other TV collections, however, new content is limited. The Blu-ray boxed set **Rome: The Complete Series** offers enhancements to the interactive on-screen guides introduced in the original DVD releases but comes with little else. The BD debut of **The Sopranos: The Complete**



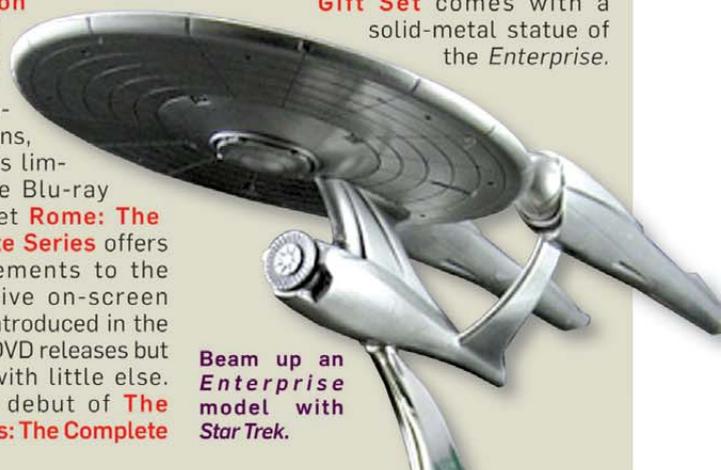
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First Season mimics the DVD, albeit in gorgeous 1080p. That's not to say there's nothing new: **The Prisoner Blu-ray Edition** has been remastered in HD from the original 35-millimeter negatives, and it picks up a new documentary and other bonus material absent from the original U.S. releases. We can't resist **Futurama: The Complete Collection**; its 19 DVDs come packed in a bug-eyed robot head, while the **Star Trek Limited Edition Replica Gift Set** comes with a solid-metal statue of the *Enterprise*.



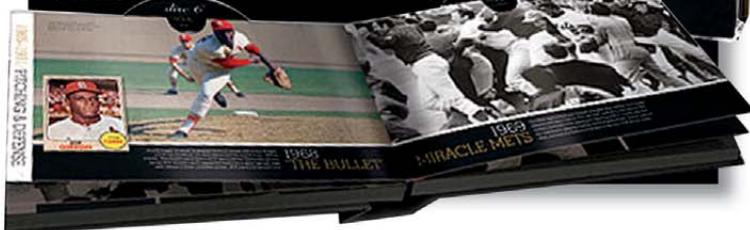
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Beam up an *Enterprise* model with *Star Trek*.

Stocking Stuffer World Serious

Worthy of any baseball cliché that comes to mind, **The Official Major League Baseball World Series Film Collection** (DVD only) delivers the gifting goods for any hard-core hardball fan. The DVD programming goes 20 discs deep, drawing on MLB's extensive highlights archive to tell 65 years of stories. It comes bound in a handsomely designed book that begs to be displayed. Fans of Ken Burns's 18-hour documentary *Baseball* will find this to be an entirely different animal: It's more focused—fall classics only, thank you—more extensive and almost wholly unconcerned with the game as an underlying metaphor for the American experience. What you get is the good stuff—all of it: from Kirk Gibson's 1988 Series-winning homer (right) and Kirby Puckett's 1991 home run (center) all the way back to the diamond heroics of Stan Musial, Jackie Robinson and, of course, Willie, Mickey and the Duke. —G.F.



Tease Frame

Paris-born actress **Marion Cotillard** became the first woman to win an Academy Award for a French-language role, in *La Vie en Rose*, but we like saying *bonjour* to her other assets in *Pretty Things* (pictured). See her next as one of the many sexy women Daniel Day-Lewis juggles in *Nine*, not to be confused with *District 9* or the animated 9.



Game On

Assassin's Creed 2 (pictured right; 360, PC, PS3) sends Desmond back into the Animus machine to relive his assassin ancestors' memories. This time he's creating bedlam in Renaissance Italy. Like *Mad Max*? Like mad loot? You'll dig **Borderlands** (360, PC, PS3), a hybrid role-playing game that plays like a shooter, with vehicular combat thrown in for good measure. **DJ Hero** (360, PS2, PS3, Wii) expands the *Guitar Hero* juggernaut to the turntable, where you'll scratch and cross-fade along with beats from elite hip-hop artists (Jay-Z, Eminem) and original mixes from some of the world's top DJs (Daft Punk, DJ Shadow). **The Ballad of Gay Tony** (360) is a downloadable Xbox-only expansion for *Grand Theft Auto 4* that lets you in on Liberty City's high-flying nightlife. You play bodyguard to Algonquin's top impresario, Tony Prince (a.k.a. Gay Tony). **Modern Warfare 2** (not shown; 360, PC, PS3) picks up where *Call of Duty 4* left off, featuring a short, tight single-player mode, along with the best multiplayer shooting in the world. **Uncharted 2: Among Thieves** (not shown, PS3) is the outstanding cinematic follow-up to the excellent 2007 action adventure.



Borderlands



DJ Hero



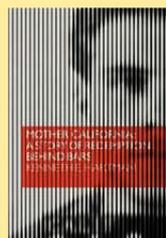
The Ballad of Gay Tony



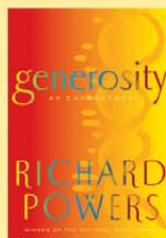
Between the Covers

Time away from work, chilly temperatures, double scotch in your hand.... No wonder so many books sell during the holidays. There are so many potential best-sellers this

season—new work by E.L. Doctorow (*Homer & Langley*) and James Ellroy (*Blood's A Rover*), among others—we couldn't possibly cover them all. Here are some favorites.



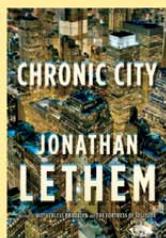
Mother California: A Story of Redemption Behind Bars by Kenneth Hartman One of the best prison memoirs in decades. Hartman was a monster; at 19 he killed for pleasure. More than 20 years later he's a philosopher and a writer reminiscent of Hubert Selby.



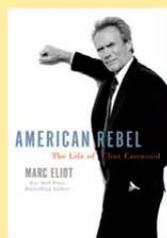
Generosity: An Enhancement by Richard Powers We generally hate novels about writing students, but this story begins in the classroom and detours into a search for the biological key to happiness. The metafictional has never been so surprisingly enjoyable.



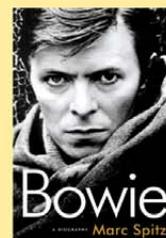
The Interrogative Mood by Padgett Powell This bizarre and wonderful novel is composed completely of questions. Even the cover is a question mark. Did the book leave us at times a bit baffled? Did we still adore it? Yes and yes.



Chronic City by Jonathan Lethem In his latest, Lethem goes sci-fi and Upper East Side sociological. Chase Insteadman is a former child star with a girlfriend stuck in outer space. By the tragicomic end, you'll concede that child TV stars are people too.



American Rebel: The Life of Clint Eastwood by Marc Eliot The story of a man who goes from small-time jazz pianist and gas-station attendant to Hollywood leading man reads like a rich movie plotline. All the sex, brawls and gunslinging are here.



Bowie: A Biography by Marc Spitz With Bowie, the voice and look of rock and roll changed forever. He affronted post-1960s convention and inspired a host of imitators, outcasts and idealists. Spitz lived it and loved it and provides a portrait that is epic and human.

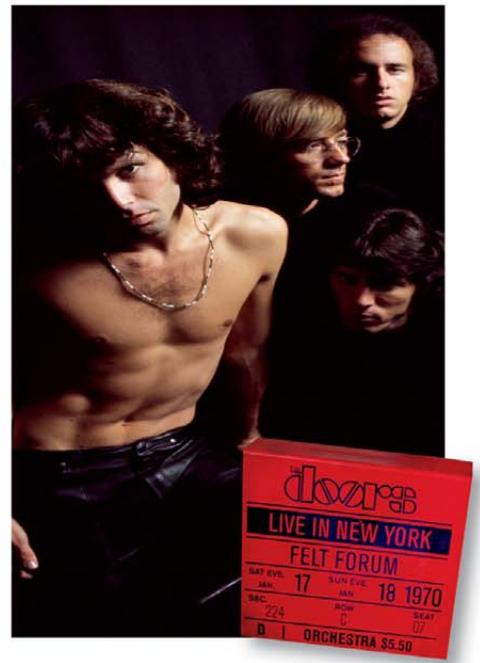
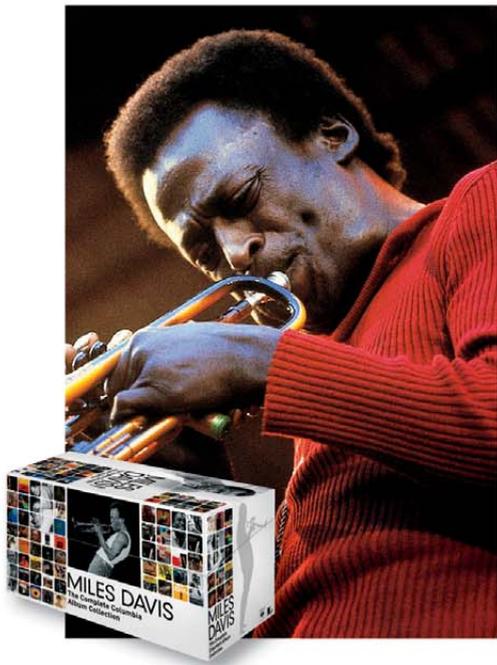


The Financial Lives of the Poets by Jess Walter Sherman Alexie called Walter's new novel "fuck-you good," and we agree. Walter has created a hero of America's post-boom days, an antic whistle-blower of all the tomfoolery that's been shaping the status quo.

Music

Miles & Jim

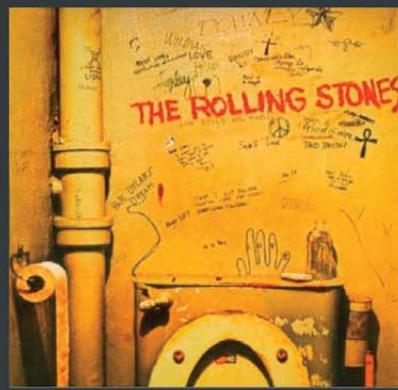
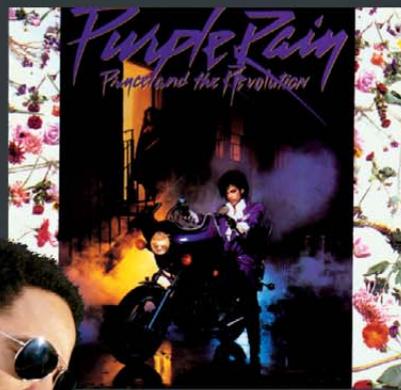
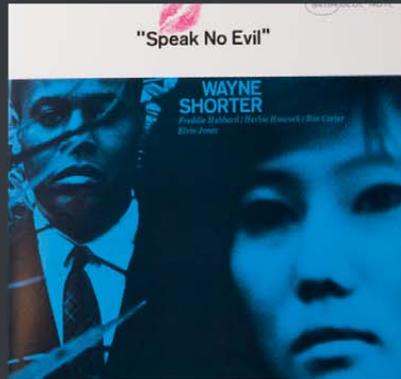
For most of the second half of the 20th century, Miles Davis defined cool. And what cooler gift than a 70-CD boxed set containing everything the man with a horn recorded for Columbia Records between 1949 and 1985? From bebop to funk, **Miles Davis: The Complete Columbia Album Collection** represents an extraordinary survey of modern American jazz. It's available only through Amazon.com for \$365. **The Doors: Live in New York** is a different kind of boxed set. The six-CD collection offers in their entirety the last four shows the band played in New York—June 17 to 18, 1970 (two shows a night), about a year before Jim Morrison's death. Mixed and mastered by Bruce Botnick, the band's engineering guru, the set includes 90 tracks, many of which have never before been released. As a historical document, it's a thrilling listen. For true Doors fans, it's a must-have; available through Amazon for \$75.



The Vinyl Revival

Why the hiss, snap and crackle of LPs is cool again

Back in the day, when you walked into a man's place, the first thing you did was flip through his albums. They were artifacts of cool with a broad canvas of imagery. For those who indulged, they served as joint-rolling tables. Now here's some news: As CD sales continue to decline, the music industry is seeing a spike in vinyl albums new and old. Last year sales grew by 89 percent. When **Animal Collective's** double album *Merriwether Post Pavilion* dropped early this year, it was released first on vinyl. Why? Analog is hip again. Nothing's better than the warm sound of an LP. If you're shopping for holiday gifts, try one of these classics, many of which have recently been reissued in all their vinyl glory: (1) **Sonic Youth's** *Daydream Nation*, (2) the **Rolling Stones' Beggars Banquet**, (3) the **Chemical Brothers' Exit Planet Dust**, (4) **Miles Davis's Tribute to Jack Johnson**, (5) the **Stone Roses' eponymous debut**, (6) **Prince's** 25th anniversary reissue of *Purple Rain*, (7) **Betty Davis's** *Is It Love or Desire*, (8)



(8) **Kraftwerk's Trans-Europe Express**, (9) **Harry Smith's Anthology of American Folk Music**, and (10) **Wayne Shorter's Speak No Evil**. Our favorite place to buy vinyl is dusty groove.com.

Lenny Kravitz: Gifts for My Friends

- (1) Asa, Asa (2009): "She's one of the new breed of voices from Nigeria." (2) Jackson 5, *Third Album* (1970): "What Michael did with the Jackson 5 was genius. No one will touch him for a thousand years." (3) Marvin Gaye, *Here, My Dear* (1978): "He was getting divorced. It's a man who's bitter and in love with somebody new, writing an album to his ex." (4) Isaac Hayes, *Joy* (1973): "There are only five songs, but the music is very cinematic, really deep and sexy."





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Casting Calls

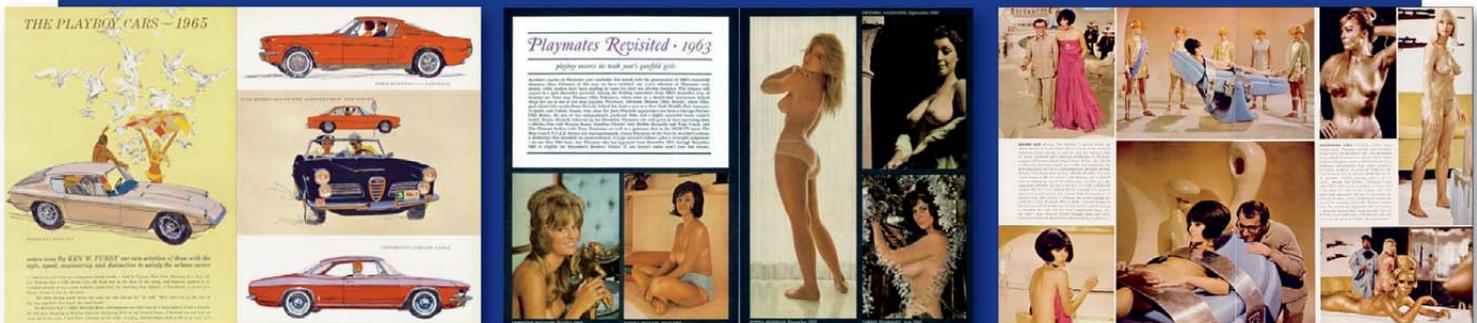
Yeah, we've got talent. Do you?

If you enjoy amateur talent shows like *America's Got Talent*, then you'll really dig playboycastingcalls.com. Contestants: Think you have the stuff to be a Playmate? See when we're coming to your city. Crystal McCahill did, and within months she became Miss May. Viewers: Check out playboy.com/castings for the first nudes of the next Crystal or Pamela Anderson. As you'll see, this isn't exactly amateur hour.



What Sort of Man Reads *Playboy*?

What sort of man has a nightstand that looks like this? He's an entertaining young guy happily living the good life. He's his own man. From the scotch he drinks to the barware he pours it into (set of three shot glasses, \$20; pint glass, \$12), every move is calculated. He's cerebral and in the know thanks to his subscription to *PLAYBOY* (\$29.97 a year), and he keeps a few of our books (*Redheads*, \$17) within grasp in his favorite place to read. Of course if his reading spot is his bed he also does some of his best work there. When he meets a girl, he approaches her with confidence and the gentleman's gesture of a light (Zippo, \$39), then lets the hint of his Playboy fragrance by Coty (set of four, \$22) draw her closer. And the girls he dates may leave him something to remember them by (thong, \$12) long after their perfume has faded from his pillow. Products can be found at shopthebunny.com, or swing by the Playboy Forum Shop on your next trip to Las Vegas. After all, the sort of man who reads *PLAYBOY* is a jet-setter who makes the scene and then moves on before the crowd arrives.



Mad Men, Mod Style and *Playboy*: The 1960s Are Back

PLAYBOY has been credited with sparking the sexual revolution of the 1960s, and by celebrating the sentiment of a brave new society it became required reading for all hepcats and Mad Men. As the swinging 1960s make a resurgence, along with the Bondi company we scanned all 120 issues from the decade onto computer discs. Hef says, "This is the perfect opportunity to offer our loyal readership something they have always wanted and also a

great way to allow a whole new generation to easily explore the magazine." It's all there, from Sophia Loren and Brigitte Bardot pictorials to *Playboy Interviews* with Fidel Castro and the Beatles, to words by Martin Luther King Jr. and Woody Allen to Hef's *Playboy Philosophy*—still words to live by, if you will. Even the original ads are cool. Plus, we give you a special 248-page behind-the-curtain book. Go to playboyarchive.com for details.

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RAW DATA

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

THE PLAYBOY POLL



NEXT UP

GO TO PLAYBOY.COM/WWT FOR DECEMBER'S QUESTIONS, INCLUDING:

WITH THE DECADE ENDING THIS MONTH, WHO IS THE HOTTEST BIG-SCREEN ACTRESS OF THE 2000S?

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| MEGAN FOX | KEIRA KNIGHTLEY |
| SCARLETT JOHANSSON | NATALIE PORTMAN |
| CATHERINE ZETA-JONES | CAMERON DIAZ |
| NAOMI WATTS | ANGELINA JOLIE |
| CHARLIZE THERON | JENNIFER ANISTON |
| HALLE BERRY | |



WHAT'S THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IN SPORTS?

WHAT WE'RE THINKING:

- * NO COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAY-OFFS 68%
- * STEROIDS 32%

ODD STAT OF THE MONTH

MEN WHO SNORE LOUDLY ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO DIE EARLY.

AT LEAST 22 STATES THAT BAN TEXTING WHILE DRIVING OFFER SOME TYPE OF SERVICE THAT ALLOWS MOTORISTS TO GET INFORMATION ABOUT TRAFFIC TIE-UPS, ROAD CONDITIONS AND EMERGENCIES VIA TWITTER.



PRICE CHECK

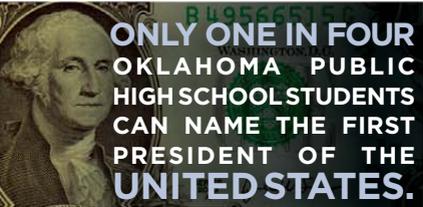
\$47,000 Cost of a gold penis enlarger encrusted with rubies and 40 diamonds; custom ordered by a Saudi businessman who claimed he was allergic to stainless steel, it is said to be the world's most expensive **SEXUAL AID.**



In 2007, 63% of college students said they would move back in with their parents after graduation until they found work. This year 69% said they would.



Greatest generation? They think it's theirs: 67% of college students surveyed agree their generation "is more self-promoting, narcissistic, overconfident and attention seeking than previous generations."



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ACCORDING TO **PSYCHOLOGY TODAY**, 40% OF WOMEN DELIBERATELY PROVOKE JEALOUSY IN A PARTNER TO GET A READING ON THE STRENGTH OF THEIR BOND.

WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

New From
SKECHERS
Fitness Footwear

Shape-ups

SHAPE UP WHILE YOU WALK

IMPROVES
POSTURE

IMPROVES
BLOOD
CIRCULATION

STRENGTHENS
AND FIRMS
THE BACK
MUSCLES

TIGHTENS
ABDOMINAL
MUSCLES

FIRMS LEG
MUSCLES

FIRMS CALF
MUSCLES

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- Reduce stress on knee and ankle joints
- Burn calories



Patent Pending



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- Craig, Illinois

"Shape-ups really help my back feel better—and after walking in the shoes daily, my muscles feel much stronger."

- Frank, Arizona

"After performing a six week clinical trial testing the benefits of SKECHERS Shape-ups, I am confident in recommending them to patients to increase their low back endurance and improve gluteal strength. Patients also benefited from weight loss and improved body composition."

- Dr. Steve Gautreau, California

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Fly Wheels

The gullwing, a born-again classic

When Mercedes-Benz unveiled the 300 SL gullwing coupe in 1954, it instantly became the Brigitte Bardot of automotive icons—so hot you couldn't take your eyes off it, yet built for speed. In America it was called the gullwing, in France it was *papillon* (butterfly) and in Germany, *Flügeltürer* (wing door). More than half a century later Mercedes unleashes its ultramodern reincarnation: the SLS AMG. We got our hands on this beast before any other journalists. The scene: the *Nordschleife* (northern loop) at the Nürburgring, a racetrack as world famous and replete with history as the car itself. "I felt the racing genes immediately," says our test-driver, Michael Goering of *PLAYBOY* Germany. The lightweight 6.3-liter eight cylinder pumps out 563 horsepower (compared with the original gullwing's 215). Everything is perfectly balanced—engine in front and transaxle in back (a 47/53 percent weight split). "I hit a maximum of more than 300 kilometers an hour on the *Döttinger Höhe*," says Goering (that's upward of 186 mph). With its 3.6-second zero-to-60 mph sprint, you feel as if you're taking off from an aircraft carrier in an F-14. The most surprising fact: The SLS is comfortable. The interior is all leather, aluminum and carbon fiber, and many details are shaped like parts of a jet. The downside? MB will make only a handful, with a tag of about \$200,000. Info at mbusa.com.



The original 1954 300 SL gullwing.

Feliz Cumpleaños

In 1758 the king of Spain gifted a plot of land in La Rojeña, Mexico to Don José Antonio de Cuervo—and forever changed the way college students celebrate spring break. Cuervo 250 Aniversario (\$2,250, fine liquor stores) is made solely from agave grown on the original land.



Whiskers, Meet Whiskey

Putting whiskey in your face and then shaving will make you bleed. Putting whiskey on your face—that is, Portland General Store's Whiskey Wet Shave Jelly (\$10) and Skin Quencher Aftershave (\$20, portlandgeneralstore.etsy.com)—will show your follicles who's boss.





Business Class

Today's economy is a war zone; we recommend you work with military-grade business equipment. Moto Art (motoart.com) offers a wide array of striking home and office furniture, all made from decommissioned airplane parts. The DC-9 Airplane Desk shown here (\$16,500) is handcrafted from an actual DC-9 stabilizer wing polished to a mirror finish and then fitted with hardwood and glass. Other favorites include the ejection-seat bar stools (\$5,200), float-tank couch (\$22,500) and Mile High bed (\$30,000).

Hack Your Life: Get Served

You want to listen to that one Dead Weather song but can't remember which machine you ripped the album to. Turns out digital files are just like CDs—easy to misfile. Here's a hint: Setting up a central server in your house is quick and simple, and you can work it so your music, movies and photos are automatically transferred and made available to any computer on your network. HP's MediaSmart servers (\$400 to \$700, hp.com) are a no-brainer to set up, as are similar offerings such as Acer's Aspire easyStore (\$400, us.acer.com) and Velocity Micro's NetMagix HQ (\$900, velocitymicro.com).

Smooth Talker

With a 600 MHz processor, one gigabyte of memory, 32 gigabytes of storage, built-in Wi-Fi, a touchscreen and a slide-out keyboard, the Nokia N900 (\$649, nokia.com) could easily be mistaken for a laptop. Nokia even calls it a "mobile computer." But it's a phone (as well as about 17,000 other things). It comes unlocked, so you're free to use it with AT&T, T-Mobile or other GSM carriers.



Telluride: The Playboy Way

The optimal time to hit Telluride, Colorado is from late January (when the snow is prime) to April (when the weather is prime). Grab pre-ski breakfast burritos at the slope-side X Café, then hit Bee's Run, a fluffy black diamond off the 12,570-foot apex. Or glide down See Forever to take in views of 14,017-foot Wilson Peak (the mountain on the Coors label). When your legs are shot, grab a bite at 221 South Oak, a bistro with overstuffed couches and killer food. After that, swank it up at Noir Bar, cut a rug on Fly Me to the Moon Saloon's spring-loaded dance floor, or grab a longneck Bud at the Last Dollar Saloon (a.k.a. the Buck), where the divots on the pool table are older than you are.



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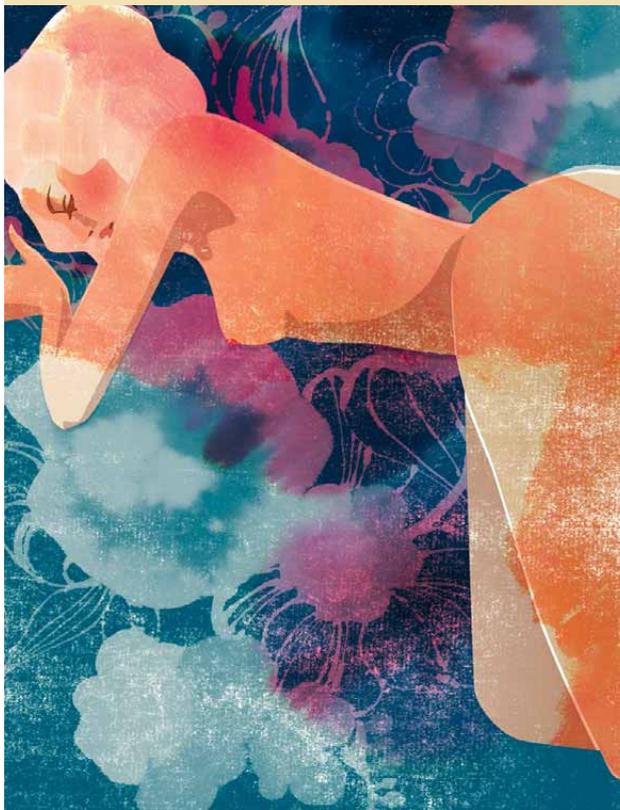
Can you tell me how to give the perfect blow job? I enjoy going down on my boyfriend, but his penis is thick, and it's hard to fit in my mouth. Any suggestions would be appreciated.—A.N., Fort Worth, Texas

Keep in mind that the head of your boyfriend's penis, especially the underside, is its most sensitive area, so you don't have to go deep to drive him crazy. Rather than worry about delivering perfection, consider the wise words of one of the greatest cocksuckers of all time, Vanessa del Rio. We posed your question to the porn superstar when she appeared on the Playboy Advisor radio show (heard weekly on Sirius/XM 99) to discuss her 16-pound, \$700 autobiography, *Vanessa del Rio: 50 Years of Slightly Slutty Behavior*, published by Taschen. "The only thing that separates me from somebody who doesn't give good blow jobs is I like to do it," she said on the show. "That's the key. If you don't like doing it and if you have to practice a technique, you're too much into the thought and the style. And yeah, it could be good, but there's nothing like a hungry mouth that likes a cock in it." Most guys will agree that having a woman tell you she loves sucking your cock will instantly double your arousal. We're told throughout our lives that our erections are ugly, threatening, "indecent"—to have a woman embrace our best buddy, as Vanessa describes, is sometimes all we need.

I enjoyed your response in September to the New Jersey reader who was renting a house to three women who claimed to be college students. He said the women started paying rent late, if at all, but because they were having orgies with him, he decided to let it go. He wanted to know if he could get into legal trouble and whether the sex would make it harder to evict the women if they refused to pay any further rent. As a property manager who has gone through his share of evictions, I would advise the reader to find a lawyer pronto. I can't imagine three roommates having sex with a landlord unless they plan to eventually withhold both rent and sex. His best bet is to put the house on the market and break the lease when it sells, or pray they move out peacefully. I hope he at least got a video of the encounters.—K.C., Chicago, Illinois

Could he plead insanity? That would be our defense. Assuming this is not a fantasy, it certainly could get messy. It's conceivable an overzealous prosecutor could charge the

PLAYBOY ADVISOR



I've always given off a tremendous amount of body heat. In fact, one lover nicknamed me "furnace woman." I don't sweat or feel overheated; I just have hot skin. As a result, no one, including my husband, has ever wanted to cuddle with me in bed. He's affectionate in other ways, and our sex life is great. But is there any way I can get him to put his arms around me without cranking the thermostat?—M.R., Tampa, Florida

The first thing that comes to mind is you have an overactive thyroid, a gland that regulates metabolism. Hyperthyroidism can make someone feel excessively hot even in room or cold temperatures. But Dr. Jeffrey Garber, author of *The Harvard Medical School Guide to Overcoming Thyroid Problems*, says the fact that you've always experienced this and don't sweat or feel overheated suggests another explanation. Assuming you don't have a skin disorder that interferes with your ability to sweat, aren't taking large doses of drugs that diminish sweating (antihistamines can be a culprit) or supplements that contain niacin, have no history of heat shock, aren't approaching menopause and don't appear flushed all the time, this is probably just the way your vascular system, brain and skin are integrated. Core body temperature varies from person to person. Sleeping in the nude may lower your temperature (while raising your husband's—you can meet in the middle), or perhaps you should routinely take a cold shower before bed. But unless your husband is suffering first-degree burns he should be happy to cuddle with his hot wife—we doubt he has any complaints about your mouth, hand, ass or vagina being too warm.

reader with solicitation or promotion of prostitution, especially if the women have paying clients coming to the property. But regardless of

any warnings we offer about potential legal hassles, we doubt he's going to call off the orgies. Would you?

I'm frustrated by my inability to find quality cigar lighters and cutters. Even the butane torch lighters made by better-known manufacturers fail within a month or two. I prefer a guillotine cutter but can't get one to stay sharp. Should I bite off the cap and use paper matches instead?—L.F., Fort Smith, Arkansas

On a deserted island, maybe. You made the right decision in choosing a guillotine cut—it's the kindest of all. This question is so important to your style we cornered not one but two experts for their thoughts—Aaron Sigmond, author of *Playboy: The Complete Guide to Cigars* (available now in select cigar stores and elsewhere next year) and Richard Carleton Hacker, author of *The Ultimate Cigar Book* (richardcarletonhacker.com). Hacker recommends a Zino Davidoff Double Blade. "Make sure you get the one with twin Solingen steel blades," he says. "It's lightweight and thin and can take up to a 54 ring. I've been alternating between two blades for more than a decade and have never had to sharpen them." At home he uses Davidoff scissors. As for lighters, try an S.T. Dupont. But don't put it in your carry-on luggage. "The TSA boys love them," he says. Sigmond's "best and only recommendation" are products by Xikar (xikar.com). "It makes exceptional—and exceptionally sharp—cutters and a fine range of lighters," he says. "More important in this case, it offers a lifetime warranty. If a blade gets dull or a lighter dies, Xikar will repair or replace it."

When is it okay to hide money from your wife? Here are my wife's recent purchases: several \$500 purses, \$2,000 to \$10,000 in clothes (which within a year she hands off to a consignment store, recovering five percent of the cost), a \$150 wallet every other month, a \$200 hair salon visit every other month and \$300 to \$400 monthly for makeup. By contrast I spend money on food, water and shelter. Is it appropriate to ask her mother for \$50,000? Is a divorce on the way? I have shared money with her for nearly a decade because I've always earned 35 percent to 500 percent more.—C.S., Seattle, Washington

You don't need to "hide" anything.

Simply open a savings or investment account in your name and funnel money into it for a rainy day. Next, have your credit card limits

lowered to something reasonable. Don't get your mother-in-law involved; don't you have enough problems? Most couples fight about money, but divorce may be on the way if you don't have the means to support her shopping frenzies. She earns her own money; she can spend that while you take care of the essentials. Keep in mind a weird psychology is at work here. In an essay that appeared in *PLAYBOY* years ago Lisa Carver revealed the real reason women shop: "It's not about acquiring; it's about losing. We aren't satisfied until we're financially naked and helpless." So you're actually doing your wife a favor by helping her reach that nadir sooner than she would be able to on her own.

A man wrote in September that his wife no longer wanted to receive oral sex because she felt it contributed to her recurring yeast infections. My husband is a great lover who enjoys going down on me, so I took steps to head off the problem with probiotic supplements, plus one to two daily servings of plain yogurt with live active cultures—which should impress you, since it tastes like wallpaper paste. I wonder if the woman in that case is perhaps not a fan of oral or if something else is going on in the relationship. I wish them both luck, but it sounds as though the husband's going to need it more.—B.A., Scottsdale, Arizona

The reader and his wife should be aware her infections may not be caused by yeast but by bacterial vaginosis, which exhibits many of the same symptoms. It's not clear how women get BV, but it appears that douching or having a new sex partner or multiple sex partners increases the risk. The good news is BV is easily treatable with antibiotics.—M.H., Richmond, Virginia

After suggesting the reader use a dental dam when giving his wife cunnilingus, you wrote, "God willing, she'll keep getting infections and focus her attention elsewhere." You owe every woman who reads your column an apology for your callous disregard for our health.—J.P., Groton, Connecticut

We would never wish a yeast infection on anyone, male or female. But we are believers in the scientific method.

I've been happily married for nine years. My wife and I have no secrets, and I would do anything for her. Recently she told me that a former lover whom she hadn't seen in 12 years had moved into town with his wife and children. She called, and they had lunch. Shortly after that, she asked me if she could take him as a sex buddy. I reluctantly agreed, thinking it would be a short-term fling and I could handle it. She says it's not like picking up a stranger since she has a sexual past with him. She also says all she wants is some excitement and affirmation she is still good in bed. Although I'm no slouch in the sack, she's adamant this relationship is strictly for

sex and neither of them wants to harm their marriages. They meet every other week. I'm getting more jealous by the day. I know if I tell her to stop, she'll be disappointed and push the limits of our trust since she really likes the guy. She has told me three times she's going to stop seeing him. Where is this going?—G.M., San Antonio, Texas

Your wife doesn't want to harm her marriage? Too late. You gave her permission to fool around but can withdraw that permission at any time. Those are the rules she agreed to. Make it clear you no longer want her to see him. Emphasize that you misjudged how you would feel about the arrangement and how much you are hurting. Stand up for your relationship, and it may give her the wherewithal she needs to put an end to it. If she continues without your okay, the affair becomes adulterous, and that's a larger problem. Based on the letters we receive, it's typical for "mutual" agreements that allow for flings to quickly collapse when only one partner is enjoying his or her freedom.

Whenver I have a herpes outbreak I find myself surfing the Internet for information about new treatments. I know there is no cure, but \$300 seems a reasonable price for relief, provided it works. Do any herbal or other treatments help?—S.W., Naperville, Illinois

It's hard to say, and that's the problem. A few years ago a team of scientists evaluated the research done on six common alternative treatments for a report published in the journal of the International Herpes Management Forum. The scientists could not find definitive evidence that showed any of the six—echinacea, which is made from coneflowers; eleuthero, a.k.a. Siberian ginseng; the amino acid L-lysine; zinc; bee products; or aloe vera—alleviate symptoms. But why rely on herbs when prescription antivirals get the job done? In fact, you can take a pill once or twice a day and reduce the risk of outbreaks and transmitting the virus to partners. "Some people worry suppressive therapy will make the antiviral less effective, but there's no evidence of that," says Susan Rosenthal of Columbia University, who led the 2005 review. Antivirals also work best when taken early in an outbreak (such as when you first feel tingling or pain), so if you don't pop a pill daily, keep a supply on hand. One serious risk of relying on unproven supplements is that a person with herpes sores is more susceptible to contracting HIV. If you're surfing for reliable information about herpes or other sexually transmitted diseases, visit the website of the American Social Health Association (www.ashastd.org).

A reader asked in September about having a hog roast. The correct term is pig pickin'. The pig should be cooked over oak coals or, in a pinch, charcoal. You should also have noted that by far the best way to do this is to follow the eastern North Carolina method, by which you cook the split pig meat-side down over live coals made from hardwood logs (or propane). It usually takes six to eight hours at 325

degrees. About an hour before the pig is done, flip it to ensure the skin is crispy. Just before you take it off the grill, pierce the skin to drain the grease. When the meat is cooked thoroughly, pull it from the bones in chunks, and chop the chunks into a texture that suits the chef. Serve with sauce. (Eastern North Carolina sauce has no tomatoes and is made with vinegar, salt, black pepper, red pepper and cayenne, plus whatever secret ingredients one cares to add.) Politicians in this state can destroy their careers if they express a preference for either eastern or western style.—C.H., Atlantic Beach, North Carolina

We will be politically prudent ourselves and make no comment except to thank you for your informative letter. We'll also note that western North Carolina style, a.k.a. Lexington style, uses only the pork shoulder and a heavier sauce.

Do you have any suggestions for a doctor who wants to ask out a female patient whose path doesn't cross with his outside the exam room? I'm hoping to do this in an ethical, noncreepy manner.—R.P., Lancaster, California

The only option we see is to confess your attraction, explain you can't maintain a professional distance as a result and refer her to another doctor. Do this over the phone rather than during an examination. If your patient is interested in seeing you as a former patient, she'll let you know.

Why are the pockets on men's suits always sewn shut when purchased new?—R.M., San Ramon, California

It's done for two reasons. First, it keeps them from snagging on anything while making their way from manufacturer to retailer. Second, and more important, the stitches help a suit hold its shape. You should carefully snip the chest pocket open with a seam ripper or nail clipper for a pocket square. Also, always take out the stitching on buttonholes, particularly on lapels. But there's no need to open the lower pockets unless you're one of those die-hard prepsters who actually use them to carry stuff because you've been wearing suits since you were four.

I have a friend who says he's gay, but he won't stop staring at my boobs. Are they that distracting, or is he a wolf in sheep's clothing?—T.M., Silver City, New Mexico

Either way, you must have terrific breasts.

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



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: JAMES CAMERON

A candid conversation with the director of Avatar about huge blockbusters, fake sexy women, learning to be a nicer guy and reinventing the way movies are made

This past August 21, film writer, producer and director James Cameron rolled the dice in a big way. The date was widely advertised, and not modestly, as *Avatar Day*, and it marked free public previews in IMAX theaters worldwide of 16 minutes of Cameron's latest movie—a \$200 million-plus science-fiction epic about a battle royal between human invaders and inhabitants of a faraway planet—rendered in what is being touted as cutting-edge photorealistic computer-graphics-generated 3-D and an astonishing sense of audience immersion. The hype and curiosity surrounding *Avatar* led audiences to expect nothing less than the *Second Coming*. After all, directors Steven Spielberg and Steven Soderbergh had already raved about the excerpts in print (the latter saying it was “the craziest shit ever”), and director Jon Favreau called it “a game changer.” Sony's boss claimed it would “change the way you consume entertainment.” Hyperbolic fans predicted on the web that the first film in 12 years from the director of such pop culture milestones as *The Terminator*, *Aliens* and *Titanic* would “fuck our eyeballs.”

So roughly four months before *Avatar*'s December 18 opening date, audiences got a chance to see—and weigh in—for themselves. And weigh in they did, instantly spattering and pontificating on Twitter, Facebook and scores of other Internet outposts. Some mentioned half-empty theaters. Many were dazzled and left panting for more. But others,

in what can best be described as a mixed response, were left with their eyeballs intact and virginal.

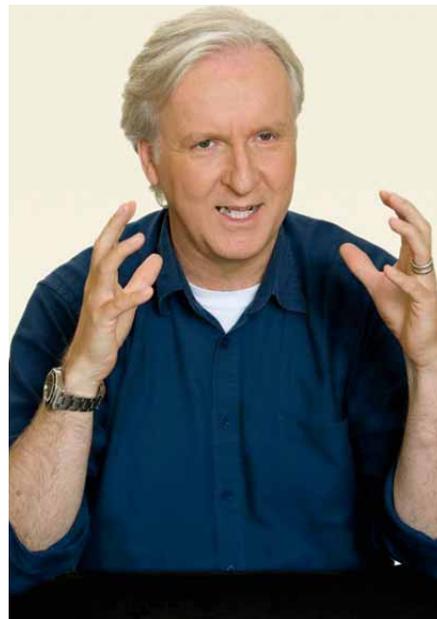
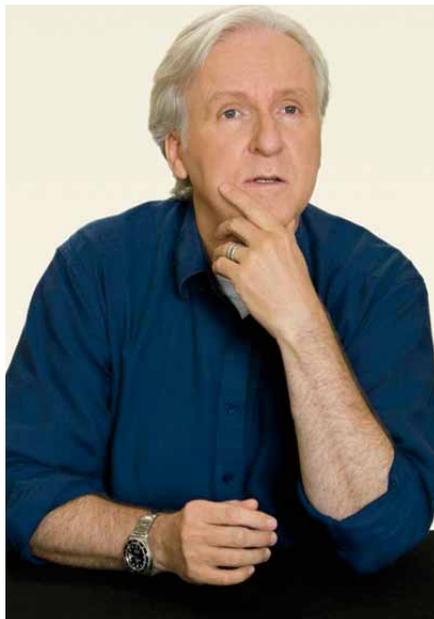
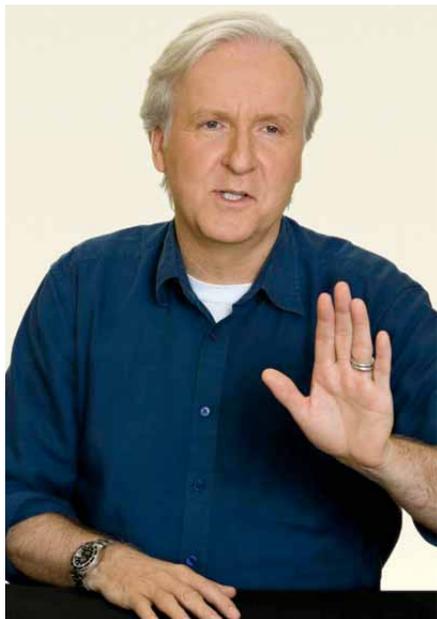
Cameron, fit, focused and immeasurably wealthy at the age of 55, is accustomed to being second-guessed. Few, at least in Hollywood, had expected all that much from the Canadian-born former pastry apprentice whose father was an electrical engineer and mother a nurse and an artist. In 1971 the family moved to Fullerton, California, where Cameron majored in physics at nearby California State University, Fullerton. Torn between his love of films, sci-fi and science, he supported himself by working as a truck driver while making short amateur action and sci-fi movies with his friends. In 1980 he landed work in and around the thriving basement-budget moviemaking scene presided over by Roger Corman.

Things looked way up in 1984 when Cameron wrote and directed a futuristic action thriller for which few had great expectations—*The Terminator*. It became a huge success, made a bona fide star of the unlikely Arnold Schwarzenegger and cemented Cameron's relationship with co-writer and producer Gale Anne Hurd, Corman's former executive assistant, who in 1985 became Cameron's second wife (they divorced in 1989). From there Cameron continued to exceed expectations by directing some of the biggest and most admired financial successes of the 1980s and 1990s, including *Aliens*, *True Lies*, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*

and *The Abyss*. *Doom* was predicted in 1997 for the crushingly expensive, troubled production of *Titanic*, yet it went on to become a phenomenon, made a movie idol out of Leonardo DiCaprio and won 11 Oscars, including a best director award for Cameron. His Oscar ceremony declaration “I'm the king of the world!” raised eyebrows, but that's the kind of thing you can get away with when you've created Hollywood's all-time biggest moneymaker.

Cameron earned a reputation for being a taskmaster, tough on his crews and actors, manic in his attention to detail and quest for perfection. Wild and woolly stories emerged from his sets of mutinous crews and actors vowing never to work with him again. But he seemed untouchable and unstoppable, co-founding a special-effects company, *Digital Domain*, and avoiding the ready-made projects Hollywood offered him. Instead, in 2002 Cameron, an avid diver, launched into a series of undersea documentaries such as *Expedition Bismarck* and *Ghosts of the Abyss* that explore legendary sunken ruins. Some speculated *Titanic*'s freak success had given him a permanent case of director's block.

Now the five-time-married Cameron is about to resurface. PLAYBOY sent Contributing Editor **Stephen Rebello** to Cameron's Malibu mansion to investigate where the director has been and where he's headed. Says Rebello, who last interviewed Benicio Del Toro, “This was the kind of interview that at first I thought the intense Cameron may



PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

“My dad treated science fiction as if it was porn. He used to throw my comics and science-fiction books in the trash because he considered them mental junk. I'd go out, wipe off the coffee grounds and read them under the covers at night.”

“There's a certain geek population that would much rather deal with fantasy women than real women. Let's face it: Real women are complicated. You can try your whole life and not understand them.”

“If you ever go to a 25th high school reunion, make sure that you've made the world's highest-grossing movie, won 11 Academy Awards and become physically bigger than most of those guys who used to beat you up.”

bolt up and expect me to go deep-sea diving, arm wrestle or book passage on an interplanetary flight. But he relaxed and was gentlemanly, and although he's known for playing it close to the vest, he loosened up and showed himself to be funnier, hipper and even smarter than you may imagine."

PLAYBOY: Your new movie *Avatar*'s stereoscopic 3-D and CGI have people in the film industry and the media comparing its technological breakthrough to the birth of sound and color film. They've also predicted the movie could become a cultural phenomenon. Are you worried about Internet fans who have posted snarky comments about the preview footage shown in theaters in August?

CAMERON: The ones who were the most vocally negative will be there opening night, I promise you. The ones I worry about are those who haven't heard of the movie. We know from the exit polling that the response was 95 percent ecstatic. Most of the five percent negative response is from the fanatic fans who imagined the movie in their minds but now have to deal with *my* movie.

PLAYBOY: Does this prejudgment remind you of 1997, when people predicted big failure for *Titanic* because it took so long to make, busted its budget and had no big stars?

CAMERON: They know *Avatar* is expensive, but that story hasn't gathered any traction because—what the fuck?—I always make expensive movies, people always like them, and people always want me to do it again.

PLAYBOY: How will you react if critics come gunning for you?

CAMERON: *Avatar* is made very consciously for movie fans. If critics like it, fine. I can't say I won't read the reviews, because I may not be able to resist. I spent a couple of decades in the capricious world of being judged by those not knowledgeable about the depth and history of film and with whom I would not want to have a conversation—with a few notable exceptions. Why would I want to be judged by them? For me, this past decade has been about retreating to the great fundamentals, things that aren't passing fads or subject to the whims of some idiot critic. You can't write a review of the laws of thermodynamics.

PLAYBOY: Moviegoers have already been wowed by lifelike CG and motion-capture characters such as Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*. Will your blue-skinned aliens and gigantic monsters satisfy jaded audiences?

CAMERON: Ultimately audiences don't give a rat's ass how a movie is made. When people see the movie, the story will be about the world of the planet Pandora, the creatures on it, the characters—such as the former Marine and amputee played by Sam Worthington—and the huge conflict between the humans and the inhabitants of Pandora. How does it move you? How emotional is it? It's pretty damn emotional and dramatic. That said, I think we certainly exceeded our expectations in making these characters feel real.

PLAYBOY: Audiences may not give a rat's ass about how a movie is made, but didn't

you have to wait a decade before special effects technology could accommodate what you had in mind?

CAMERON: Here I was the CEO of a major digital effects company, Lightstorm, which was designed to create fantasy CG characters and was not doing that, so I said, "I'll write a script that is beyond state of the art, we'll make it, and it will force us to become a world leader in effects." Everybody looked at what I had in mind and said I was crazy. In the wake of *Titanic* I saw how much a project can go off the rails, and I got a little more conservative about taking risks. So I put *Avatar* away because no one had yet accomplished the photo reality and human emotional expression we needed until Peter Jackson cracked the code with Gollum and *King Kong*. And Industrial Light & Magic was doing it in a completely different way in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. With *Avatar* it's okay if the characters aren't perfect. Who knows what aliens are supposed to look like?

PLAYBOY: How is film technology influencing how we process reality?

CAMERON: Human society and human consciousness are evolving before our eyes in an unprecedented, historic way as we

I won't make a movie if I think I won't be tested and it won't be grueling for me, the crew, the actors. Anybody who signs on is going to be tested. There are challenges.

adopt and integrate with our machines. Typically people don't know when they're making history, but we are definitely making history right now, for better or worse.

PLAYBOY: You're a major techie, but does any current tech toy elude you?

CAMERON: On Twitter, a tweet has to be less than, what, 25 words? [Editor's note: It's 140 characters maximum.] There isn't one concept I would be interested in discussing with anyone that could be summed up in 25 words or fewer. I'm totally not into Facebook or Twitter, so that makes me a dinosaur right there.

PLAYBOY: Sigourney Weaver's character Ellen Ripley in your film *Aliens* is a powerful sex icon, and you may have created another in *Avatar* with a barely dressed, blue-skinned, 10-foot-tall warrior who fiercely defends herself and the creatures of her planet. Even without state-of-the-art special effects, Zoe Saldana—who voices and models the character for CG morphing—is hot.

CAMERON: Let's be clear. There is a classification above hot, which is "smoking hot." She is smoking hot.

PLAYBOY: Did any of your teenage erotic icons inspire the character Saldana plays?

CAMERON: As a young kid, when I saw Raquel Welch in that skintight white latex suit in *Fantastic Voyage*—that's all she wrote. Also, Vampirella was so hot I used to buy every comic I could get my hands on. The fact she didn't exist didn't bother me because we have these quintessential female images in our mind, and in the case of the male mind, they're grossly distorted. When you see something that reflects your id, it works for you.

PLAYBOY: So Saldana's character was specifically designed to appeal to guys' ids?

CAMERON: And they won't be able to control themselves. They will have actual lust for a character that consists of pixels of ones and zeros. You're never going to meet her, and if you did, she's 10 feet tall and would snap your spine. The point is, 99.9 percent of people aren't going to meet any of the movie actresses they fall in love with, so it doesn't matter if it's Neytiri or Michelle Pfeiffer.

PLAYBOY: We seem to need fantasy icons like Lara Croft and Wonder Woman, despite knowing they mess with our heads.

CAMERON: Most of men's problems with women probably have to do with realizing women are real and most of them don't look or act like Vampirella. A big recalibration happens when we're forced to deal with real women, and there's a certain geek population that would much rather deal with fantasy women than real women. Let's face it: Real women are complicated. You can try your whole life and not understand them.

PLAYBOY: How much did you get into calibrating your movie heroine's hotness?

CAMERON: Right from the beginning I said, "She's got to have tits," even though that makes no sense because her race, the Na'vi, aren't placental mammals. I designed her costumes based on a *taparrabo*, a loincloth thing worn by Mayan Indians. We go to another planet in this movie, so it would be stupid if she ran around in a Brazilian thong or a fur bikini like Raquel Welch in *One Million Years B.C.*

PLAYBOY: Are her breasts on view?

CAMERON: I came up with this free-floating, lion's-maned array of feathers, and we strategically lit and angled shots to not draw attention to her breasts, but they're right there. The animation uses a physics-based sim that takes into consideration gravity, air movement and the momentum of her hair, her top. We had a shot in which Neytiri falls into a specific position, and because she is lit by orange firelight, it lights up the nipples. That was good, except we're going for a PG-13 rating, so we wound up having to fix it. We'll have to put it on the special edition DVD; it will be a collector's item. A Neytiri **PLAYBOY** Centerfold would have been a good idea.

PLAYBOY: So you're okay with arousing PG-13 chubbies?

CAMERON: If such a thing should happen—and I'm not saying it will—that would be fine.

PLAYBOY: You reunited with Sigourney

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WORKING TITLE

JAMES CAMERON CHANGED THE ORIGINAL NAME OF TWO OF HIS FILMS. WE'LL TELL YOU ABOUT ONE; YOU GUESS THE OTHER
BY ROCKY RAKOVIC

Avatar has been a decade in the making, but for much of that time it was referred to by its working title, *Project 880*. Doesn't have quite the same ring to it as *Avatar*, right? It's not unusual for filmmakers to do a last-minute title switch: *Snakes on a Plane* was supposed to be called *Pacific Air Flight 121* until Samuel L. Jackson put his foot down. Think you can match the blockbuster to the name they almost put on the movie poster?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. TITANIC | A. BLACK MASK |
| 2. ANNIE HALL | B. SCARY MOVIE |
| 3. CASABLANCA | C. ROPE BURNS |
| 4. PRETTY WOMAN | D. \$3,000 |
| 5. E.T. | E. HOW THE SOLAR SYSTEM WAS WON |
| 6. UNFORGIVEN | F. GOD |
| 7. WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? | G. A BOY'S LIFE |
| 8. DOGMA | H. THE GREATEST GIFT |
| 9. SCREAM | I. IT HAD TO BE JEW |
| 10. PULP FICTION | J. DEAD TOONS DON'T PAY BILLS |
| 11. PSYCHO | K. NOT TONIGHT, JOSEPHINE! |
| 12. MILLION DOLLAR BABY | L. EVERYONE COMES TO RICK'S |
| 13. SOME LIKE IT HOT | M. INFERNAL AFFAIRS |
| 14. THE DEPARTED | N. WIMPY |
| 15. IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE | O. THE CUT WHORE KILLINGS |
| 16. 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY | P. THE SHIP OF DREAMS |

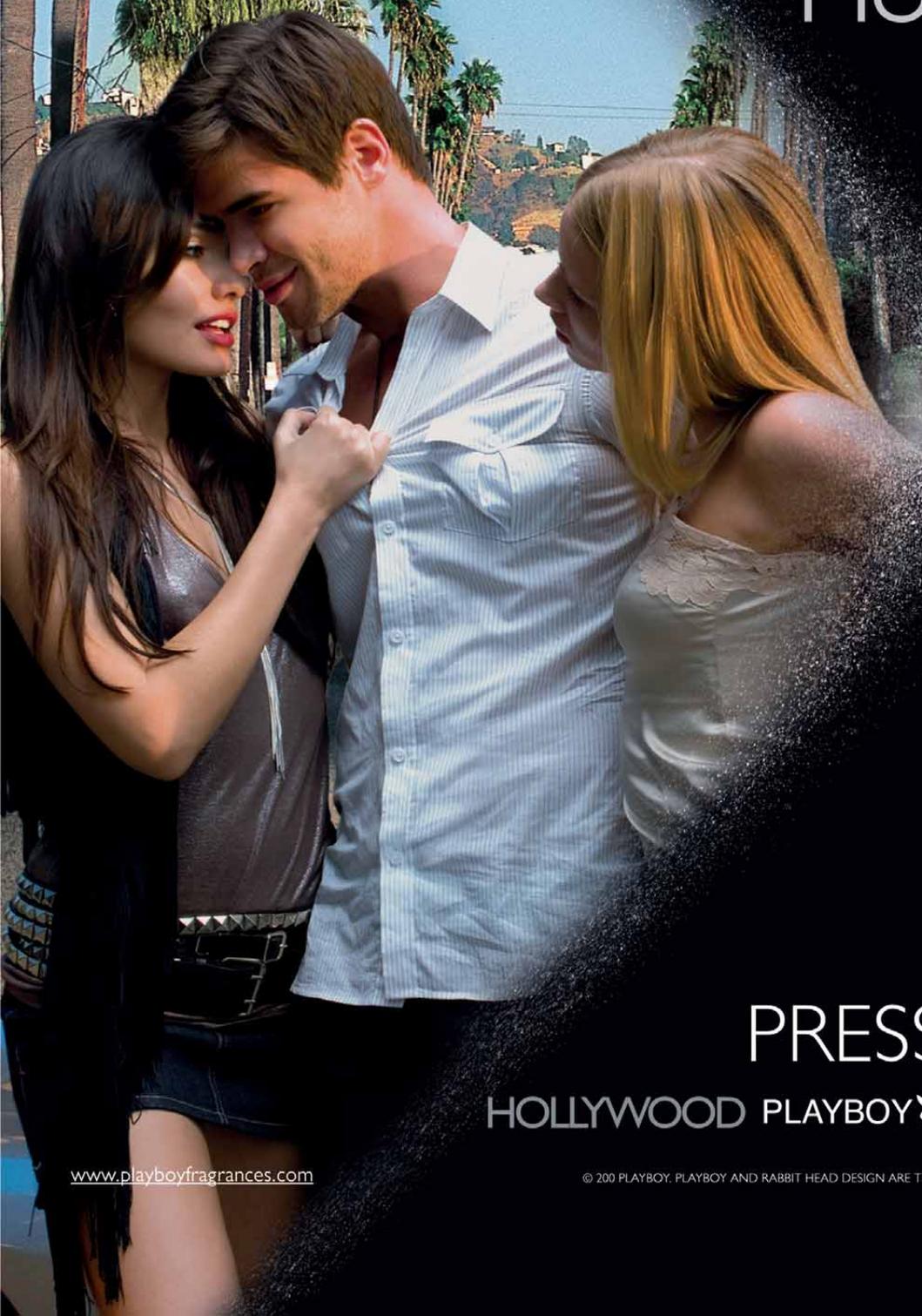
ANSWER KEY. 1-P; 2-I; 3-L; 4-D; 5-G; 6-O; 7-J; 8-F; 9-B (SERIOUSLY); 10-A; 11-N; 12-C; 13-K; 14-M; 15-H; 16-E.

Weaver for the first time since *Aliens*, over 20 years ago. What took you so long?
CAMERON: She was my safest casting choice to play the botanist, which is why I didn't want to cast her. I woke up one day and said, Don't be a dumb shit; she'll be perfect. Sig is worthy of awe, but she's also goofy, funny, deeply committed to acting, wicked smart and really sweet. There's no gun porn around her character in this film like there was for Ripley in *Aliens*, and she doesn't have big clanging brass balls. Instead, she has a scholarly hippie dowdiness that makes her look as though she no longer fits civilization—a little like Dian Fossey, which is interesting because I had originally gotten Sig into the Fossey movie *Gorillas in the Mist*; I bailed, but she stuck with the project. I'm really happy with the cast. We went way out on a limb casting Sam Worthington, but he came through for us. So did Zoe. As for Sigourney, we get along great because I don't have to be demanding with her; she is highly demanding of herself and me.
PLAYBOY: You have a rep for being demanding of everyone you work with. Ed Harris is rumored to have punched you on *The Abyss* and was quoted as saying the strain of making that 1989 movie had actors hurling couches out windows and smashing walls. Kate Winslet said making *Titanic* had her thinking, Please, God, let me die—and she nearly drowned.
CAMERON: I'll cop to my faults, but I'll also defend the situation in a rational way, and it goes like this: Isn't the purpose of being attracted to something intense and challenging—such as, say, white-water rafting—to come out the other side and tell everybody how you almost died? It doesn't mean you almost died. We simply let Kate *think* she was nearly drowning. A little sputtering and coughing does not count in my book, because I have almost drowned several times and know what it feels like. Asking God to please let you die? I was thinking the same thing at about the same point. *Titanic* was a catastrophic production financially and getting worse every day. Kate probably got some unnecessary stress from me, but I would say 99 percent of her stress was internally induced as part of her acting process.
PLAYBOY: You're saying she was telling the press post-white-water-rafting stories?
CAMERON: The real question is "Would she work with me again?" I'm sure it would have to be the right material and all those things, but my guess is, absolutely. I'd certainly work with her again; she's very talented. Whereas Leo DiCaprio switches his acting on and off like a faucet, Kate's acting process is to internalize all this stuff and use it. She was carrying the whole burden of this enormous production on her back. I probably didn't do enough to wrap the actors in cotton wool. The part of directing I wasn't good at—and probably still am not the best at, although I'm better now—is the personal touch: letting people know you appreciate what they're doing. Personally, I could not have oper-

ated under my direction back then; my pride wouldn't have allowed it.
PLAYBOY: Have you ever thrown or taken a punch on a movie set?
CAMERON: Absolutely not. It would be an alien concept for me. But I won't make a movie if I think I won't be tested and it won't be grueling for me, the crew, the actors. Anybody who signs on is going to be tested. So there are challenges, but it gets misconstrued that there was gross irresponsibility on the part of the production to put people into that situation, when in fact they wanted to be right there.
PLAYBOY: Some heard your "I'm king of the world" speech after winning the best director Oscar as a sure sign of a highly developed ego.
CAMERON: *Titanic* was wildly celebrated on every possible level, so sure, I knew how good that felt. It was almost like back in the 1980s when I got a taste of coke. That door opened a crack, and I saw a glimpse of what it was like to have something more powerful than you that you have to answer to. I put it down in, like, a week when most people—everybody around me—didn't. Getting a glimpse through that door and seeing that accolades can be so capriciously withdrawn made me know I didn't want to base my self-value on that.
PLAYBOY: How has working with underwater exploration crews instead of film crews in the past decade changed you?
CAMERON: People who have worked with me before think I'm just as crazy, but I think I've come back to moviemaking with a different perspective. On all my films prior to *Avatar*, the film was the one god you had to serve. Getting involved with NASA and various space projects and doing underwater exploration, I got to meet not only a diversity of people but also a diversity of cultures of thought. It was sobering and necessary to see that what we do in Hollywood means almost nothing to them. I look around the Hollywood landscape and see people who can't or don't want to exist outside that bubble. I don't want to be one of them. Now I see moviemaking as officially a job.
PLAYBOY: What aspects of Hollywood megasuccess made you want to climb into submersibles and film documentaries starring sunken ships, instead of movies starring Leonardo DiCaprio?
CAMERON: I made *Titanic* because I wanted to dive to the shipwreck, not because I particularly wanted to make the movie. The *Titanic* was the Mount Everest of shipwrecks, and as a diver I wanted to do it right. When I learned some other guys had dived to the *Titanic* to make an IMAX movie, I said, "I'll make a Hollywood movie to pay for an expedition and do the same thing." I loved that first taste, and I wanted more.
PLAYBOY: So *Titanic* was a means to an end.
CAMERON: *Titanic* was about "fuck you" money. It came along at a point in my life when I said, "I can make movies until I'm 80, but I can't do expedition stuff when I'm 80." My father was an engineer. I had

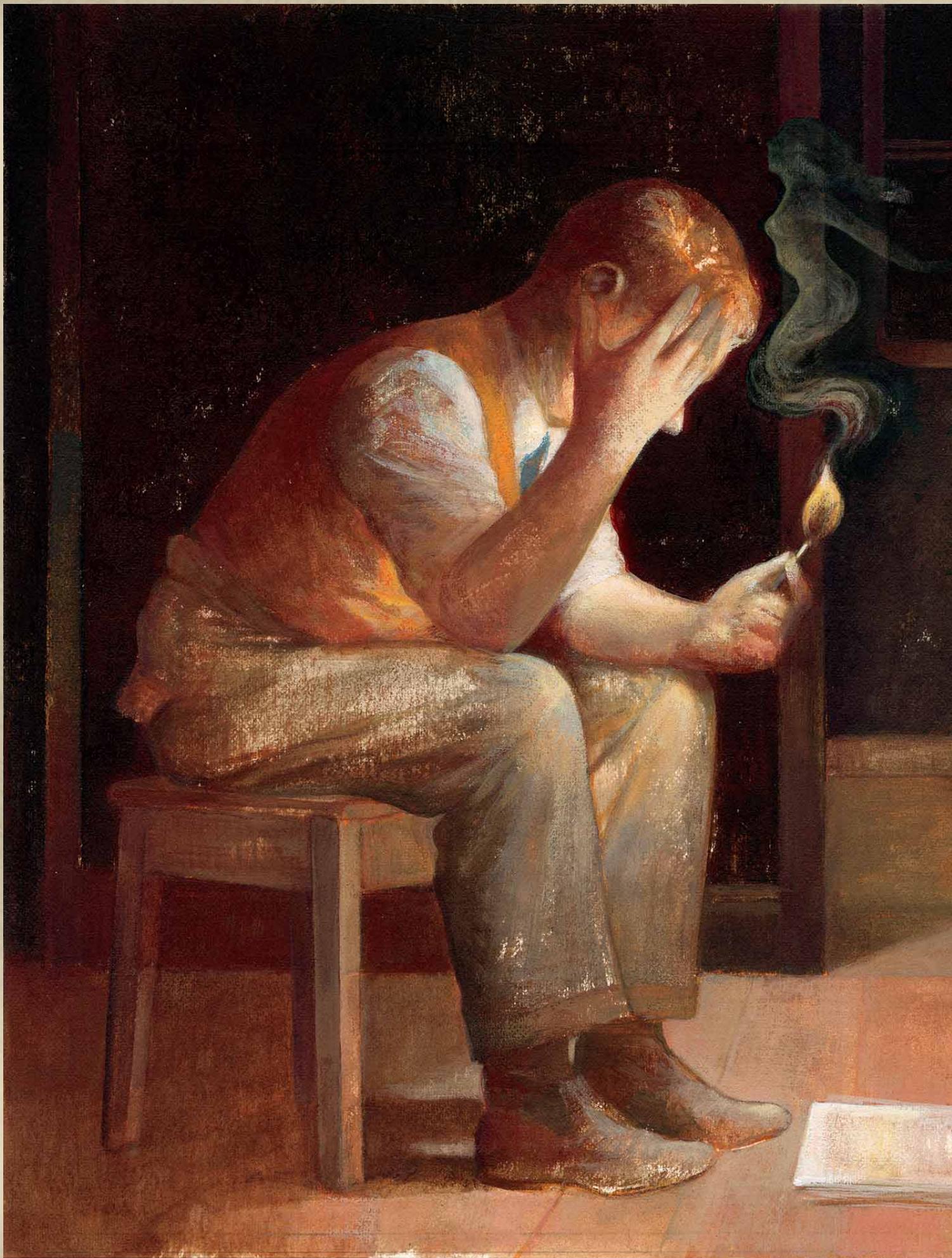
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WHO SAYS
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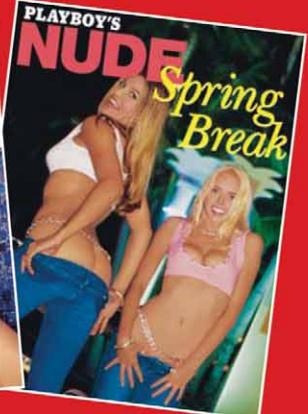
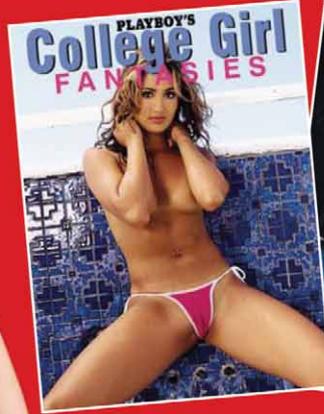


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**The Final
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For 32 years the heirs of Vladimir Nabokov safeguarded the literary giant's last novel in a vault in Switzerland while they wrestled with his request to destroy the unfinished manuscript. The decision was ultimately left to son Dmitri and deferred till now: This month Alfred A. Knopf will publish *The Original of Laura* (or *Dying Is Fun*), an event for readers the world over. *PLAYBOY* is proud to publish an exclusive excerpt and introduce another of Nabokov's mystifying and mythic heroines, *Flora*, the subject of a novel within the novel.

*F*lora's] husband...was a writer...—at least, after a fashion. Fat men beat their wives, it is said, and he certainly looked fierce when he caught her riffling through his papers. He pretended to slam down a marble paperweight and crush this weak little hand (displaying the little hand in febrile motion). Actually she was searching for a silly business letter—and not in the least trying to decipher his mysterious manuscript. Oh no, it was not a work of fiction which one dashes off, you know, to make money; it was a mad neurologist's testament, a kind of *Poisonous Opus*.... It had cost him, and would still cost him, years of toil, but the thing was, of course, an absolute

THE ORIGINS OF LAURA

Nabokov's 18th novel began, we can assume, as his other works did, with his particular and powerful alchemy. He started writing it in 1975 and persisted while hospitalized the few months before his death in 1977. He relied on his signature creative approach (the note cards included here are testament to that), but the book was never finished. In this event, he asked that the draft be destroyed. That we are able to publish a portion of it today is a privilege and a relief to admirers, biographers and readers of every stripe, but that it would survive was never a certainty.

Rarely has an author's dying request been so contested and concerned so many. Since the manuscript's existence became known, wife Véra Nabokov and son Dmitri have been subject to pleas and pieces in the press debating the matter. Among those leading the charge to preserve the novel was journalist Ron Rosenbaum. In a 2005 column in *The New York Observer* he describes "a terrible literary tragedy in the making"; in 2008 he is more conversant in all sides of the issue, querying on the one hand, "Does it matter what V.N. would feel, since he's long dead?" And on the other, "Do we owe no respect to his last wishes because we greedily want some 'key' to his work...? Does the greatness



of an artist diminish his right to dispose of his own unfinished work?" Véra was never able to answer these questions in her lifetime and left them to her son. As recently as 2005, at the age of 75, the opera singer, writer and translator of his father's work let it be known that he was prepared to fulfill his father's wishes. But, as he writes in his introduction to the forthcoming *The Original of Laura*, he first had to open the precious index-card box: "I needed to traverse a stifling barrier of pain before touching the cards he had lovingly arranged and shuffled. After several tries...I first read what, despite its incompleteness, was unprecedented in structure and style, written in a new 'softest of tongues' that English had become for Nabokov. I attacked the task of ordering and preparing, and then dictating, a preliminary transcript.... *Laura* lived on in a penumbra.... Very gradually I became accustomed to this disturbing specter that seemed to be living a simultaneous twin life of its own in the stillness of a strongbox and the meanders of my mind. I could no longer even think of burning *Laura*."

his landscapes, either unsold or loaned to him by kind friends and ignorant institutions—pictures that were said to be the glory of Russia, the pride of the people. How many times art albums had reproduced those meticulous masterpieces—clearings in pine woods, with a bear cub or two, and brown brooks between thawing snow-banks, and the vastness of purple heaths!

Native "decadents" had been calling them "calendar tripe" for the last three decades; yet Linde had always had an army of stout admirers; mighty few of them turned up at his exhibitions in America. Very soon a number of inconsolable oils found themselves being shipped back to Moscow, while another batch moped in rented flats before trouping up to the attic or creeping down to the market stall.

What can be sadder than a discouraged artist dying not from his own commonplace maladies, but from the cancer of oblivion invading his once famous pictures such as "April in Yalta" or "The Old Bridge"? Let us not dwell on the choice of the wrong place of exile. Let us not linger at that pitiful bedside.

His son Adam Lind (he dropped the last letter on the tacit advice of a misprint in a catalogue) was more successful. By the age of thirty he had become a fashionable photographer. He married the ballerina Lanskaya, a delightful dancer, though with something fragile and gauche about her that kept her teetering on a narrow ledge between benevolent recognition and the rave reviews of nonentities. Her first lovers belonged mostly to the Union of Property Movers, simple fellows of Polish extraction; but Flora was probably Adam's daughter. Three years after her birth Adam discovered that the boy he

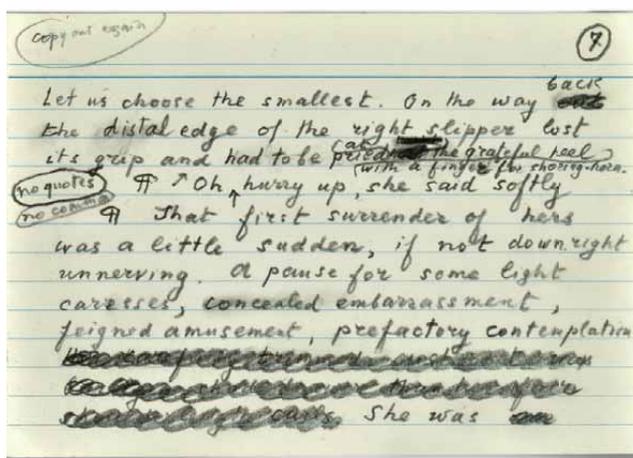
secret. If she mentioned it at all, she added, it was because she was drunk.

She was an extravagantly slender girl. Her ribs showed. The conspicuous knobs of her hipbones framed a hollowed abdomen so flat as to belie the notion of "belly." Her exquisite bone structure immediately slipped into a novel—became in fact the secret structure of that novel, besides supporting a number of poems. The cup-sized breasts of that twenty-four-year-old impatient beauty seemed a dozen years younger than she, with those pale squinty nipples and firm form.

Her frail, docile frame when turned over by hand revealed new marvels—the mobile omoplates of a child being tubbed, the incurvation of a ballerina's spine, narrow nates of an ambiguous irresistible charm (nature's beastliest bluff, said Paul de G watching a dour old don watching boys bathing).

Only by identifying her with an unwritten, half-written, rewritten difficult book could one hope to render at last what contemporary descriptions of intercourse so seldom convey, because newborn and thus generalized, in the sense of primitive organisms of art as opposed to the personal achievement of great English poets dealing with an evening in the country, a bit of sky in a river, the nostalgia of remote sounds—things

utterly beyond the reach of Homer or Horace.



INDEX CARD #7, CHAPTER ONE: THE FITS AND STARTS OF A FIRST DRAFT.

loved had strangled another, unattainable, boy whom he loved even more. Adam Lind had always had an inclination for trick photography and this time, before shooting himself in a Montecarlo hotel (on the night, sad to relate, of his wife's very real success in Piker's *Narcisse et Narcette*), he geared and focused his camera in a corner of the drawing room so as to record the event from different

angles. These automatic pictures of his last moments and of a table's lion-paws did not come out too well; but his widow easily sold them for the price of a flat in Paris to the local magazine *Pitch*, which specialized in soccer and diabolical *faits-divers*.

[Flora's] grandfather, the painter Lev Linde, emigrated in 1920 from Moscow to New York with his wife Eva and his son Adam. He also brought over a large collection of

With her little daughter, an English governess, a Russian nanny and a cosmopolitan lover, she settled in Paris, then moved to Florence, sojourned in London and returned to France. Her art was not strong enough to survive the loss of good looks as well as a certain worsening flaw in her pretty but too prominent right omoplate, and by the age of forty or so we find her reduced to giving dancing lessons at a not quite first-rate school in Paris.

Her glamorous lovers were now replaced by an elderly but still vigorous Englishman who sought abroad a refuge from taxes and a convenient place to conduct his not quite legal transactions in the traffic of wines. He was what used to be termed a *chameur*. His name, no doubt assumed, was Hubert H. Hubert.

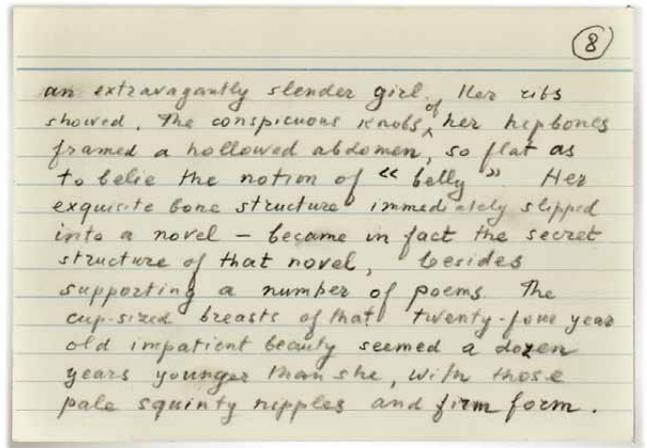
SHE WAS OFTEN ALONE IN THE HOUSE WITH MR. HUBERT, WHO CONSTANTLY "PROWLED" AROUND HER.

Flora, a lovely child, as she said herself with a slight shake (dreamy? Incredible?) of her head every time she spoke of those prepubescent years, had a gray home life marked by ill health, and boredom. Only some very expensive, super-Oriental doctor with long gentle fingers could have analyzed her nightly dreams of erotic torture in so-called "labs," major and minor laboratories with red curtains. She did not remember her father and rather disliked her mother. She was often alone in the house with Mr. Hubert, who constantly "prowled" (*rôdait*) around her, humming a monotonous tune and sort of mesmerizing her, enveloping her, so to speak, in some sticky invisible substance and coming closer and closer no matter what way she turned. For instance she did not dare to let her arms hang aimlessly lest her knuckles came into contact with some horrible part of that kindly but smelly and "pushing" old male.

He told her stories about his sad life, he told her about his daughter who was just like her, same age—twelve—same eyelashes—darker than the dark blue of the iris, same hair, blondish or rather palomino, and so silky—if he could be allowed to stroke it, or *l'effleurer des lèvres*, like this, that's all, thank you. Poor Daisy had been crushed to death by a backing lorry on a country road—short cut home from school—through a muddy construction site—abominable tragedy—her mother died of a broken heart. Mr. Hubert sat on Flora's bed and nodded his bald head acknowledging all the offences of life, and wiped his eyes with a violet handkerchief which turned orange—a little parlor trick—when he stuffed it back into his

heart-pocket, and continued to nod as he tried to adjust his thick outsole to a pattern of the carpet. He looked now like a not too successful conjuror paid to tell fairy tales to a sleepy child at bedtime, but he sat a little too close. Flora wore a nightgown with short sleeves copied from that of the Montglas de Sancerre girl, a very sweet and depraved schoolmate, who taught her where to kick an enterprising gentleman.

A week or so later Flora happened to be laid up with a chest cold. The mercury went up to 38° in the late afternoon and she complained of a dull buzz in the temples. Mrs. Lind cursed the old housemaid for buying asparagus instead of aspirin and hurried to the pharmacy herself. Mr. Hubert had brought his pet a thoughtful present: a miniature chess set ("she knew the moves") with tickly-looking little holes bored in the squares to admit and grip the red and white pieces; the pin-sized pawns penetrated easily, but the slightly larger noblemen had to be forced in with an enervating joggle. The pharmacy was perhaps closed and she had to go to the one next to the church or else she had met some friend of hers in the street and would never return. A fourfold



INDEX CARD #8, CHAPTER ONE: NABOKOV CONCEIVES FLORA'S APPEARANCE.

FABER PENCILS USED BY NABOKOV TO WRITE ADA.



Dear Mr. Hefner

TO: HUGH M. HEFNER CC, 1 p.

Montreux, Palace Hotel
 January 27, 1967

Dear Mr. Hefner,
 After receiving your bonus I now receive your prize.* I want to tell you how very much touched I am.

This is the first time that any magazine—or in fact any kind of publication—has awarded me a prize. But then *PLAYBOY* can be always depended upon to provide brilliant surprises.

Cordially,
 Vladimir Nabokov

* The editors of *PLAYBOY* had awarded the \$1,000 Best Fiction Award for 1966 to *Despair*.



THE NOVELS THE EYE AND DESPAIR RAN IN INSTALLMENTS IN OUR PAGES FROM 1965 THROUGH 1966.

TO: HUGH M. HEFNER CC, 1 p.

Montreux Palace Hotel
 Montreux, Switzerland
 December 28, 1968

Dear Mr. Hefner,
 I wish to thank you, Mr. Sectorsky and The Playboy for your letter, charming cards and gifts and the bonus.

It pleases me very much to know that "One Summer in Ardis"* (an excellent title suggested by Mr. Macauley) will appear in *PLAYBOY*.

Have you ever noticed how the head and ears of your Bunny resemble a butterfly in shape, with an eyespot on one hindwing?

Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,
 Vladimir Nabokov

* Excerpt from *Ada*.



PLAYBOY WAS THE FIRST TO EXCERPT ADA, OR ARDOR: A FAMILY CHRONICLE, IN APRIL 1969.

smell—tobacco, sweat, rum and bad teeth—emanated from poor old harmless Mr. Hubert; it was all very pathetic. His fat porous nose with red nostrils full of hair nearly touched her bare throat as he helped to prop the pillows behind her shoulders, and the muddy road was again, was forever a short cut between her and school, between school and death, with Daisy's bicycle wobbling in the indelible fog. She, too, had "known the moves" and had loved the *en passant* trick as one loves a new toy, but it cropped up so seldom, though he tried to prepare those magic positions where the ghost of a pawn can be captured on the square it has crossed.

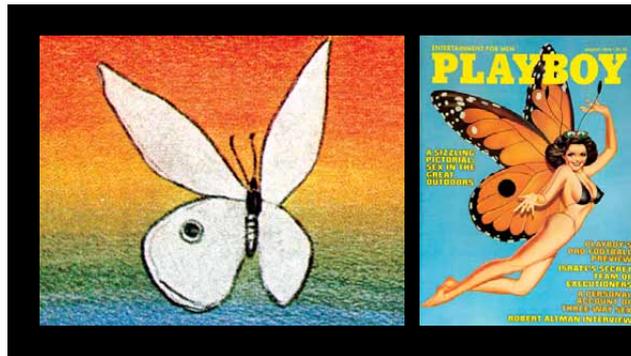
Fever, however, turns games of skill into the stuff of nightmares. After a few minutes of play Flora grew tired of it, put a rook in her mouth, ejected it, clowning dully. She pushed the board away and Mr. Hubert carefully removed it to the chair that supported the tea things. Then, with a father's sudden concern, he said "I'm afraid you are chilly, my love," and plunging a hand under the bedclothes from his vantage point at the footboard, he felt her shins.

Flora uttered a yelp and then a few screams. Freeing themselves from the tumbled sheets



scenti—which you had enjoyed for more than 30 years—to both acclaim and abuse as the world-renowned author of a sensational best-seller. In the aftermath of this cause célèbre, do you ever regret having written *Lolita*?

NABOKOV: On the contrary, I shudder retrospectively when I recall that there was a moment, in 1950 and again in 1951, when I was on the point of burning Humbert Humbert's little black diary. No, I shall never regret *Lolita*. She was like the composition of a beautiful puzzle—its composition and its solution



BUNNY INTO BUTTERFLY: NABOKOV'S ILLUSTRATION (LEFT) INCLUDED IN HIS 1968 LETTER PROVIDED THE CONCEPT FOR OUR AUGUST 1976 COVER.

her pedaling legs hit him in the crotch. As he lurched aside, the teapot, a saucer of raspberry jam and several tiny chessmen joined in the silly fray. Mrs. Lind, who had just returned and was sampling some grapes she had bought, heard the screams and the crash and arrived at a dancer's run. She soothed the absolutely furious, deeply insulted Mr. Hubert before scolding her daughter. He was a dear man, and his life lay in ruins all around him. He wanted [her] to marry him, saying she was the image of the young actress who had been his wife, and indeed to judge by the photographs she, Madame Lanskaya, did resemble poor Daisy's mother.

There is little to add about the incidental but not unattractive Mr. Hubert H. Hubert. He lodged for another happy year in that cosy house and died of a stroke in a hotel lift after a business dinner. Going up, one would like to surmise.

Flora was barely fourteen when she lost her virginity to a coeval, a handsome ballboy at the Carlton Courts in Cannes. Three or four broken porch steps—which was all that remained of an ornate public toilet or some ancient temple—smothered in mints and campanulas and surrounded by junipers, formed the site of a duty she had resolved to perform rather than a casual pleasure she was now learning to taste. She observed with quiet interest the difficulty Jules had of drawing a junior-size sheath over an organ that looked abnormally stout and at full erection had a head (concluded on page 164)

SPEAK, NABOKOV

IN 1964 THE AUTHOR, NOTORIOUSLY PUBLICITY AVERSE, GRANTED A RARE INTERVIEW TO *PLAYBOY*. IN THE SELECTIONS BELOW HE DESCRIBES HOW HE NEARLY CONSIGNED HIS MOST POPULAR (AND DERIDED) NOVEL TO FLAMES AND DETAILS THE IDIOSYNCRASIES OF HIS CREATIVE PROCESS

PLAYBOY: With the American publication of *Lolita* in 1958, your fame and fortune mushroomed almost overnight from high repute among the literary cognoscenti

at the same time, since one is a mirror view of the other, depending on the way you look. Of course she completely eclipsed my other works—at least those I wrote in English: *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, *Bend Sinister*, my short stories, my book of recollections; but I cannot grudge her this. There is a queer, tender charm about that mythical nymphet.

PLAYBOY: Can you tell us something about the actual creative process involved in the germination of a book?

NABOKOV: After the first shock of recognition—a sudden sense of “this is what I’m going to write”—the novel starts to breed by itself. The process goes on solely in the mind, not on paper, and to be aware of the stage it has reached at any given moment, I do not have to be conscious of every exact phrase. I feel a kind of gentle development, an uncurling inside, and I know that the details are there already, that in fact I would see them plainly if I looked closer... but I prefer to wait until what is loosely

called inspiration has completed the task for me. There comes a moment when I am informed from within that the entire structure is finished. All I have to do now is take it down in pencil or pen. Since this entire structure, dimly illuminated in one's mind, can be compared to a painting, and since you do not have to work gradually from left to right for its proper perception, I may direct my flashlight at any part or particle of the picture when setting it down in writing. I do not begin my novel at the beginning... I pick out a bit here and a bit there, till I have filled all the gaps on paper. This is why I like writing my stories and novels on index cards, numbering them later when the whole set is complete. Every card is rewritten many times. About three cards make one type-written page, and when finally I feel that the conceived picture has been copied by me as faithfully as physically possible—a few vacant lots always remain, alas—then I dictate the novel to my wife, who types it out in triplicate.... Art is never simple.



"I'm painting your Christmas present."





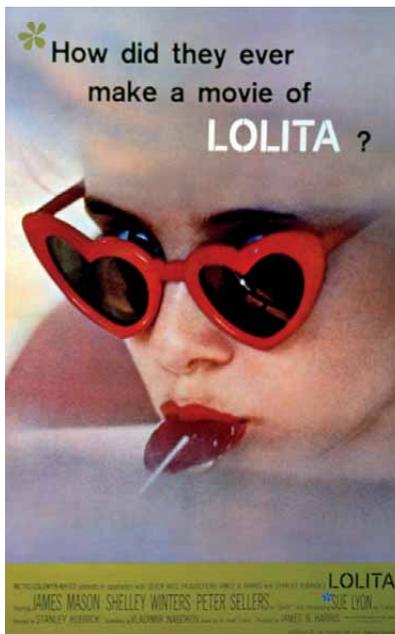
LOLITA

**THE BOOK THEY SAID COULD NEVER BE
MADE INTO A MOVIE. *PLAYBOY* EXPLORES
THE MAKING OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS
FILM OF THE 1960S IN THIS
HOMAGE STARRING SASHA GREY
AS DOLORES HAZE**

The ads asked, “How did they ever make a movie of *Lolita*?” The answer, *The New York Times* reported the day after it opened, was—they didn’t. Stanley Kubrick’s 1962 film sidesteps most of the eroticism of Vladimir Nabokov’s novel, contains no nudity, discreetly fades to black at the slightest hint of sex and uses the mature 15-year-old Sue Lyon as its 12-year-old nymphet. Kubrick made *Lolita* in England, excluding the novel’s odyssey across America, because he feared filming in the U.S. Even then, he said, “It was almost impossible to get the film played. Even after it was finished, it laid around for six months.” It’s hard to realize today how scandalous the novel was. Completed in 1953, the same year *PLAYBOY* was founded, it was shunned by publishers. After two years, Nabokov found a home for it with Maurice Girodias’s Olympia Press in Paris; a signed copy of that first edition now sells for \$35,000. After Graham Greene praised it, Putnam’s in New York took a chance and found itself with the fastest-selling new novel since *Gone With the Wind*. Its title added a new word to the English language.

Kubrick made the film two years before *Dr. Strangelove*, so he was not yet a cult hero. He commissioned a screenplay from Nabokov, but it was long enough for a six-hour film and too suggestive. Nabokov complained that only “ragged odds and ends” of his work were used. Kubrick’s screenplay, written with James Harris, made major changes.

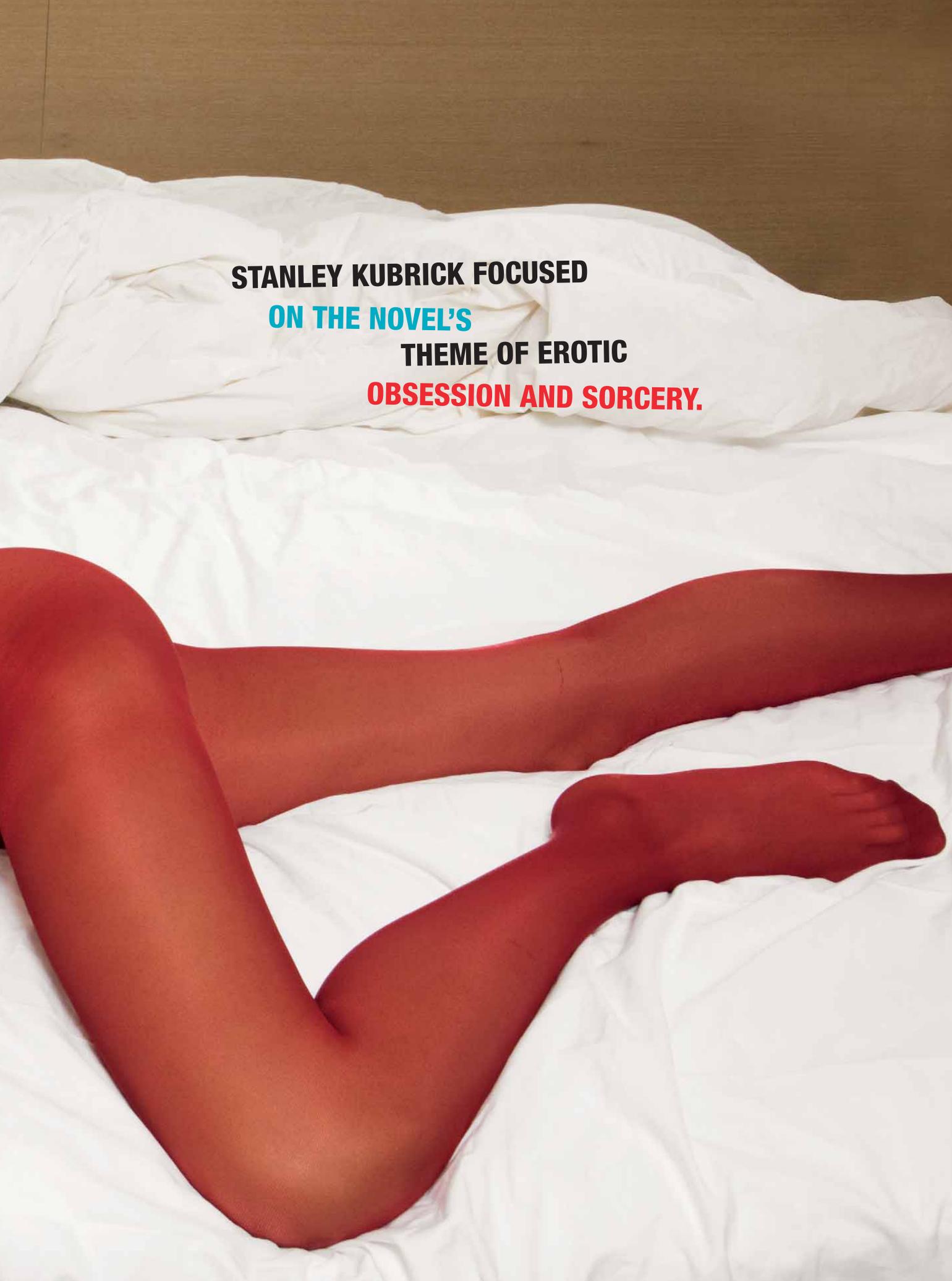
The filmmaker began by realizing that a frank treatment of a sexual liaison between a middle-aged professor and a 12-year-old girl violated the Production Code and would quite



BY ROGER EBERT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD KERN



A photograph of a person's legs, wearing bright red tights, lying on a white, wrinkled bedsheet. The legs are positioned in the lower half of the frame, with one leg bent at the knee and the other extended. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**STANLEY KUBRICK FOCUSED
ON THE NOVEL'S
THEME OF EROTIC
OBSESSION AND SORCERY.**



probably repulse audiences. He focused on the novel's theme of erotic obsession and sorcery. Certain young girls, Nabokov wrote, "reveal their true nature, which is not human, but nymphic (that is, demoniac); and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as *nymphets*." In other words, Professor Humbert Humbert was not evil but bewitched. Tell that to the judge.

After a famous search for his Lolita, during which eager mothers paraded their daughters before him, Kubrick settled on Lyon, whom he'd seen in a squeaky-clean role on *The Loretta Young Show*. For his Humbert he chose James Mason, who portrays not a horny lecher but a diffident, meticulously polite gentleman. Shelley Winters is a life force as Lolita's mother, a widow who covets Humbert and within a few weeks marries him—though not for the reasons she supposed. Peter Sellers plays the ubiquitous Quilty, a TV writer who also desires Lolita. Sellers does several accents in the film, persecuting Humbert while impersonating a cop, a German psychiatrist and a regular guy; he improvises a long scene in foreground, his back turned to Humbert, pretending to be a detective curious about the professor's underage traveling companion. These choices and Kubrick's detailed visual style make for a film that probably plays better today than in 1962, when many admirers of the novel felt betrayed.

Kubrick upends Nabokov's structure, beginning instead of ending with Humbert's murder of Quilty. He arrives much more quickly at Humbert's first sight of Lolita, sunbathing in the backyard of her mother's home, but the first half hour is devoted mostly to Humbert's introduction to a New Hampshire town he loathes. Mason is sublime in the subtle way he cannot tear his eyes from the girl. After Lolita's mother is killed by a car, Humbert schemes to get her alone overnight in a hotel, arriving at a point when audiences must have been holding their breath. How would Kubrick deal with this? He uses slapstick to defuse the scene. Mason looms yearningly over the sleeping girl, who awakens and makes it clear he is not going to share the bed. He and a bellman struggle with a spring-loaded cot. The next morning, when Lolita coyly suggests they play a "game" she learned from an older teen, Kubrick fades to black, but not routinely: He stays on the black screen a couple of beats too long, and the audience gets the message—how could a censor object to that? Then he depends on the subplot with Quilty, judging correctly that the film would lose tension after the morning.

Had he realized how severe his compromises with the novel would have to be, Kubrick said, "I probably wouldn't have made the film. Maybe the book was simply too good to be filmed."



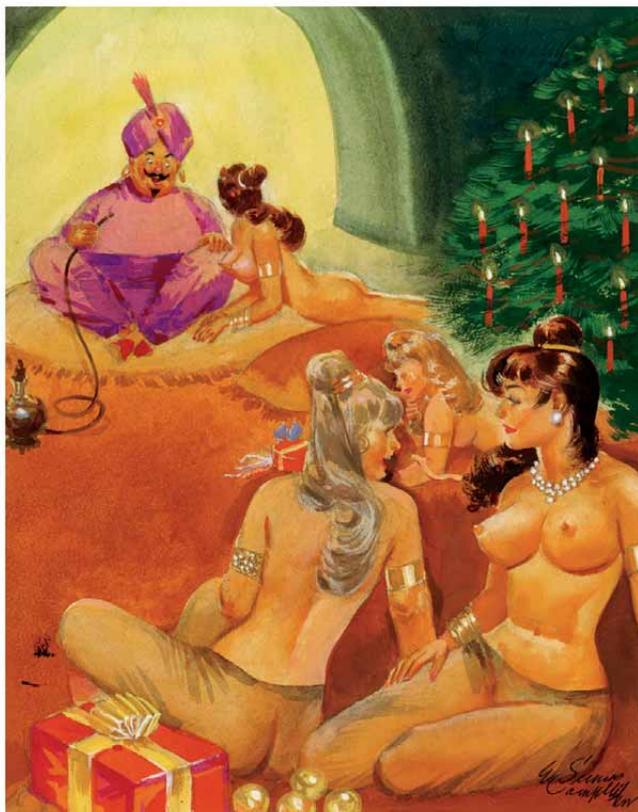
CLASSIC CARTOONS OF CHRISTMAS PAST



"I've been saved, thank you."



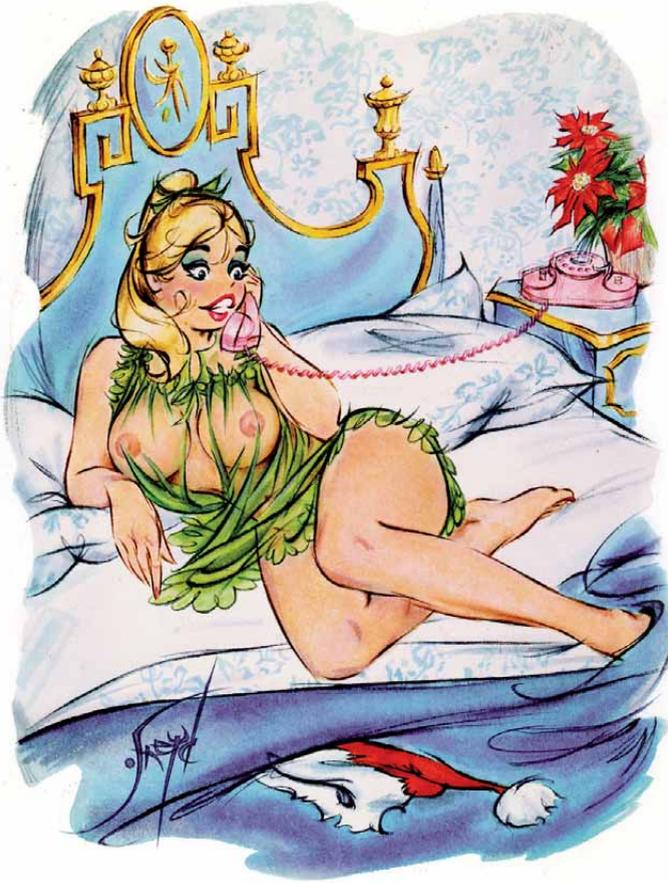
"Get a load of ol' Rudolph, the brown-nosed reindeer!"



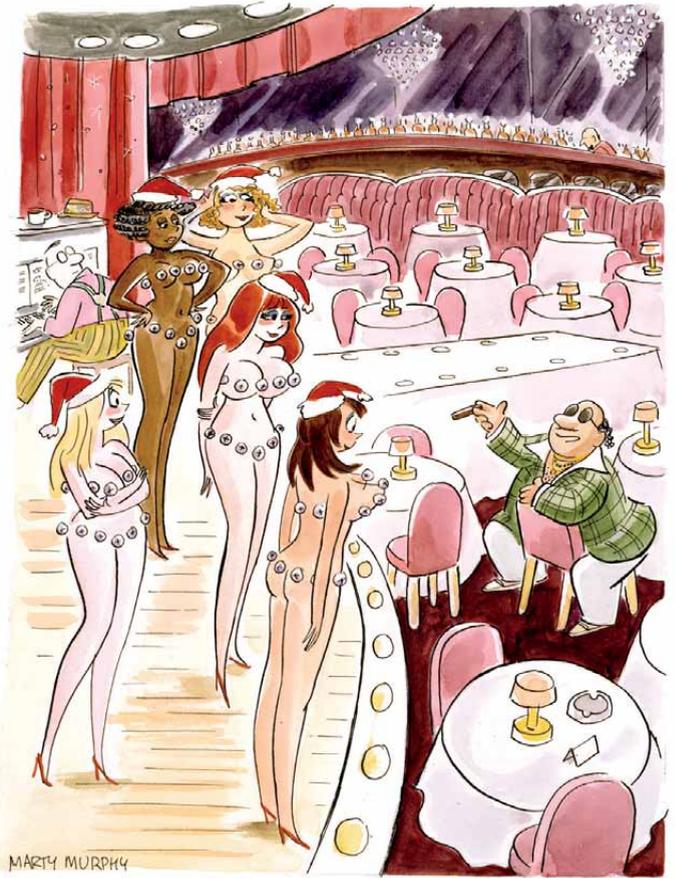
"He's easy to please. He wants the same thing every Christmas."



"And here we are all gathered around the tree, in front of the fire—that's me on top."



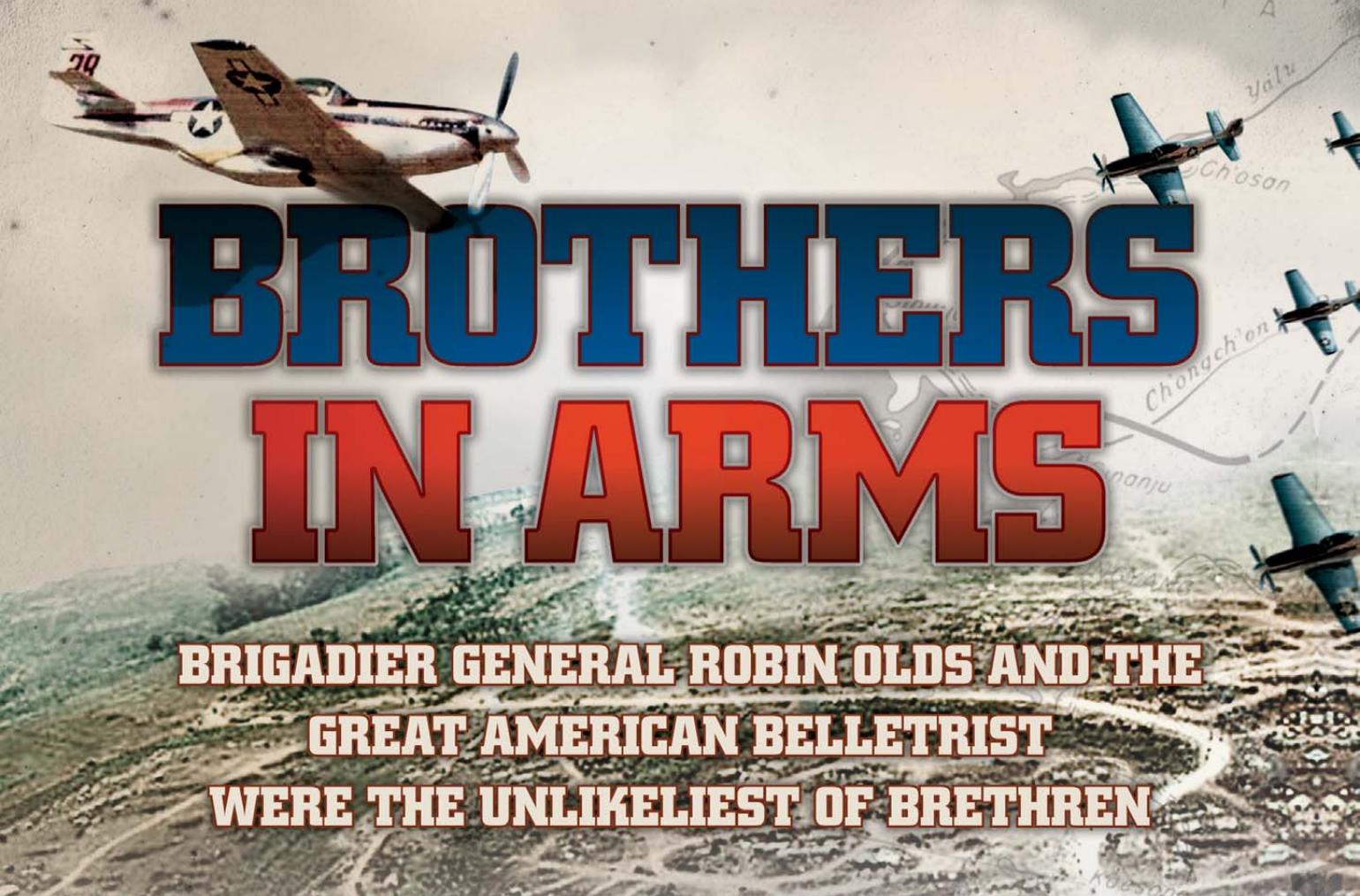
"All I know is every December 25th I wake up and this jolly little fat fellow is in the bed with me..."



"Once more, ladies, and this time I wanna really hear those bells jingle!"



"Terrific, eh? Each year we rent the old lady and come out here and have a real old-fashioned Christmas."



BROTHERS IN ARMS

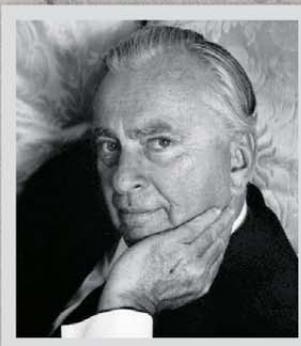
**BRIGADIER GENERAL ROBIN OLDS AND THE
GREAT AMERICAN BELLETRIST
WERE THE UNLIKELIEST OF BRETHERN**

BY GORE VIDAL

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

a self-styled newspaper of record, tells us of the life and recent death of a celebrated fighter pilot who elected to fight in three of our national wars (World War II, Korea and Vietnam). He was also my stepbrother. How did

this happen? Like so much in our lives it was brought on by the boredom and dissatisfaction of one Nina Gore Auchincloss Olds, whose restlessness with marriage of almost any sort was to bring together the unique aviation family of Major General Robert Olds. Like most of the military fliers of his generation, Olds had aggressively favored what was called in those days "a separate independent Air Force" in place of the Army Air Forces. And thanks to him, my father and others, a separate entity still known as the U.S. Air Force came into existence: Its birth was heralded by Bob Olds's period of service in the 1930s as a young military aide to the fabled brigadier general Billy Mitchell, whose thesis was that airpower was bound to dominate sea power. Bob himself was to demonstrate this by sinking an ancient battleship called the *Utah*, an adventure that demonstrated even to the most die-hard admiral what airpower



would be in our next war: not only decisive but preeminent. Although my mother had married a wealthy Mr. Auchincloss only on condition that there be no sexual activity between them, he changed the rules not long after we all moved into his Virginia estate called, inaptly, Merrywood. Unhappily for him, although he wanted children, he could not have normal orgasm accompanied by the traditional erection which makes festive such joyous matings, or so aficionados now assure me. I still recall the day beside the swimming pool at Merrywood when the general, a fairly constant visitor when Mr. Auchincloss was otherwise engaged in his brokerage house, arrived with a pair of

very large West Point boys, both of whom would magically become my stepbrothers when Olds and Nina were married in a suite at Washington, D.C.'s Wardman Park Hotel. On the right-hand page you can see the fully adult oldest son at the time he commanded a fighter wing in Vietnam. His younger brother Steven was not allowed to serve in the reconstructed Air Force on the grounds, the medic said, that his Hodgkin's disease would soon be fatal. Happily, it was not, and he enjoyed a long and useful life.

My mother's household was not a cozy place for the various children who were beginning to accumulate. Since both Olds boys were still at West Point I sometimes think that





Col. Robin Olds of the Eighth Tactical Fighter Wing with subordinate officers on returning from his 100th mission over North Vietnam.

Robin Olds, 84, Fighter Ace; Hero of Big Vietnam Battle

By DOUGLAS MARTIN

Brig. Gen. Robin Olds, a World War II fighter ace who became an aviation legend by commanding the Air Force wing that shot down seven MiGs over North Vietnam in the biggest air battle of the Vietnam War, died last Tuesday at his home in Steamboat Springs, Colo. He was 84.

The Air Force's most decorated pilot, Olds' congestive heart failure had been diagnosed a long time ago. He had a long military career, including the role of a Lightnings pilot in the Vietnam War. He was shot down in 1967 and spent 24 days in a prisoner-of-war camp.

Olds focused on nuclear strategy. General Olds argued for strengthening conventional warfare capabilities. "Throughout his career, he was a staunch advocate for better fighters, better pilot training and new tactics, culminating in the war-winning doctrine of surgical precision bombing that we use today," Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Air Force chief of staff, said in a statement after Olds' death.

Olds was born on July 14, 1921, in his mother, Eloise. His father, Maj. Gen. Robert Olds, a World War I pilot, helped devise the jet engine. Olds' single parent. He was killed at age 8 in an open-air plane crash operated by his father. He had hoped to attend West Point.



Robin Olds won great renown during the three wars in which he elected to serve. His June 20, 2007 obituary in *The New York Times* illuminated a life of adventure and defiant individualism. The *Times* called him "everybody's choice as the hottest pilot of the Vietnam war." In the black-and-white photo above, Olds—with his RAF mustache—and members of his fighter wing add stars to their MiG-kill scoreboard. He and his movie-star wife, Ella Raines, "were like new American gods come down to earth."

had they arrived a bit earlier I might have suffered less from a physically disagreeable response to my mother, whose presence in my vicinity often brought on uncontrollable vomiting. In due course, more happily, I had begun to read about Robin, whose career as an athlete at West Point was being noticed by the press, as he was an all-American football player, much as my father had been in 1917.

It is now odd for me to look to the left of this page and read the obituary of Robin, who has in my mind not changed at all since he proved to be the most formidable ace in the short history of the Army Air Forces. Now dead, we are told, at 84 he concentrated his last years on the development of airpower rather as my father had during the same period of his life—or, indeed, Bob Olds had done when he founded the famous Air Command for the transport of pilots and aircraft from the U.S. to the U.K.

After his enlistments in three air wars he was again successful in battle. Unlike most officers he did not settle into his generalhood, as he was far too restless for staff work. But he used his fame as a flier to get permission to return to combat duty, in Vietnam. Finally, when the Air Force Academy was invented, he was chosen to be the first commandant of cadets. He became notorious for a line he was heard to give voice to whenever things seemed to him to be a bit dull: "Vietnam is not much of a war, but it's the only war we've got." He also had a running commentary on the irony of his becoming—thanks to my mother having married his father—stepbrother to the only true persistent enemy of the only war we had.

At the end of his service, he commanded a fighter wing operating out of Germany. I have one very vivid memory of him on Bastille Day after the war when he and the beautiful Ella Raines, his movie-star wife, were walking along the right bank of the Seine; she wore a glittering

silver dress, and they were like new American gods come down to earth as a new era in history began. My father regarded Bob Olds as a tiresome bureaucrat somewhat out of place in the rather gung ho U.S. Air Force that the two of them had, perhaps more than any other high officers, helped create. Gene Vidal also saw in Robin a younger self while the whole lot of them remained dedicated to the necessity of an independent air force.

What do I remember most of that time? For boys who lived almost entirely with death and its nearness, the early Air Force pilots were very lively. Robin's great charm was his sardonic sense of humor. At a time when he thought the Royal Air Force was given far too much credit for stuff

HE BECAME NOTORIOUS FOR A LINE HE GAVE VOICE TO WHENEVER THINGS SEEMED TO HIM TO BE A BIT DULL: 'VIETNAM IS NOT MUCH OF A WAR, BUT IT'S THE ONLY WAR WE'VE GOT.'

he thought the Army Air Forces should be given some credit for, he grew a vast RAF mustache to show he

could do it too. This caused all sorts of consternation in the office of the chief of staff. But Robin held on to his mustache until he received orders to shave it off, dooming him to become a clean-shaven legend.

To end this military reminiscence I should note that the Army medics, after carefully misdiagnosing the problem I was having with my legs, let me go for sea duty. Robin, heroically, expanded his own legend in Vietnam, ending in the new Air Force Academy. As he had no son there will not be another General Olds as we had two in my lifetime: The ending of a story like Robin's is generally at Arlington. What made him so many times a functioning ace in the relatively new Army Air Forces, where he was already a unique figure, were his reenlistments. As can be seen on this page, *The New York Times* illuminated in its own luminous prose what Keats would have called Robin's "cloudy trophies." While talking to a contemporary pilot-general like himself, Robin said, "What do you think ever happened to those god-awful generals that my father had to contend with in the First World War?" The other general said comfortingly, "Haven't you figured it out? They are us."

As commandant of the Air Force Academy, Robin had come full circle in an astonishing (concluded on page 162)





“So, umm...does this mean I’m naughty, or nice?”

An inebriated guest is an entertaining guest—an abundance of booze makes everybody a little less critical of the terrible food they're being served.



Chelsea & Handler's Guide to the Holidays

Who needs Martha Stewart or Rachael Ray? Our expert is just like us—she does everything wrong and covers her crimes with vodka

LEAVE THE COOKING TO THE PROFESSIONALS

I love a big holiday meal with friends. And I'm a meat-and-potatoes kind of girl. I like baked hams, mashed potatoes, a big turkey stuffed with Vicodin and extra tryptophan—all the old standards. But I'm not very skilled in the kitchen. My dog has more culinary expertise than I do. I have trouble boiling eggs, and I learned a long time ago that the microwave isn't my friend. My last attempt at making something delicious for the holidays was in the third grade when I baked a Jolly Rancher pie and nobody spoke to me for the rest of the year. (Have you ever tried putting Jolly Ranchers in an oven? It's like a mini Hiroshima.)

When I host a Christmas party I like to pay other people to cook for me. It guarantees the meal won't be a complete disaster, or at least nobody on my guest list will come down with botulism. Luckily my brother is a professional chef, and I pay him handsomely to cook most of my meals. It's not always convenient, because he lives in New Jersey, and flying him out to Los Angeles twice a week can be a costly commute, especially now that he refuses to take the Greyhound bus.

Don't get me wrong; I never take credit for an elaborate dinner if I had nothing to do with its preparation. But if I've pitched in at all, maybe coming up with an ill-advised hors d'oeuvre involving goat cheese and Gummi Bears, I'll definitely blame it on somebody else.

DON'T GO OVERBOARD WITH THE DECORATIONS

When I was growing up there was a big house in Livingston, New Jersey that always had the best Christmas decorations. The front yard was like a Broadway set, with thousands of blinking lights, an animatronic Santa Claus and reindeer, and a nativity scene that looked like a wax museum display. It was insane, and every year thousands of people, including my family, would make a pilgrimage to the neighborhood just to admire it. Then we'd come back to our house, and I'd look at all the used cars in our driveway and the cheap lights my mom had thrown on the roof and not taken down all year, and I'd close my eyes and imagine a time when I'd never be humiliated by Christmas decorations again.

Not that I'm a complete scrooge. I have nothing against a little holiday decor; I just think it should be subtle. Take Christmas trees, for instance. I don't understand people who haul huge towering trees into their homes every season. I like my Christmas trees like I like my men: short and corpulent. And whenever possible, it should be a real tree, not one of those cheapo counterfeits. A Christmas tree should be like a good pair of breasts. Aluminum trees, like silicone boobies, are an affront to the holidays.

Also, never, ever decorate the outside of your home. Christmas, like sex, isn't something to be shared with the general public. From the outside my house looks bleak and uninhabited. But inside it's like the baby Jesus himself threw up white lights.

At *Chelsea Lately* I've tried to encourage a pro-drinking environment, not just for parties but as a general rule.



DON'T MIX FRIENDS AND EMBARRASSING RELATIVES

No matter what TMZ claims to the contrary, trust me—I love my family. But certain relatives should never be introduced to your friends and colleagues, especially during the holidays. My father has absolutely no social decorum at Christmas meals. He's usually the first to start eating, hoarding the food like he's preparing for a famine. And watching him eat is like watching a dryer on the spin cycle.

He loves mussels, so my mom sometimes made him mussels marinara for a preholiday snack, just to distract him from the real food. But he would get so enthusiastic, he'd cover himself in marinara sauce, drenching the sweater he had been wearing for three straight days. Oh, and he also likes to urinate over our balcony. That's not something you want other people to witness, especially people who aren't directly related to you.

With a relative like that, you need to keep his interactions with non-family members to the absolute minimum. I'm careful to include my dad only in holiday gatherings that involve my five siblings and their respective spouses. We adore him, but we don't want anybody else to find out about him. It's gotten so bad, we've gone so far as to tell him Christmas has been moved to a different day. If you can host a Christmas party without inviting your mussel-eating, balcony-peeing father, you've cut your odds of personal humiliation almost in half.

KEEP YOUR GUESTS WELL LUBRICATED

The moment your guests walk in the door, they should be handed a glass of alcohol. Wine, vodka, margarita—it doesn't matter. Not only will it lower their inhibitions—an inebriated guest is an entertaining guest—but an abundance of booze makes everybody a little less critical of the terrible food they're being served.

I have only a few rules when it comes to drinking. If you start slurring words, falling down or repeating yourself, you've had too much. But as long as you're not making a public spectacle

of yourself, I'm pretty accepting of most drunken behavior. And I always welcome my guests to sleep over. The best Christmas parties usually turn into big sleepover parties. I have a few spare bedrooms for just such occasions, and I'll also set up tents outside for those less hygienic guests. (You know who you are.)

Alcohol also makes a great social lubricant for office parties. At *Chelsea Lately* I've tried to encourage a pro-drinking environment, not just for parties but as a general rule. If my employees need to do drugs or drink on the job, I can't know about it legally, but I'm not opposed to it. Whatever you need to get through the day. And that holds true for our annual Christmas party.

If you drink so much that it seems a good idea to hook up with one of your co-workers, try to do it somewhere a little less public, like a car. We have an official *Chelsea Lately* El Camino that we use for just such an emergency. If I notice a pair of drunken employees getting a little too frisky with each other, I'll throw them the El Camino keys and guide them toward the parking lot. If you're going to make a mistake you'll regret tomorrow, you may as well do it somewhere classy.

INVITE A FEW CELEBRITIES

I'm going to assume that, like me, you have a mid-level cable-TV show on E! and thus have easy access to a wide range of celebrity friends willing to attend your next holiday party. Here are a few suggestions to add to your guest list: Paula Abdul and David Hasselhoff are a must, especially with all the free time they both have. And don't forget about Michael Jackson's doctor. He's gotten a bad rap because of the whole possibly-giving-Jackson-a-fatal-overdose thing, but I think he'd be a lot of fun to have around for Christmas. If nothing else, he'd definitely bring enough drugs to keep everyone at the party really relaxed.

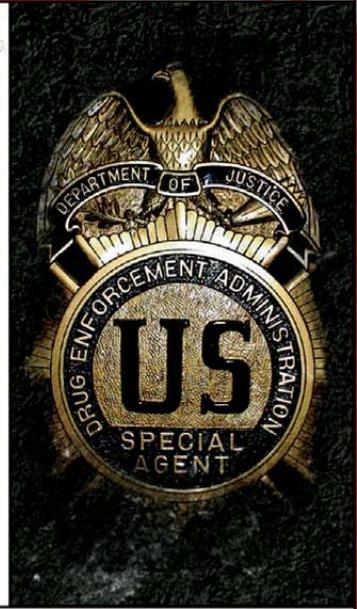
But what if you don't know any C-list celebrities, semifamous people or even reality-show contestants? In a pinch, a little person can be just as good. What they lack (concluded on page 162)



I don't understand people who haul huge towering trees into their homes. I like my Christmas trees like I like my men: short and corpulent.

DOPE

LEE LUCAS ROSE THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE DEA THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY—EMPLOYING SHODDY EVIDENCE, PARTNERING WITH THUGS AND ABUSING THE AUTHORITY OF HIS POSITION



BY T. J. ENGLISH

Geneva France remembers vividly the day a task force of federal narcotics agents came pounding at her front door. It was six A.M. and she was about to get her kids ready for school. Her third child, 21 months old, was barely out of the crib. Once she woke the kids and sent them off, France would head to her part-time job at a nursing home, where she emptied bedpans and cleaned and fed old people for a living. Just 22 years old, an African American single mother struggling to raise three children on a subsistence income, she had a difficult enough life without a swarm of lawmen arriving at her house.

"It's the sheriff's department. Open the door or we'll kick it in."

France opened the door. A stream of cops flooded through, in uniform and carrying guns. They fanned out around the house, opening drawers and turning everything upside down.

"They went rambling," France recalls. "They weren't searching for anything in particular, so I didn't know why they were there until one of the officers asked me, 'Where are the drugs?'"

"Drugs?" she said. "What drugs?"

A female cop made her stand against the wall and spread her legs. France was searched, cuffed and told, "We're taking you in."

"One of those officers threw my baby on the sofa, and the baby started crying. The female officer said, 'We're taking your kids to child welfare.' I said, 'The hell you are.'"

Luckily for France, her sister Natasha was there. Natasha lived at the residence and was 18, old enough to serve as legal guardian. She missed school that day to stay with the kids so they would not be seized by the government.

No one told France what she was being charged with. She was led out into the predawn darkness, loaded into a sheriff's car, driven to a holding cell 70 miles away in Cleveland, booked, photographed, fingerprinted and shuffled off to arraignment court. "I was more shocked than frightened," she says. "I remember thinking, This will all be over soon. They made some kind of mistake. They gonna have to let me go."

France had no way of knowing, but her long nightmare had only begun.

She had become a small fish caught in a big net. Her arrest on federal narcotics charges was part of a massive drug sweep in Mansfield, Ohio, an economically depressed industrial town of 50,000 inhabitants in the Northern District of Ohio. On the same morning France was arrested, nearly 30 drug busts took place in



WOLFGANG VON SCHLIEFFEN



LEE LUCAS

FAUSTINO RICO TORO

GREG WHITE

HELMUT GROEBE



Removida en el círculo George Rodriguez, junto a otros agentes y Lee Lucas, otro cuestionado agente

Clockwise from top: Attorney Owen (center) and victims Nabors (in black), Ballard (standing) and France (in red). Groebe (seated) and Lucas face Von Schlieffen in a surveillance tape. Lucas (far left) had a posting in Bolivia in the mid-1990s. Then—U.S. attorney Greg White. Lucas with attorney outside courthouse. Informant Bray's mug shot.



the area, the culmination of a six-month investigation known as Operation Turnaround.

The case was spearheaded by veteran DEA agent Lee Lucas. In Mansfield Lucas was dependant on local informant Jerrell Bray, a thug, convicted criminal and diagnosed schizophrenic. Together Lucas and Bray made street-level crack deals around town for two months, with Lucas often posing as a friend of Bray's. Bray would make the overture by phone or in person, allegedly with someone interested in buying or selling crack or powder cocaine. A location would be set, and sometimes a surveillance team recorded the transaction. Then one morning in November 2005 the arrests went down in dramatic fashion—doors busted open, drug-sniffing dogs let loose in people's homes, occupants commanded to "get on the fuckin' floor!"

No large caches were netted by the investigation, but it didn't matter. Informant Bray and Agent Lucas were prepared to identify each and every defendant in court if necessary.

The busts made headlines in Cleveland and the surrounding area; Operation Turnaround was touted as a major success. The star of the show was Special Agent Lucas, a Cleveland boy made good. In his career Lucas had handled major drug cases in Miami and South America; now he was back home serving as a white knight in the war on drugs.

Unfortunately this scenario was seriously flawed and built on a tissue of lies. It will take years to calculate the collateral damage—the mess challenges not only a star DEA agent and those who supervised and prosecuted his cases but the entire criminal justice system in which he operated and the nature of the war in which he served.

IF IT'S NOT A CELEBRITY
OR A WEALTHY WHITE DEFENDANT
THEN WHO GIVES A DAMN?

Law enforcement personnel in the Northern District of Ohio will tell you it's not difficult to make dope cases in the town of Mansfield. In 2008 Oprah Winfrey devoted an entire hour to Richland County's drug problem, using a panel of local addicts, former dealers and cops to illustrate her point. As one attorney remarked, "Making dope busts in Mansfield is like shooting fish in a barrel."

The fruits of the Mansfield arrests were numbingly familiar—poor blacks (25 of the 26 people arrested were African American), marginally educated, some with previous legal trou-

bles, swept up in a collective show of force. Most people quickly copped a plea. Some defendants had been out on parole and were now facing life sentences. Pleading guilty in exchange for a lesser sentence was par for the course, part of the give-and-take that keeps our judicial system from collapsing under the weight of more drug cases than any city, district or state can handle.

There was one small glitch: A startling number of the people charged—including Geneva France—claimed they weren't present during the drug transactions. They had been misidentified, and they could prove it.

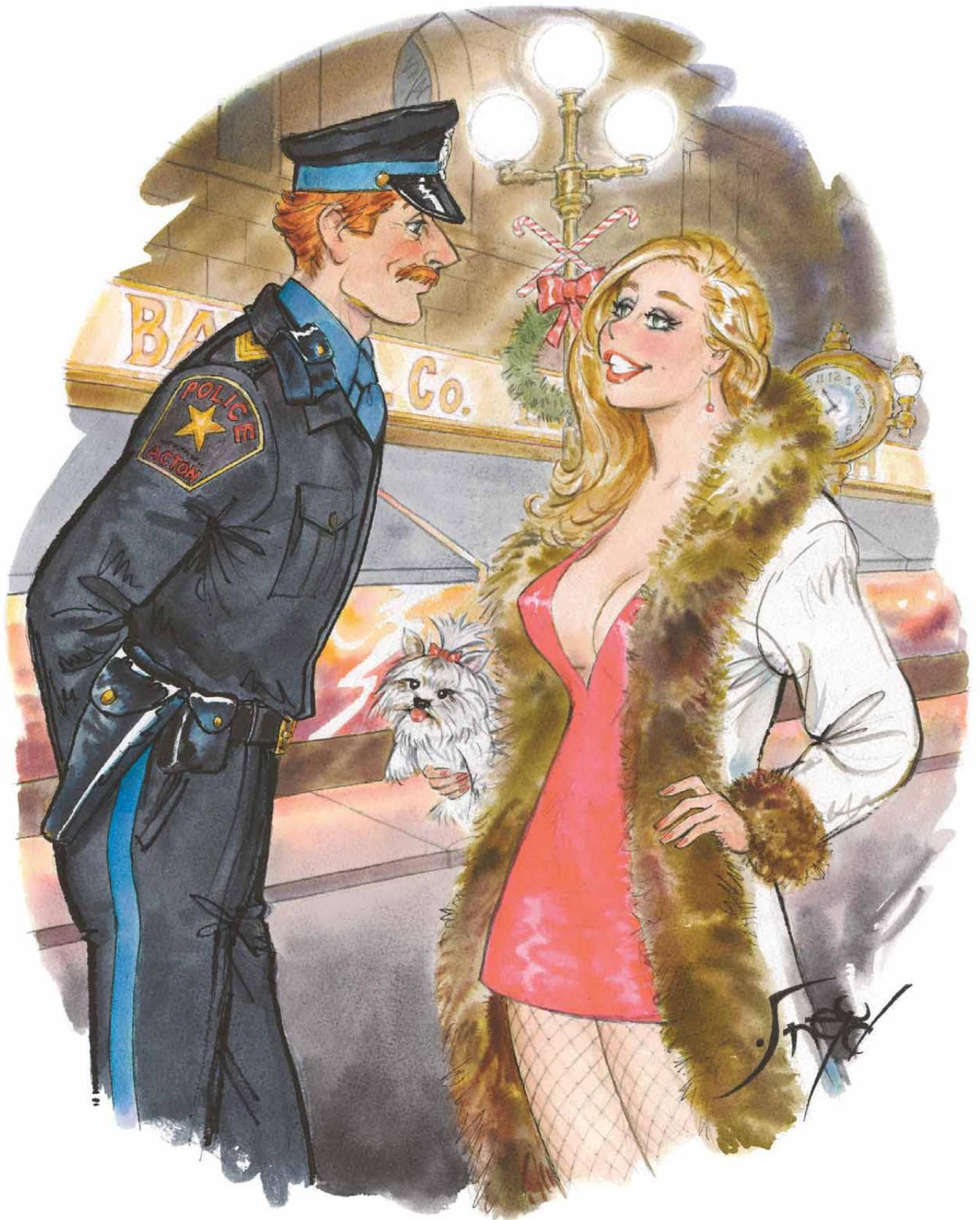
Their protests were met with a collective *ho hum* by the authorities. Don't criminals often plead innocence? Assistant U.S. Attorney Blas Serrano, lead prosecutor for Operation Turnaround, was surprised some defendants opted to go to trial. That was unusual, but if they wanted to go through the time and hardship of adjudication, facing sentences of 10 years to life in prison, the government was ready to take them on.

One parolee defendant was wearing an ankle monitor when his drug transaction supposedly took place, and he could prove he wasn't there. Another was on a plane to Chicago and had a boarding pass and flight records to back that up. The U.S. attorney's response was "So what?" They had Bray and Lucas, who would swear the defendants engaged in drug transactions.

France said she was home braiding a friend's hair at the time Bray and Lucas alleged she climbed into their 1997 Chevy Suburban and sold them more than 50 grams of crack. Who was going to believe a single mother and her friend in the face of a star DEA agent?

In February 2006, after a four-day trial, France was found guilty. Even though she was a first-time offender, mandatory sentencing dictated that she serve 10 years behind bars. When she still maintained her innocence at the sentencing, U.S. District Judge Patricia Ann Gaughan berated her and called her a pathological liar.

All these plea bargains, claims of innocence and guilty verdicts stemming from Operation Turnaround would normally have gone unnoticed. It is a truism of the drug war that arrests and indictments make headlines, but what follows unfolds in obscurity deep within the bowels of the criminal justice system. If it's not a celebrity or a wealthy white defendant, then who gives a damn? No one beyond France's lawyer and family would have lost a moment's sleep over



"I'm just offering a little 'piece' on Earth."

her conviction, were it not for an unexpected bombshell delivered by Bray.

In May 2007 the rat who pointed his finger at so many fellow African American citizens turned against his white overseer, Lucas. "Everything I tell you may spin your head but it's true," Bray told Carlos Warner, a criminal defense attorney with the federal defender's office in Ohio. Bray claimed he and Lucas had railroaded nearly 30 people on fraudulent drug charges.

Bray's confession sent shock waves that reverberated throughout the country—particularly in jurisdictions where Lucas had made cases and put people behind bars during his 19-year career.

In January 2008 then-U.S. attorney Greg White announced that in light of Bray's confession and after review of the evidence, many convictions could not stand. To date 23 people have had their convictions overturned and been released, including France, who served 16 months in prison for a crime she didn't commit.

In May 2009 Lucas was charged in an 18-count federal indictment with knowingly making false statements in DEA reports, obstruction of justice, perjury and multiple civil rights violations.

The events playing out in Ohio are similar to those in Tulia, Texas, where many of the town's African Americans had been rounded up and convicted on drug charges based on the uncorroborated testimony of Tom Coleman, a highly decorated undercover agent and son of a Texas Ranger. It took years to prove Coleman was a liar. Eventually, in August 2003, 35 of the 38 people convicted were pardoned by Governor Rick Perry but only after an NAACP call for an inquiry exposed Coleman's malfeasance.

In Mansfield, as in the Tulia scandal, there were early signs that many cases were rotten. Yet prosecutors still sought convictions based on weak evidence supplied by Lucas and the task force. They put the agent on the stand and let him use the full authority of his position as an officer of the law to sway juries.

Working as a DEA agent must have felt perfect to Lee Michael Lucas. At St. Edward High School the star wrestler often talked about becoming a cop. After graduating in 1986 he enrolled at Baldwin-Wallace College and worked part-time as a bouncer. While in college Lucas interned with the DEA, the preeminent federal agency in the government's war on drugs. Unlike the buttoned-down types at the FBI, DEA agents tend toward improvisation and daring undercover operations—men of action versus intellectuals or crime analysts.

Lucas graduated from college in 1990 with a degree in criminal justice; within months he was accepted into the DEA

and was trained at its academy in Quantico, Virginia. In 1991 Lucas received his first assignment, to the hottest spot in the drug war: Miami.

With his stocky wrestler physique Lucas looked more like a biker than a federal agent. He exhibited an enthusiasm for undercover work—he wore his hair long, sometimes in a ponytail, and dressed like a man of the streets. Occasionally he grew a goatee or handlebar mustache. If he wanted, Lucas could look like one tough hombre. In the Miami DEA office agents considered him to be a valuable asset.

"He was an excellent agent," said Frank Tarallo, Lucas's supervisor in Miami. "He worked really well undercover and did everything. Today no one wants to do undercover work, but he did. He did surveillance, handled seizures and worked well with informants."

Tarallo became a mentor to Lucas. A former Los Angeles police officer, Tarallo had been a member of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, a precursor to the DEA. He was old school. Says Gary McDaniel, a Florida-based private investigator, "To understand Lucas, you have to start with Frank Tarallo. He comes from a law enforcement culture that believes the end justifies the means. Tarallo is partly responsible for having created Lucas."

With Tarallo as second in command in Miami, Lucas received plum assignments. In his early 20s Lucas became a special agent in a major cocaine case right out of *Miami Vice*.

The coke deal in the case involved many moving parts. Two Cuban drug dealers were sprung from prison so they could circulate as CIs (confidential informants) in Miami's cocaine underworld. The two were paid \$20,000 each to relocate their families, then assigned to a joint task force that included Miami police officers, agents from Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and young Lucas of the DEA.

Setting up a coke deal in Miami in the early 1990s was not difficult. The task force soon organized a major transaction: More than 400 kilograms of Colombian coke, with a street value of more than \$10 million, would be shipped via speedboat from the Bahamas to a place called Manny's Marina. (Manny's owner, a convicted dope dealer, was to receive \$500,000 for cooperating.)

That many of the major players were convicted felons working for the government wasn't unusual. But it was unusual to have a rookie agent who spoke no Spanish at the time, fresh out of Quantico, to be working on this case. Clearly Lucas was being groomed to be a frontline soldier in the war on drugs.

The cocaine arrived in U.S. waters on the night of September 4, 1992. After the bales were transferred to a boat manned by task force members,

the drugs were then taken to a government warehouse.

The shipment was supposed to be delivered to a local smuggler named Gilberto Morales, but Morales was having trouble finding \$600,000 to close the deal. The Colombians and the Bahamians grew concerned; they suspected Morales and his partners were planning to rip them off. Two contract killers from Colombia were dispatched to get to the bottom of things. Morales became terrified. And that's when Peter Hidalgo got involved.

Hidalgo had sold Morales boat equipment. "I dealt with many shady characters," says Hidalgo. "Sure, I knew people used powerboats to smuggle cocaine. I don't get to choose my customers, but I was careful. There was a sign on the wall of my store that said IN GOD WE TRUST. EVERYBODY ELSE PAYS CASH. I was not in the cocaine business and made sure I could not be implicated in any way—or at least that's what I thought."

Morales knew that Hidalgo had sold boat parts and equipment to the Bahamians who were now threatening to have him killed. The Bahamians trusted Hidalgo. Morales asked Hidalgo to call them and reassure them he was not seeking to cheat them, that he was a man of his word. Says Hidalgo, "I knew the Bahamians from the boat business. They knew I was an honest businessman. If I didn't do this for Morales, he might wind up dead with his body floating in the Miami River. I defused the entire situation."

Today, speaking by phone from the Federal Correctional Institution in Coleman, Florida, Hidalgo realizes that making the call was the biggest mistake of his life. It made it possible for various informants and Special Agent Lucas to set him up as a major player.

On the night of September 8, 1992, Hidalgo was arrested and charged with being the kingpin of the entire operation. Hidalgo was stunned: "I had heard of things like this from movies and TV shows; now I was living it."

Hidalgo was offered a deal. If he pleaded guilty he would receive an 11-year sentence and likely be released in nine. He was also asked to testify against others with a chance to become a paid informant for the DEA. Remembers Hidalgo, "I turned them down. I was innocent. And it would go against everything I believe to become an informant for any government, even the United States, a country I love."

Though prosecutors had no evidence other than his phone call and the testimony of Lucas and a fellow agent, Hidalgo was found guilty and given four life sentences.

Throughout the case Lucas misstated the criminal histories of his CIs. Hidalgo and other convicted defendants in the case tried unsuccessfully to use Lucas's misrepresentations to get their

(continued on page 150)



PLAYBOY'S

MUSIC 2009 POLL

VOTE FOR YOUR
FAVORITE ARTISTS
IN OUR ANNUAL
CELEBRATION
OF MUSIC





When you think about the music of 1977, maybe you recall Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* or the Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks*. And for 1991, it's *Nevermind* by Nirvana and *Metallica*. So what about 2009? The biggest music star this year was Michael Jackson, an emblem of the 1980s who hadn't released a new record in eight years and who in death reclaimed the chart supremacy he coveted. The biggest rock band was the Beatles, emblems of the 1960s who hadn't released a new record in 39 years.

That makes it sound as though 2009 sucked, right? A year of exploitation and necrophilia, of unoriginality and nostalgia, of hearing "Billie Jean" on CNN and "A Hard Day's Night" on an Xbox or a PS3? But that's not the case. In our recession-era paradigm, years can no longer be measured and memorialized by blockbuster albums. The

record industry is dying, buried under the rubble of collapsing CD sales, but the music business has never been better. All day long we're surrounded by it in unprecedented measure.

In this bountiful year great music came to us from many directions: A friend transmits a hot Mos Def song via IM. We discover an overlooked 2007 album by No Age, a rampaging punk duo, on Rhapsody. With a Sirius XM subscription we hear Bob Dylan and Mojo Nixon interpret the scriptures of lost American music. Free weekly downloads at the iTunes Music Store introduce us to Cage the Elephant and Owl City. At the Wolfgang's Vault site we stream incredible concerts—Miles Davis in 1971, the Rolling Stones in 1973, the Hold Steady in 2009—from a selection numbering in the thousands. Our love of Chromeo, funky young scamps from Canada, leads us to Live From Daryl's House, a site on

which Daryl Hall of Hall and Oates airs high-quality webcasts of his rec-room sessions with different pals.

On *Glee*, the dweebs of McKinley High deepen our love of "Rehab" and "Gold Digger." Even more amazingly, we download terabytes of files from RAR blogs, where obsessive collectors post and notate more rare music—even out-of-print vinyl and regional 45s—than you could ever listen to. It's like a food pantry—but with music.

Sure, 2009 also launched joyful new sing-alongs by the Black Eyed Peas and 3OH!3, outré rock by Mastodon and Ida Maria, more sick rhymes from Jay-Z and Ghostface—but the biggest star in music right now is technology. That's not a computer on your desk; it's a big jukebox with a library limited only by the capacity of your hard drive and the speed of your downloads. As the Black Eyed Peas like to say, mazel tov!

IN 2009 SHAWN CARTER QUIT HIS DAY JOB, THE BEATLES CAME BACK AND MICHAEL JACKSON DEPARTED. ALTHOUGH THE YEAR'S MUSIC WON'T WIN AWARDS FOR ORIGINALITY, WE WILL REMEMBER IT AS A TIME OF PROFOUND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE. CAST YOUR VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE SONGS, ALBUMS AND PERFORMERS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES. WE'LL BE BACK WITH THE WINNERS IN OUR MARCH 2010 ISSUE.

→ PLACE A CHECK NEXT TO YOUR FAVORITE IN EACH CATEGORY.

ROCK BEST ALBUM

- DEAD WEATHER, *HOREHOUND*
- GREEN DAY, *21ST CENTURY BREAKDOWN*
- MASTODON, *CRACK THE SKYE*
- DAVE MATTHEWS BAND, *BIG WHISKEY*
- PARAMORE, *BRAND NEW EYES*
- PEARL JAM, *BACKSPACER*
- U2, *NO LINE ON THE HORIZON*
- TEGAN & SARA, *SAINTHOOD*
- WILCO, *WILCO (THE ALBUM)*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:

COUNTRY BEST ALBUM

- JOHN ANDERSON, *BIGGER HANDS*
- ROSANNE CASH, *THE LIST*
- ERIC CHURCH, *CAROLINA*
- GUY CLARK, *SOMEDAYS*
- MIRANDA LAMBERT, *REVOLUTION*
- PATTY LOVELESS, *MOUNTAIN SOUL II*
- BUDDY & JULIE MILLER, *WRITTEN IN CHALK*
- RICKY SKAGGS, *SOLO*
- GEORGE STRAIT, *TWANG*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



MIRANDA LAMBERT

WORLD BEST ALBUM

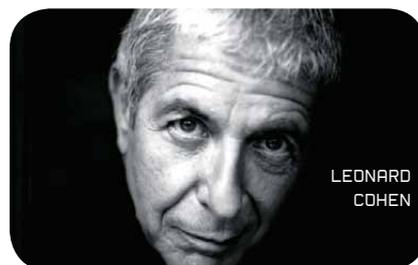
- AMADOU & MARIAM, *WELCOME TO MALI*
- RUBÉN BLADES, *CANTARES*
- BURAKA SOM SISTEMA, *BLACK DIAMOND*
- BEBEL GILBERTO, *ALL IN ONE*
- A HAWK & A HACKSAW, *DÉLIVRANCE*
- JAH CURE, *THE UNIVERSAL CURE*
- TARRUS RILEY, *CONTAGIOUS*
- OUMOU SANGARE, *SEYA*
- VIEUX FARKA TOURÉ, *FONDO*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:

HIP-HOP BEST ALBUM

- DJ QUIK & KURUPT, *THE BLAQKOUT*
- EMINEM, *RELAPSE 2*
- GHOSTFACE KILLAH, *GHOSTDEINI*
- JAY-Z, *THE BLUEPRINT 3*
- LIL BOOSIE, *SUPERBAD*
- LIL WAYNE, *REBIRTH*
- MOS DEF, *THE ECSTATIC*
- RAEKWON, *CUBAN LINX II*
- TWISTA, *CATEGORY FS*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



LADY GAGA



LEONARD COHEN

BREAKOUT BEST ALBUM

- GRIZZLY BEAR, *VECKATIMEST*
- IDA MARIA, *FORTRESS ROUND MY HEART*
- LADY GAGA, *THE FAME*
- LIVING THINGS, *HABEAS CORPUS*
- LONELY ISLAND, *INCREDIBAD*
- METRIC, *FANTASIES*
- SILVERSUN PICKUPS, *SWOON*
- REGINA SPEKTOR, *FAR*
- YEAH YEAH YEAHS, *IT'S BLITZ!*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:

LIVE BEST BAND

- AC/DC
- KENNY CHESNEY
- LEONARD COHEN
- COLDPLAY
- METALLICA
- NINE INCH NAILS
- PHISH
- BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE E STREET BAND
- U2
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



EMINEM

TO VOTE BY MAIL, SEND BALLOT TO:

PLAYBOY MUSIC POLL, 680 NORTH LAKE SHORE DRIVE, CHICAGO, IL 60611
MAIL YOUR ENTRY NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15, 2009.
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO VOTE ONLINE GO TO PLAYBOY.COM/MUSICPOLL.

→ PLACE A CHECK NEXT TO YOUR FAVORITE IN EACH CATEGORY.



MARK TURNER OF FLY

JAZZ
BEST ALBUM

- JOSH BERMAN, *OLD IDEA*
- FLY, *SKY & COUNTRY*
- ROBERT GLASPER, *DOUBLE BOOKED*
- ROY HARGROVE, *EMERGENCE*
- KEITH JARRETT, *TESTAMENT*
- DONNY MCCASLIN, *DECLARATION*
- CHRIS POTTER, *ULTRAHANG*
- TYSHAWN SOREY, *KOAN*
- ALLEN TOUSSAINT, *THE BRIGHT MISSISSIPPI*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:

BEST **SONG**

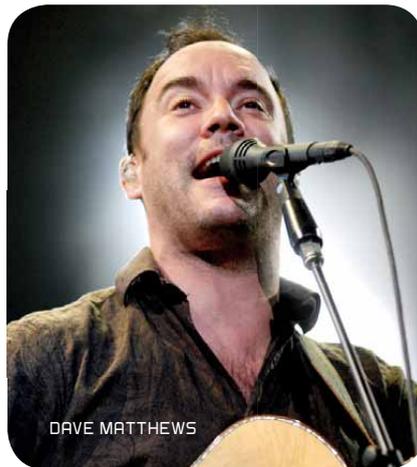
- BEYONCÉ, "SINGLE LADIES"
- BLACK EYED PEAS, "BOOM BOOM POW"
- COBRA STARSHIP, "GOOD GIRLS GO BAD"
- GREEN DAY, "KNOW YOUR ENEMY"
- IDA MARIA, "I LIKE YOU SO MUCH BETTER"
- JAY-Z, "RUN THIS TOWN"
- KINGS OF LEON, "SEX ON FIRE"
- MGMT, "TIME TO PRETEND"
- ASHER ROTH, "I LOVE COLLEGE"
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



KINGS OF LEON

R&B
BEST ALBUM

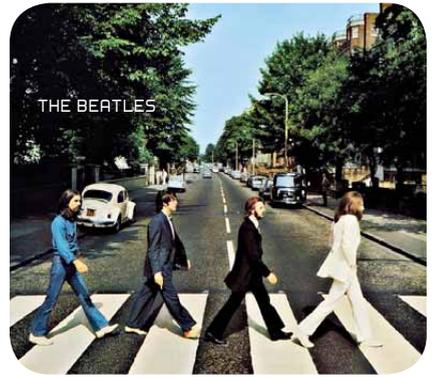
- AMERIE, *IN LOVE & WAR*
- BEYONCÉ, *I AM...SASHA FIERCE*
- CHRISSETTE MICHELE, *EPIPHANY*
- THE-DREAM, *LOVE VS. MONEY*
- ANTHONY HAMILTON, *THE POINT OF IT ALL*
- KERI HILSON, *IN A PERFECT WORLD*
- MAXWELL, *BLACKSUMMERS' NIGHT*
- T-PAIN, *THR33 RINGZ*
- TREY SONGZ, *READY*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



DAVE MATTHEWS

ALT-ROCK
BEST ALBUM

- LILY ALLEN, *IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU*
- ANIMAL COLLECTIVE, *MERRIWEATHER*
- DECEMBERISTS, *THE HAZARDS OF LOVE*
- FEVER RAY, *FEVER RAY*
- HOLD STEADY, *A POSITIVE RAGE*
- MODEST MOUSE, *NO ONE'S FIRST*
- MONSTERS OF FOLK, *SHANGRI-LA*
- PHOENIX, *WOLFGANG A. PHOENIX*
- RAVEONETTES, *IN & OUT OF CONTROL*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



THE BEATLES

REISSUE
BEST ALBUM

- BEASTIE BOYS, *PAUL'S BOUTIQUE*
- BEATLES, *ABBEY ROAD*
- FIRE IN MY BONES, *AMERICAN GOSPEL*
- AL GREEN, *LIVIN' FOR YOU*
- BUDDY HOLLY, *MEMORIAL COLLECTION*
- PEARL JAM, *TEN: COLLECTOR'S EDITION*
- ART PEPPER, *THE ART HISTORY PROJECT*
- RADIOHEAD, *OK COMPUTER*
- RICHARD THOMPSON, *WALKING ON A WIRE*
- WRITE-IN VOTE:

HALL
OF FAME

- DR. DRE
- GENESIS
- HALL & OATES
- JEFFERSON AIRPLANE
- N.W.A
- POLICE
- PRINCE
- STOOGES
- U2
- WRITE-IN VOTE:



BOND

JAMES CAMERON

(continued from page 42)

studied to be an engineer and had a mental restlessness to live the life I had turned my back on when I switched from the sciences to the arts in college.

PLAYBOY: You've been a diver for years. When you make so many potentially dangerous exploration dives, how much are your wife and kids on your mind?

CAMERON: Whenever we tout one of our documentary films we sort of emphasize the risk or that we're going into unexplored territory, doing things few have done. The reality is it's pretty darn safe. Having said that, it can be quite white-knuckle when something unexpected happens. I've spoken at NASA seminars and symposia about the nature of risk because I make action movies and have managed to lead seven deep-ocean expeditions with no fatalities or significant injuries. And my films have been relatively injury-free—well below the industry average—because we have a pretty rigorous approach to safety.

PLAYBOY: Do you observe any rituals when you're about to climb into a submersible?

CAMERON: You don't want to put a big emphasis on it because you're there to do a job and stay focused. But every time I close the hatch of a submersible I say to whoever is gathered to see us off, "I'll see you in the sunshine." Of course there's no sunshine down there, so to say that means you're coming back to the surface. On most of our dives we come back at night because we stay way too long, and the only people waiting are a couple of bored deckhands. By that time the people who were waving and wishing you luck 16 hours earlier are asleep somewhere or drunk in their cabin.

PLAYBOY: As you mentioned, your father was an electrical engineer. Your mother was an artist and a nurse. How are you most like and most unlike them?

CAMERON: I'm a pretty representative fusion of their DNA, a Mendelian genetics experiment gone well. That created a lot of tension, though, because my father was very authoritarian and pragmatic, but my mom had a romantic sense of wanting to head for the hills, to explore. My mom used to nurture what I was about by taking me to the Royal Ontario Museum to draw. My idea of a great weekend was to spend it drawing, going hiking or building something, like a medieval siege engine.

PLAYBOY: You came of age in the late 1960s and early 1970s. How did your parents view the sexual revolution, drugs and the antiwar movement?

CAMERON: They were pretty much against everything. I can't think of anything my dad was for except hockey. He used to throw my comics and science-fiction books in the trash because he considered them mental junk. I'd go

out, wipe off the coffee grounds and spaghetti and read them under the covers at night. He treated science fiction as if it was porn. I actually don't think I had any porn, but I had the occasional **PLAYBOY** I kept well hidden.

PLAYBOY: You spent your first 17 years in Canada. Do you ever feel Canadian?

CAMERON: I went back to get an honorary degree at a Canadian university. When everybody stood and sang the national anthem, I stood onstage in front of a thousand Canadians just moving my lips because I had forgotten the words. I was never into the national anthem and never even went to a football game in high school, so I never had occasion to sing it.

PLAYBOY: You weren't a high school jock?

CAMERON: In a small, very jocky school I was president of the science club, which consisted of me, some other lab rats and a Czechoslovakian girl who could barely speak English. I had been accelerated twice in elementary school, so I was two years younger than everybody and small. I hung out with the smart, wide-bell-bottomed, paisley-shirt, hair-down-the-middle-of-your-back counterculture rejects. I didn't do drugs and looked like an accountant. Jocks would come up to me in the hall and punch me for no reason.

PLAYBOY: Have you since run into any of those guys?

CAMERON: Yes, and if you ever go to a 25th high school reunion, make sure that in the previous two months you've made the world's highest-grossing movie, won 11 Academy Awards and become physically bigger than most of those guys who used to beat you up. I walked up to them one by one and said, "You know, I could take your ass right now, and I'm tempted, but I won't." Actually, they were all nice guys except for one who was still big and mean. I left him alone.

PLAYBOY: Did anything in your childhood predict you'd gravitate to the career you're in today?

CAMERON: I could always get kids on my block to rally around some harebrained idea, such as, "Hey, let's build an airplane." It doesn't occur to kids that you don't build planes, but we built one that flew briefly until the ropes broke. A high school biology teacher encouraged us to do something interesting, so we started a theater arts program with a small group of kids craving something besides the football or basketball game. I did production design, lights and scenery and wrote and directed a little. Funny, but I didn't immediately relate it to some kind of career path.

PLAYBOY: How did your life change when your father's job relocated the Cameron family to Fullerton, California when you were 17?

CAMERON: In Canada there was a general resentment against America. We lived in a border town, and America was this huge culture generator that constantly bathed

us in its radiation. To move to Los Angeles was to go into the belly of the beast. At first I thought the culture was all about cars. The kids seemed so shallow. I wanted to shake them and say, "Can't you see how you're destroying the earth with your materialistic values?" I started college six months after we moved, and of course I learned to drive. In the U.S., if you don't have a car, or at least a license and your dad's car, you're not getting laid.

PLAYBOY: That's pretty much in the fine print on most driver's licenses. So you got laid?

CAMERON: Yeah, and I wound up marrying that girl seven years later. She was my girlfriend in college, on and off. We had a lot of fun. She was a waitress at Bob's Big Boy, and I worked at a machine shop. We were just two blue-collar kids who'd go out to the desert and have a large time, drive cars fast and be hellions. I was shaking off all my practical conservatism—before that I hadn't smoked dope, hadn't driven fast. It's a good thing I survived, is all I can say. And here I was living in the street-racing capital of southern California.

PLAYBOY: Did you do any street racing?

CAMERON: Hell yeah! All my new friends had hot rods and almost killed me a bunch of times on rides—accidentally spinning out or sliding backward down a freeway off-ramp because they thought they were such good drivers. After enduring these white-knuckle terror rides for about a year, I got a 1969 Mach 1 Mustang and made it really fast by tearing apart the engine, lowering it, putting in Coney shocks, putting the battery in the back to transfer the weight. I stripped everything off it and made my own kind of fiberglass hood and spoiler—all the stuff you now just buy aftermarket.

PLAYBOY: Were you good at street racing?

CAMERON: I got good by systematically taking my friends—the ones who white-knuckled me—for their karmic rides. After that they never rode with me again. I'd go out on my own at three or four A.M. and teach myself to drive really fast, then go out on wet nights and drive sideways for hours, putting myself into a drift to learn how to get out of it. There was no name for that then, but now we call it drifting.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever let loose behind the wheel now?

CAMERON: As a family man and father of five, especially two teenagers, I have to lead by example. For me to get in a dumb wreck racing would send the wrong signal. What's also taken the fun out of it is that there's no place you can drive fast anymore.

PLAYBOY: What were your earliest jobs?

CAMERON: My first job was at 15, working as an assistant to a crazy Viennese pastry chef in a giant restaurant that served 1,500 dinners a night in Niagara Falls, near

(continued on page 144)

SEX *in* CINEMA 2009

THE BEST EROTIC SCENES FROM THE BIG SCREEN IN THEATERS—
AND THE SMALL ONE IN YOUR LIVING ROOM



Whatever happened to sex in cinema? The simple answer is it moved to a more welcoming home on cable—especially when you consider that 2009's biggest box-office attractions include the chaste and shiny *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, *Star Trek and Up*. While mainstream Hollywood moviemakers persist in wooing preadolescents and grown-ups stuck in various stages of arrested development, those of us in search of edgier, more risqué and adult entertainment are happy to stay home and tune in to such Showtime and HBO fare as *True Blood*, *Californication*, *Hung* and *Dexter*. Luckily,

BY STEPHEN REBELLO

though, sexual collisions between consenting adults haven't been completely banished from the multiplex. Not only do foreign-language films hold up their end of the erotic bargain but so do some interesting American movies such as *Two Lovers*, starring independent thinkers Joaquin Phoenix and Gwyneth Paltrow, and the raunchy, sexy screen version of Chuck Palahniuk's *Choke*, starring Sam Rockwell. And what about Jessica Biel's steamy pole dance in *Powder Blue*? As long as there are adventurous movie stars and bold directors, eroticism will not be pushed entirely to the margins. Besides, we'll always have cable.



Hot Number

Ferociously sexy Penélope Cruz flies high and wild in the stylish musical *Nine* (opposite). But with Cruz swinging half naked on a trapeze, no one will rate her less than a 10.

Getting a Rise

In the horror comedy *Jennifer's Body* (above), a lesbian-lite romp between demonically possessed Megan Fox and Amanda Seyfried gets so heated, they levitate.

Why So Serious?

Beautiful, doomed university student Penélope Cruz invites professor Ben Kingsley to take a bedroom exam well worth boning up for, in *Elegy* (below left).

Good Vibrations

The unrated DVD version of the merily scatological *Van Wilder: Freshman Year* (bottom left) features one of the hero's hotties and choosing from his stash of dildos.

View to a Kill

Julianna Guill's breasts steal the show in the Blu-ray version of *Friday the 13th: Killer Cut* (below right), which has more sex and skin than the wimpy theatrical release.





Powder Power Jessica Biel as a coke-addicted L.A. mother forced to strip to pay for medical care for her ailing kid is the best thing about *Powder Blue*.

Blue Man Group Billy Crudup goes through an accidental “atomization” process in *Watchmen*, emerging as the muscled-up and well-endowed Dr. Manhattan.



Casta Diva

The knockout appeal of model turned actress Laetitia Casta in the French film *Visage* (above) recalls that of the va-voom screen sex symbols of the 1950s and 1960s.

Moody Blues

On Showtime’s sexy *Californication* (above right), novelist and sex junkie David Duchovny juggles an ex-girlfriend (Natascha McElhone) and a crippling case of writer’s block.

Voulez-Vous Coucher Avec Moi Ce Soir?

Threesomes are all in a night’s work for Billie Piper on the Brit TV series *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (middle right). By day she’s a secretary; by night she’s a high-ticket prostitute.

Bad Rap

Freeze-dried seductress Gwyneth Paltrow haunts and teases her emotionally battered neighbor Joaquin Phoenix in *Two Lovers* (bottom right). He left this for a career in rap?





Boys' Town Adrian Grenier and the boy-men of *Entourage: The Complete Fifth Season* hook up with women who are as wonderfully shallow as they are.

Queen for a Day Natalie Dormer's Anne Boleyn loses her head with Jonathan Rhys Meyers's Henry the VIII in *The Tudors: The Complete Second Season DVD*.



Love Bites

In the bold HBO series *True Blood* (below), the much talked about body-melding sex scenes between real-life lovers Anna Paquin and Stephen Moyer show that cable regularly goes where movies won't dare. Yes, we're talking about you, *Twilight*.

A Dish Best Served Hot

In the Austrian thriller *Revanche* (above), Irina Potapenko's lavish physical charms and acting skills as a debt-ridden Ukrainian prostitute helped the movie snag an Oscar nomination for best foreign-language film of the year.

Cat and Mouse

The serpentine plot twists of *Duplicity* (below) left limited screen time for the sexual tension between Julia Roberts and Clive Owen. Maybe the movie would have been a bigger hit if it featured more of that Roberts-Owen sizzle.





Milk Maids In the road-trip comedy *Sex Drive*, virginal new grad (Josh Zuckerman) discovers that some Amish women are buxom, friendly and available.

Burn, Baby, Burn *The Burning Plain* features the amazing hotness of Charlize Theron, who scorches the screen as a troubled restaurant manager.



Forced Entry

In the shocking and provocative *Los Bastardos* (above), two undocumented day laborers hold a crack-smoking suburban wife and mother hostage.

Ghost of a Chance

Even sex is otherworldly in *Shadows* (above right), a Macedonian horror thriller that introduces the sensually compelling musician turned actress Vesna Stanojevska to the screen.

Killer Sex

Dexter: The Complete Third Season (near right) offers a ringside seat from which to observe the sexual hang-ups of TV's wittiest, most compelling serial killer.

Higher Education

In *The Reader* (far right), Kate Winslet embarks on a sensual affair with teenager David Kross, insisting he must read great literary works to her during sex.

Necro Pornucopia

Antichrist (right), from director Lars von Trier, freaked out audiences with scenes of Willem Dafoe and Charlotte Gainsbourg screwing on a pile of corpses.





Once Over Knightley Going topless in *The Edge of Love*, a World War II epic, was Keira Knightley's idea—another reason to love the Oscar-nominated actress.

Stripped Down Marisa Tomei gyrates her way to an Academy Award nomination in *The Wrestler*, playing a single mom working the pole to pay the bills.

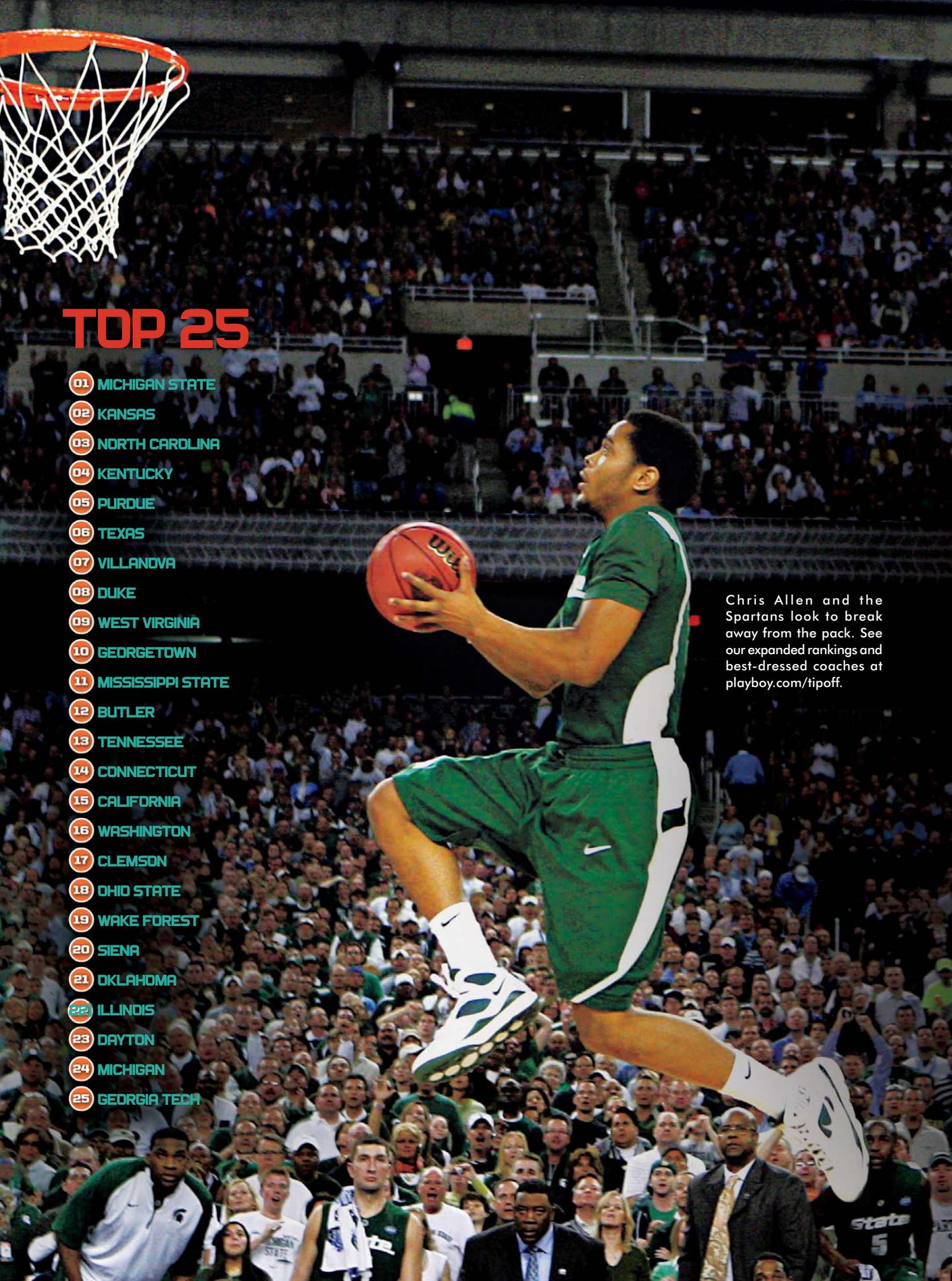


All About Eva Sultry, seductive Eva Mendes is all business as the black-booted hooker junkie girlfriend to Nicolas Cage's painkiller-addicted cop in director Werner Herzog's edgy *Bad Lieutenant: Port of Call New Orleans* (above).

Choke on This *Choke* (below), from the Chuck Palahniuk novel, features a raucous performance by Sam Rockwell as a sex-addicted con man who trolls for the kind of woman who brings sex toys to Sexaholics Anonymous meetings.

Rear Window Cynthia Nixon's sweaty, candlelit lovemaking with old flame David Eigenberg helps justify the word sex in the title of the hugely popular *Sex and the City: The Movie* (below). Is it any surprise it's a transplant from cable?





TOP 25

- 01 MICHIGAN STATE
- 02 KANSAS
- 03 NORTH CAROLINA
- 04 KENTUCKY
- 05 PURDUE
- 06 TEXAS
- 07 VILLANOVA
- 08 DUKE
- 09 WEST VIRGINIA
- 10 GEORGETOWN
- 11 MISSISSIPPI STATE
- 12 BUTLER
- 13 TENNESSEE
- 14 CONNECTICUT
- 15 CALIFORNIA
- 16 WASHINGTON
- 17 CLEMSON
- 18 OHIO STATE
- 19 WAKE FOREST
- 20 SIENA
- 21 OKLAHOMA
- 22 ILLINOIS
- 23 DAYTON
- 24 MICHIGAN
- 25 GEORGIA TECH

Chris Allen and the Spartans look to break away from the pack. See our expanded rankings and best-dressed coaches at playboy.com/tipoff.



TIP-OFF

AFTER AN OFF-SEASON FULL OF DISTRACTIONS, ALL EYES ARE ON THE COURT TO SEE WHO WILL RISE ABOVE IT ALL

Even before the referee floats the first tip-off, NCAA basketball has had some serious off-the-court action that left things up in the air. The biggest news involves Louisville coach Rick Pitino's affair—news more appropriate for TMZ than ESPN. In fact, some details of his dalliance seem fit for a *National Enquirer* story. Have we heard the last of it? Speaking of Kentucky coaches, John Calipari takes over the Wildcats post Pitino held in the 1990s. How quickly will he make an impact? You probably saw a tweet about John Wall dunking on Jerry Stackhouse. Is Wall destined to be the new collegiate star? If college basketball had a Tim Tebow (someone who stays in

school until he earns his degree and is a morally sound poster boy) it would have been Tyler Hansbrough, who graduated after winning the national championship last season. Is another Hansbrough out there? Can the team fill his high-tops at North Carolina? Who's the favorite to hear "One Shining Moment"? Why did so many guaranteed pros decide to return to campus? Michigan State's Kalin Lucas is one player who could have been on the NBA payroll but chose to stay in East Lansing. Coach Tom Izzo retained five of his top six scorers, which is why we think MSU will cut down the nets come March. For answers to other questions, turn the page and enjoy watching the season play out.



love and basketball

ODD COURTSHIP

We haven't heard much about Louisville coach Rick Pitino's affair in months. Hoping to put the issue to rest, the man in the white suit—only he and fellow Kentuckian Colonel Sanders can pull off that look—addressed the allegations as soon as they came to light this past summer. When Pitino plays on the road, opposing teams' fans will likely make it a hot topic again, taking poster boards and turning TV network acronyms into quips about the torrid affair.

"I DO NOT WALK ON WATER. I DO NOT HAVE A MAGIC WAND." —JOHN CALIPARI TO KENTUCKY WILDCAT FANS



leaving for bluer grass

KENTUCKY'S BASKETBALL JESUS

When John Calipari joined Kentucky he had to explain to Wildcat fans that he does "not walk on water." That's how much they believe in him. After reinvigorating the Memphis Tigers with nine 20-win seasons, including an NCAA record 38-win season(*), Calipari defected north. And he won't be rebuilding; he is already reloaded with three of the nation's top 15 recruits: DeMarcus Cousins, Daniel Orton and John Wall. The Cats are the most exciting young team since the Fab Five.



Imagine March Madness without CBS. After this season the NCAA can opt out of the 11-year \$6 billion contract that allows the network to televise one of the nation's most watched sporting events. The option gives the NCAA a chance to get richer. In the words of beloved CBS commentator Bill Raftery, let's see if ESPN has the "onions" to make an offer despite the tricky economy.



"ALL OF THESE KIDS ARE POSTERIZING NBA STARS."
—YOUTUBE COMMENT

nothin' but internet POST-ERIZE

This is where Jerry Stackhouse was when Kentucky freshman John Wall (left) dunked over him during a summer league game. Earlier that summer Xavier sophomore Jordan Crawford showed up LeBron James at King James's own camp. These would have been urban myths five years ago, but amateur video and Internet uploads have made the two underclassmen legendary.



@MASONCOACHL

Coaches are using Twitter to bypass NCAA strictures against e-mail communication with recruits. George Mason coach Jim Larranaga tweeted about another regulation:

-Compliance meetings begin tmw for the new year. New NCAA rule allows us to provide players bagels but no cream cheese or butter. Love it!

-There is nothing I like better than a dry bagel after a hard workout. LOL

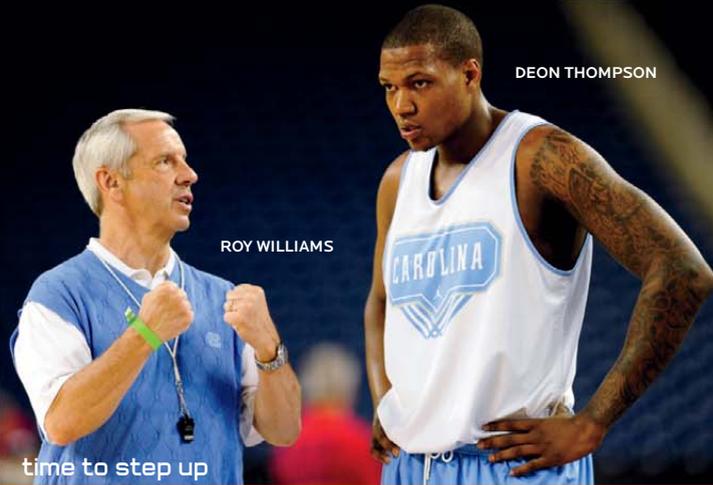
He has suspended tweeting—and hopefully using "lol."



zero points, more than 1 million hits

BENCH BLOG

The best player blog is Club Trillion by Ohio State benchwarmer Mark Titus: "Gordon [of Butler] and I combined for 25 points, seven rebounds and two assists. Because I didn't get in the game, Gordon shouldered most of [it], but I looked really good with the towel around my neck.... Despite Gordon's best effort, in the end my good looks obviously weighed much more heavily in the outcome than his 25 points because my team was victorious."



ROY WILLIAMS

DEON THOMPSON

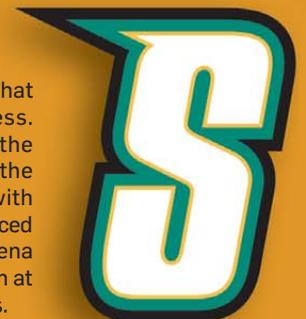
time to step up

BIG SNEAKERS TO FILL

Tyler Hansbrough and Ty Lawson left UNC after three 30-win seasons and a national championship last year. So will it be mediocrity this year? Not if coach Roy Williams is involved. He's nurturing senior center Deon Thompson, who averaged roughly 10 points and six boards at the World University Games this summer.

saint bernards UNDERDOG

Everyone loves a small school that shows up during March Madness. This season our money is on the Siena Saints. They should win the MAAC again, and they return with four of the five starters who advanced in last year's tourney. Though Siena won't win it all (bookies have them at 20,000 to one), they'll win hearts.



SAVE THE DATES



1 MICHIGAN STATE AT NORTH CAROLINA
Our number one travels early to test the new Tar Heels.



9 UCONN VS. KENTUCKY (MADISON SQUARE GARDEN)
Calhoun's fresh crop or Calipari's new school?



DEC 22 MICHIGAN STATE AT TEXAS
Kalin Lucas vs. Jai Lucas.



22 CALIFORNIA AT KANSAS
The Pac-10 tries to post up the Big 12.



1 WEST VIRGINIA AT PURDUE
Match of the manliest mascots.



2 LOUISVILLE AT KENTUCKY
The entire state shuts down.

10 KANSAS AT TENNESSEE
Can Kansas beat up the Vols?

17 UCONN AT MICHIGAN
Which storied school will rebuild more quickly?

13 XAVIER AT FLORIDA
The Gators, or anyone, can't sleep on the A-10.



SOMETHING IN THE AIR

SHOE OF THE YEAR 1991—AND 2010

Sneakerheads and ballers are anticipating Nike's January rerelease of the Air Jordan VI Infrared. The kicks Jordan wore during his first NBA title in 1991 will run you 150 in 2010 dollars.



PLAYBOY'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW

THE PLAYBOY
2009-2010
PRESEASON

COLLEGE ALL-AMERICA TEAM



GUARDS

JOHN WALL KENTUCKY, FRESHMAN

If Wall had been able to enter this past NBA draft, he might have gone first.

WILLIE WARREN OKLAHOMA, SOPHOMORE

Averaging 15 points a game, Warren was last season's unanimous choice for Big 12 Freshman of the Year. He has a knack for creating his own shots.

KALIN LUCAS MICHIGAN STATE, JUNIOR

Lucas was named Big Ten Player of the Year and Final Four All-Tournament Team. Running the point, he makes his teammates better.

JAMES ANDERSON OKLAHOMA STATE, JUNIOR

He averaged 1.27 points per touch—that's damn good.

FORWARDS

CRAIG BRACKINS IOWA STATE, JUNIOR

We can't believe he came back to school. He averaged 20 points and 10 rebounds last year. He's the hardest-working man on the glass.

GREG MONROE GEORGETOWN, SOPHOMORE

Monroe has great footwork and touch. His only lack? Aggression.

JARVIS VARNADO MISSISSIPPI STATE, SENIOR

The Bulldog led the country in blocks (yes, over Hasheem Thabeet).

LUKE HARANGODY NOTRE DAME, SENIOR

Harangody has an odd release; it reminds us of a player in an eight-bit video game. But he's deadly from any distance. He averaged 23 points last season.

CENTERS

COLE ALDRICH KANSAS, JUNIOR

The Kansas state tree is the cottonwood, but it ought to be changed to the Aldrich. The six-11, 250-pound center owns the paint.

JEROME JORDAN TULSA, SENIOR

Jordan has the wingspan of a Boeing at seven feet six inches.

COACH OF THE YEAR

JAY WRIGHT VILLANOVA

WRIGHT LED THE WILDCATS TO THE FINAL FOUR LAST YEAR; NOW HE'S ARMED WITH ONE OF THE TOP RECRUITING CLASSES. HE'S ALSO ONE OF THE BEST-DRESSED COACHES, AND HE MARRIED A FORMER VILLANOVA CHEERLEADER.



JAY WRIGHT

HOLIDAY CRYSTAL

HEF'S NEW
SQUEEZE,
CRYSTAL
HARRIS,
MAKES THE
SCENE
AS MISS
DECEMBER



Crystal Harris was at a crossroads. “I was in my last semester at San Diego State, getting a psychology degree, and I didn’t know what I wanted to do next,” says the 23-year-old. Then she met Hugh Hefner at the Playboy Mansion’s 2008 Halloween party and, well, Hef’s and Miss December’s Christmas came early. “Hef was so humble and easy to talk to, which is one of the things I love about him,” she says. “It was as if we already knew each other.” Crystal has become the icon’s main girlfriend, the down-to-earth yin to the wild yang of the Shannon sisters. Like Hef, Crystal has had a lifelong love of philanthropy. Not that she’s a saint. “I won’t lie—I love glamour,” she says. “Flying in private planes and fine dining? Give it to me all day, every day! But growing up, I was far from being a rich girl, so I don’t take this for granted. I want to be a Playmate who is a good role model.” This holiday season Miss December received quite a gift: herself. “I didn’t have much confidence in myself before, and I think the number one priority for happiness is to be comfortable in your own skin. I am now,” she says. “Living in the Mansion has been a great year of growth. I’ve learned how to be myself.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
STEPHEN WAYDA









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



MISS DECEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





Crystal Harris



A JOLLY CHRISTMAS
FROM FRANK S

CHRISTMAS SONGS
BY SIMONE

When Christmas
songs taught me
to sing, I was
young. I remember
Christmas songs like
"Let It Snow" and
"Let It Snow, Let It
Snow and Let It
Snow!"

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Crystal Harris
BUST: 34D WAIST: 25 HIPS: 35
HEIGHT: 5'6" WEIGHT: 124



BIRTH DATE: 4/29/86 BIRTHPLACE: Lake Havasu City, AZ

AMBITIONS: To complete my psychology degree, be an entrepreneur and have Season Six of "Girls Next Door" be a hit!

TURN-ONS: All-American guys with a nice smile & teeth, a flat tummy, charm and wit. Real-life Prince Charmings. ☺

TURNOFFS: Muscle heads with too much hair product and guys who are overbearing, loud and self-absorbed.

ALL-TIME FAVE MOVIES: "Cruel Intentions" and "The Little Mermaid."

SPORTS I LOVE TO WATCH: The Padres playing baseball, the Lakers playing basketball and the Chargers playing football.

WHAT MAKES A WOMAN SEXY: First and most important, her smile, plus imagination, knowledge, some mystery, the ability to keep things fresh and CURVES!

FAVORITE ACTORS: Johnny Depp, Ryan Kwanten, Leo DiCaprio.

THINGS I LOVE MOST: The ocean, boats, nightlife, nature & HEF♥



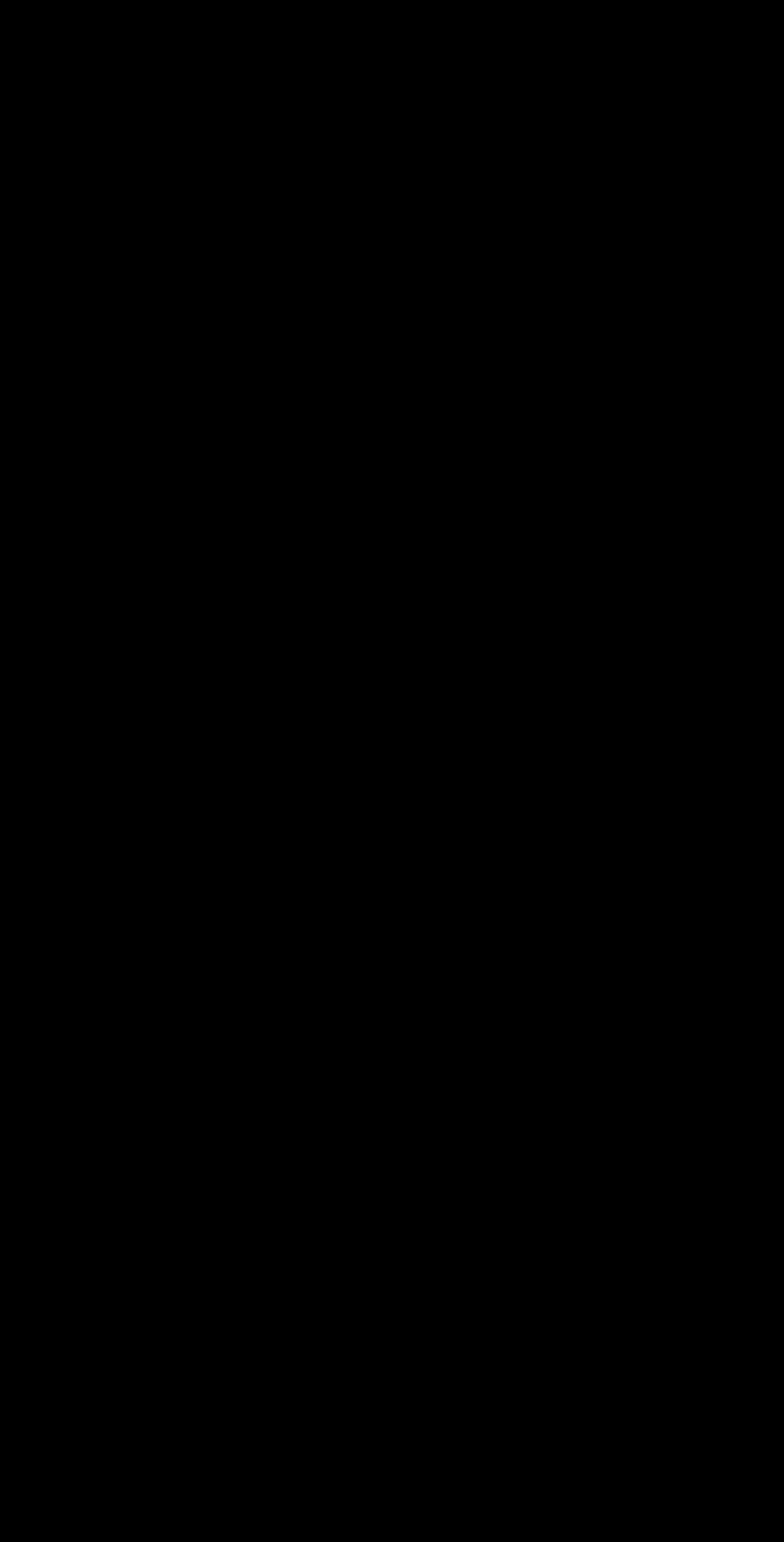
Eighth-grade East Coast trip.



Souvenir photo on a Cruise ship to Mexico.



My Cavalier King Charles, Charlie, and I.



MISS DECEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



FRANK S

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

One year a husband decided to buy his mother-in-law a cemetery plot as a Christmas gift. The next year he didn't buy her anything. When she asked him why, he replied, "Well, you still haven't used the gift I bought you last year!"

A drunken boss approached his secretary at the office Christmas party. "I thought of you last night," he said and paused. "Actually, I almost thought of you twice."

How are Christmas and working for a Fortune 500 company similar?

You do all the work and a fat ass in a suit takes the credit.



For the kids: Knock knock. Who's there? Centipede. Centipede who? Centipede all over the Christmas tree.

A wealthy benefactor was being shown around a hospital. During her tour she passed a room where a male patient was masturbating furiously.

"Oh my God!" screamed the woman. "That's disgraceful."

The doctor leading the tour explained to her, "I'm very sorry you were exposed to that, but this man has a serious condition that causes his testicles to rapidly fill with semen. If he doesn't do that at least five times a day, he'll be in extreme pain and his testicles could easily rupture."

"Oh well, in that case I guess it's okay," said the woman.

As they passed the next room they saw a male patient lying in bed while a nurse performed oral sex on him. Again the woman screamed, "Oh my God, how can *that* be justified?"

Again the doctor explained, "Same illness, better insurance."

A man bought his wife a beautiful diamond ring for Christmas. After hearing about the extravagant gift, his friend said, "I thought she wanted one of those high-end sports cars."

"She did," he replied. "But where was I going to find a fake Porsche?"

A husband put his coat on and said to his wife, "I suggest you do the same."

Surprised, she asked, "You're taking me out for a drink?"

"Don't be silly," he said. "I'm turning off the heat."

Ever wonder why people put angels on top of Christmas trees?

One December Santa was having a bad time of it. Mrs. Claus refused to have sex with him, he had a hangover from the night before, and the elves were misbehaving. Because the house was a mess, he stubbed his toe on a broken toy and started to swear up a blizzard. Just then the doorbell rang. It was an angel with a beautiful new Christmas tree, who asked, "Santa, where should I put this?"

A teenage boy asked Santa for a Hummer with lots of chrome. On Christmas Day a girl with braces knocked on his door.

What does a man do standing up that a woman does sitting down and a dog does on three legs? Shake hands.



A guy was talking to his buddy in a bar. "I dreamed last night that I was lying beside this beautiful girl," he said, "kissing and caressing every part of her body, and then—*poof!*—she was gone."

"Is that when you woke up?" the friend asked.

"No," the first said. "She did."

A woman grabbed a few last-minute presents on Christmas Eve and dashed to the register. The clerk had his back turned to her, so she said, "Excuse me, young man, I'm in a hurry. Could you check me out, please?"

The clerk turned around, looked her up and down and said, "Nice tits, lady."

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



"I wonder if the milk and cookies will be enough to satisfy Santa...?"

RIVAO



A PLAYBOY PAD

NO RESERVATIONS

CHICAGO'S SHOWMAN RESTAURATEUR **JERRY KLEINER** TOOK AN ANYTHING-GOES APPROACH WHEN HE TRANSFORMED A FORMER INDUSTRIAL GARAGE INTO A COLORFUL AERIE FILLED WITH RARE FINDS. YOU SIMPLY MUST STAY FOR DINNER BY STEVE GARBARINO



HIGH LIVING: The 18-foot-long zebrawood dining table in the "ballroom" of the Jerry Kleiner residence was custom built for the space. The dramatic skylight ceiling rises to 35 feet; the building originally housed a shop where hydraulic lifts were repaired. The home's many antique Persian rugs are handwoven.

Not many restaurateurs would consider stuffing an Amish chicken with Maine lobster, but it makes perfect sense in the diamond-in-the-rough world of Jerry Kleiner.

Chicago's undisputed ringmaster of downtown restaurants is famous for infusing an embarrassment of riches into ragtag spaces and neighborhoods. Over the past two decades Kleiner (pictured opposite page, with putter) has transformed the most humble of places—no-man's-lands, a fisheries building, a power plant, a truck repair shop—into settings of spectacle, color, taste and pure gustatory theater. His eight-ring circus now includes the Randolph Street Market district's Marché (rustic French), the West Loop's Vivo (Italian) and Fulton Market's high-flying Carnivale (Latino), as well as the South Loop's vaulted Opera (Chinese). His bustling new 33 Club bistro, a mezzanined rush of mahogany, stained glass and vintage glam photography, appeared this summer in Old Town.



STEINWAY TO HEAVEN: The grand piano at left is a 1920s Steinway, which girlfriend Marisa Molinaro plays at house parties. She is adept at five instruments, including a Stradivarius violin given to her by “an old Mexican man, a friend of my grandma’s.” The floors are old oak lifted from an East Coast mansion, says Kleiner. A local Chicago artist designed the Buddha head. The black-and-white photo above shows the raw space Kleiner gutted in 1998. The checkerboard-floored kitchen at top is where visiting chefs audition for a job in one of Kleiner’s bistros. Below: Silken fabrics—in colors only the Teletubbies could dream up—come courtesy of Kleiner’s many travels. They’ve been used here to upholster the dining chairs.



The 53-year-old Polish immigrant prefers to sculpt a space to his liking, leaving a building's bones intact as evidence of what it once was. So it figures his own home—an 8,000-square-foot former 1920s industrial garage situated in the working-class neighborhood of West Town—is the ultimate barn turned castle, equal parts Fellini whim and Case Study minimalism. Kleiner gutted the old garage (see the original building on the next page and the gutted interior above) in 1998. He has his own metal shop and did much of the work himself. Simultaneously cluttered and airy, with a 35-foot-high glass ceiling that cranks open to the clouds, the two-story compound is arranged like a series of theatrical stages. The house is the ultimate entertaining space, Kleiner's pièce de résistance among his many Herculean efforts.

The dining table is large and dramatic enough to accommodate the starting lineup of the White Sox and then some. (It seats 12.) A walled-in putt-putt green off the dining hall is used more for sunning than golfing. Jeff Koons would be in thrall of Kleiner's stuffed dragons, as well as the pachyderm-themed upstairs playground for his two



lucky children. It's a Mad Hatter's tea party, with chefs often auditioning for jobs in the black-and-white checkerboard-floored industrial kitchen. "One visiting French chef got out of a cab in front of my house," says Kleiner, "and exclaimed, 'What kind of hotel is this?'"

The space is the spectacle. A visitor sees this when he ventures through the custom-designed pressed-copper gates and passes a street-leaning sculpture that looks like a giant espresso cup. Kleiner often travels the world and has collected silken fabrics in bursting colors—hallucinogenic turquoise, grapefruit pink, kiwi lime. They're stitched into chairs and settees and shroud gargantuan chandeliers. The antique Persian rugs were hand-picked by the perfectionist himself. The overall design is influenced by the grand hotels of Portofino and Capri in Italy.

Along with Marisa Molinaro, his girlfriend of 10 years, Kleiner curates their showplace's exotic finds, culled mostly from antique, glass and fabric shops in Capri, Murano and Venice. It's a rotating show, a movable feast for the eyes. "Our lives are a production," says Molinaro, a striking classical violinist and onetime Hanes underwear model. "Everything we like winds up in the restaurants," says Kleiner with a trace of Polish accent remaining.

From his house to his bistros, Kleiner's affinity for turning ugly ducklings into swans is anything but cavalier. It's rare that an upbringing and a personal vision come together



OPEN SESAME! A private putt-putt green in the courtyard is situated behind the home's custom-designed copper gates (above left). "Our neighbors think the giant flowerpot sculpture [above right] outside the driveway is a cup from *Alice in Wonderland*," says Molinaro. "Everything in the house is supersize, so why not a flowerpot too? Maybe we should have put a handle on it." An archival 1920s image of the industrial garage Kleiner transformed into his opulent residence shows just how much effort went into the job. He and Molinaro did much of the work themselves. Top of page, from left: Much of the home's glasswork—chandeliers, glass grapes, vases—was custom made in Venice. Paintings often go unhung because they are likely to end up in one of Kleiner's restaurants.



so literally. When the restaurateur was seven, he and his parents—both Holocaust survivors—moved from Europe to a tenement in Chicago, living on virtually nothing. His parents were accomplished custom tailors, however, and they made sure their son was dressed to the nines.

“Appearances were always important,” says Kleiner, whose own effortlessly put-together look could be called Euro prep, like a Bond villain’s. “We had custom clothing but never any food,” he adds, driving in his jet-black BMW. Kleiner has spent his life re-creating himself. “You carve your life into what you want to make it,” he says. Of his restaurants he says, “You treat a building like a canvas, a sculpture, a character sketch, and translate it into a living, breathing art piece, a three-dimensional environment.”

And if you’re Jerry Kleiner, who has seen the best and worst of times, you don’t share the canvas with other artists; you’re fine doing it on your own. “It’s about layering, like Picasso painting a picture. You don’t say, ‘Hey, buddy, can you help me with this?’” Except, perhaps, when you’re trying to fit a crustacean into a chicken.

BUBBLY, ANYONE?: Though he has scant time, Kleiner is a pro at entertaining; it’s part of his daily life as a restaurateur. When he does have guests, you can bet the food is top-notch. The party often ends in the beautifully tiled garden hot tub (above) heated perfectly to 110 degrees. As for the master bedroom (top), the couple created a comfortable high-ceilinged space that invites relaxation but also something with “sizzle, sexiness, elegance”—and, yes, extraordinary amounts of color. “Color can change people’s lives,” Kleiner says. “We love color, and we get our fabrics from Italy and France.” It’s the fabric of Kleiner’s life: “The colors we use reflect Jerry’s personality,” says his girlfriend, who describes the choice of hues as “vibrant, eclectic and, dare I say, borderline crazy.”



Dust in the Wind

*Why the world's best-selling author is shelving his
book collection and going viral*

BY PAULO COELHO

I do not have many books. Some years ago I made certain choices in life, led by the idea of trying to obtain maximum quality with a minimum amount of things. This does not mean I opted for a monastic life or have stopped reading—quite the contrary; when we have the choice to possess an infinite number of objects we have immense freedom. Some of my friends complain that because they have too many clothes they waste hours of their lives picking out what to wear. Since I have reduced my wardrobe to “basic black,” that is one problem I do not need to face.

However, I am not here to speak about fashion but about books. To get back to the essentials, I decided to keep only 400 books in my library—some for sentimental reasons, others because I am always rereading them. This decision was made for several reasons, one being the sadness at seeing how collections carefully gathered during a lifetime are then sold by the pound without the least respect. And I asked myself, Why should I keep all these books at home? To show my friends I am cultured? To decorate the walls? The books I have bought will be infinitely more useful in a public library than in my house.

I used to be able to say that I needed them because I was going to consult them. But today, whenever there is any need for any information at all, I connect the computer, type a key word and what I need appears before me. That's the Internet for you—the biggest library on Earth.

Of course I still buy books—no electronic device can possibly replace them. But as soon as I finish a book, I let it travel, give it to someone or hand it in at a public library. My intention is not to save forests or be generous; it is just that I believe a book has a course of its own and should not be condemned to remain immobilized on a shelf.

Being a writer and living off copyrights, I may be advocating against myself—after all, the more my books sell, the more money I earn. But that would be unfair to the reader, especially in countries where many government programs for library acquisitions do

not use the basic criterion for a serious choice, namely the pleasure of reading a quality text.

So let our books travel, be touched by other hands and enjoyed by other eyes. As I write this essay I remember vaguely a poem by Jorge Luis Borges that speaks of the books that will never be reopened.

Where am I now? In a little town in the French Pyrenees, sitting in a café enjoying the air-conditioning since the temperature out there is unbearable. By chance I happen to have the complete collection of Borges at home, a couple of kilometers from where I am writing this—he is a writer I am constantly rereading. But why not try the test?

I cross the street. I walk five minutes to another café, equipped with computers (a type of establishment known by the trendy and contradictory name of cybercafé). I say hello to the owner, order a very cold mineral water, open the page of a search program and type some words from the only verse I remember, along with the name of the author. Less than two minutes later I have the complete poem in front of me:

“There is a line by Verlaine that I'll never remember again.

There is a street nearby that is widowed of my footsteps,

There is a mirror that has seen me for the last time.

There is a door closed till the end of time.

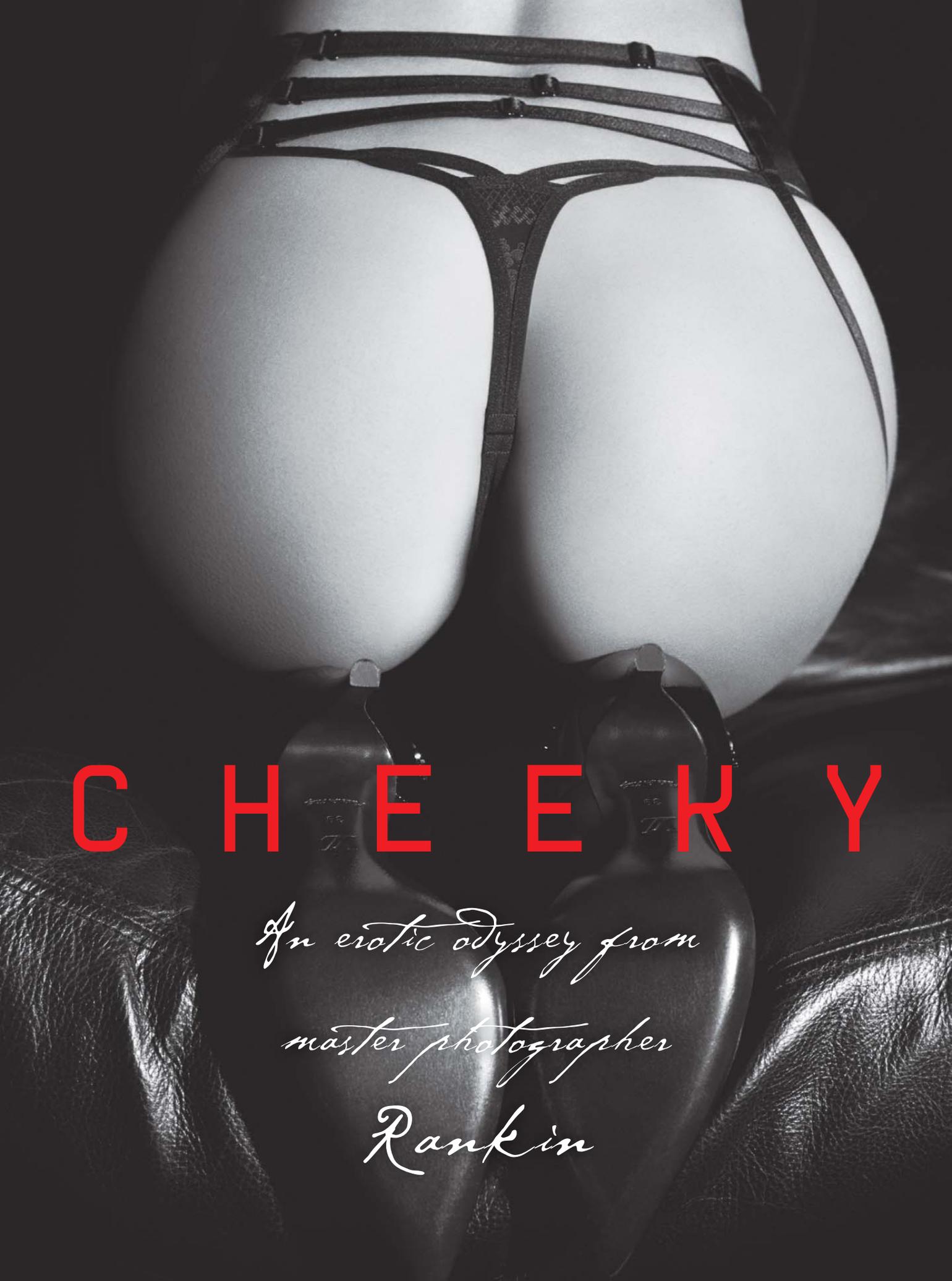
Among the books in my library

There is one that I'll never open again.”

In fact, I probably would not have reopened the books I chose to give away—because something new and interesting is always being published, and I love to read. I think it is vital that people have libraries; the first contact children have with books is usually through curiosity about those bound volumes with figures and letters. But I also find it moving when at a book signing I meet readers with very used copies that have been lent dozens of times, which means the book has traveled like the mind of the author traveled as he wrote it.

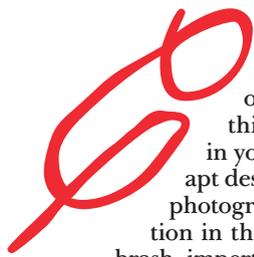
Translated by James Mulholland

Paulo Coelho's latest novel, The Winner Stands Alone, is available in bookstores now.



CHEEKY

*An erotic odyssey from
master photographer
Rankin*



Cheeky, in the obscure parlance of the Brits, signifies something brash, impertinent and in your face. This proves to be an apt description of the mono-named photographer who made his reputation in the United Kingdom with his brash, impertinent and in-your-face manner. Rankin—as this photographer is known—was born John Rankin Waddell near Glasgow in 1966. He first made a name for himself in 1991 when he and Jefferson Hack launched *Dazed & Confused* magazine in London. *Dazed & Confused* became the perfect antidote to the legacy of Margaret Thatcher, a life-affirming voice in a time of grimness and debilitation.

Rankin, like Cecil Beaton and Helmut Newton before him, went on to greater glory as a fashion photographer and portraitist. His photographic subjects have included Heidi Klum, Naomi Campbell and Queen Elizabeth II (posing magnificently in front of a Union Jack). “To take a great portrait,” says Rankin, “you have to let yourself fall slightly in love with the person you are photographing. You have to be flirtatious and want to know more about them. You need to bring out that desire within you and within them.”

While his work is often intentionally derivative, Rankin has established a style of his own. One of his greatest skills is in taking sexy photos of beautiful women, as is evidenced on these pages. The images seen here may also be enjoyed in *Rankin's Cheeky*, a forthcoming book of erotic photography (with a foreword by one of his more notable fans, Hugh M. Hefner). The photographer's cheekiness continues to serve him well. “I don't want my work to aspire to anything,” says Rankin. “I'm not an art photographer. I'm not a media photographer. My interest lies in the people I take photographs of.”





*Rankin is the court
photographer of cool
Britannia.*





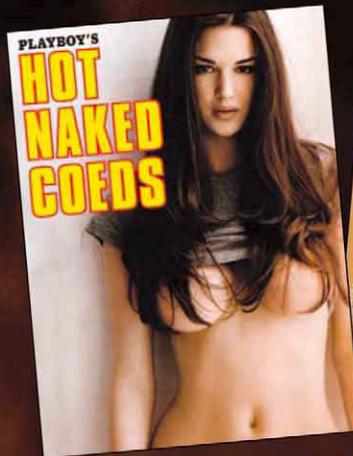




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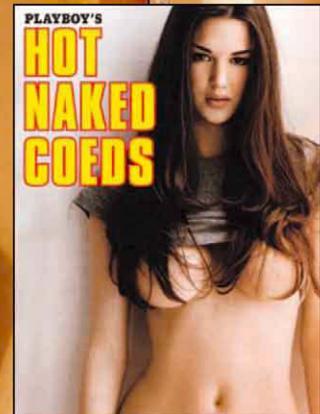
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THE TRIUMPH OF THE CONSERVATIVE

OF THE

THE RIGHT IS RISING AGAIN. THE REAL COUNTERCULTURE IS LED BY AN UNLIKELY TALK-SHOW HOST NAMED GLENN BECK

BY THOMAS FRANK

UNDERGROUND

This is Glenn Beck's moment. The talk-show host is the face of today's unlikely conservative renaissance, the most influential man on the right in a nation where the right has traditionally held disproportionate power. Beck is host of an immensely popular Fox News program, as well as a radio show, and the author of a string of best-selling books. It was Beck's constant promotion, in part, that brought citizens from all over America to Washington, D.C. on September 12 to protest bailouts, deficits and stimulus spending. And it was Beck who provided the drumbeat of criticism that brought down the Obama administration's special advisor for green jobs, Van Jones. At first the man's maudlin and sometimes tearful style made him a laughingstock for the orthodox media. But in the aftermath of his triumphs, ombudsmen for *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* declared they had been mistaken to ignore him.

What they will learn, as they start to pay attention, is that Beck's contradictions tell us more than his assertions. He is, for example, a comedian, a boyish figure of fun; he is at the same time a snarling, vituperative stoker of public fury. In his philosophical mode he often questions greed and materialism; in his political mode he is dedicated to the utterly materialistic principles of free-market economics. He comes from a hard-luck working-class background and repeats the classic criticism of bourgeois soullessness. His political program, however, would do much to wreck working-class lives and heap even more of civilization's rewards on the people he apparently despises.

And it is these mental short circuits that make Glenn Beck the embodiment of a certain spirit of the times. I say this not because I think Beck is stupid or because I believe he is a racist but because of his almost fanatical determination to deny economic reality. After 30 years in which free-market worship dominated our politics, we have just lived through one of the greatest failures of the free-market system in all of history. And



The real underground has nothing to do with liberals or bohemians: It involves conservatives and dyed-in-the-wool patriots. Glenn Beck—a new sort of 21st century populist—has become the man at the vanguard of this new conservative revolution. Whatever his outlandish theories and assertions, Beck has led a groundswell of protest. What had been laughed at is now mainstream.

the greatest political superstar of this age is a man who has made it his business to root out and assail critics of the free-market system. What's more, he does so as a self-proclaimed friend of the common man.

We may be living through a mild version of the Great Depression, but we have little of that era's radicalism to show for it. Instead we have Glenn Beck, a sort of Huey Long in reverse, a one-man Popular Front demanding defiantly that we be given more, more, more of the same.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WHERE WE ARE TODAY

(1) Banks and mortgage lenders, left pretty much to their own devices after decades of deregulation, came to misbehave in a spectacular manner. They handed out mortgages to anyone. They handed out bonuses to the most reckless mortgage-granting employees. The credit-rating agencies then proceeded to slap triple-A labels on trash mortgages, repackaged as investments. The smartest B-school graduates in the world, when their turn came, snapped up those securities for the Wall Street banks where they too pulled down monumental bonuses every year. Then, when real estate prices stopped growing, it all fell apart. Credit markets froze. Stock markets plummeted. Banks failed. And finally, government stepped in to keep the system from collapsing completely.

The story has its complicated aspects and its technical details, but on the whole it isn't historically unique or dif-

GLENN BECK IS NOT A MARGINAL FIGURE.

ficult to understand. It repeats, on a vastly larger scale, familiar patterns of bubble-and-bust misbehavior from the 19th century, the Roaring Twenties, the savings-and-loan failures of the 1980s and the Enron collapse.

The lesson it teaches is also simple: From the raft of Wall Street disaster books to Alan Greenspan's confession of "shocked disbelief," most people who have studied the question believe we have come to the end of an era of desupervision. Markets do not self-regulate. Government must be involved to prevent this disaster from repeating itself.

(2) Enter Glenn Beck and the right-wing revival he leads. For Beck, only one of the stages of the disaster that I lay out above holds any interest worth more than a joking sentence or two. This is the final step, in which government stepped in to avert disaster. The rest of the long story is of no consequence except for the various ways in which blame might somehow be pinned on government.

But the bailout, the Obama administration's stimulus package, and then the push for universal health insurance—this is something far worse than misguided policy making. This is tyranny aborning. This is "the road to socialism." This is a monstrous power grab by the people Beck calls Progressives—always with the capital *P*—who have bided their time for decades, waiting for their chance.

IT COULD BE WORSE

To write a serious critique of Beck is almost a waste of time. After all, the man has referred to himself as a "rodeo clown" and a "recovering scumbag." He has commented at length on his scuzzy former life in the professional radio fast lane—his onetime drug use, his former alcoholism, his assholishness. But it's not all in the past. Fans of his radio show appear to cherish, among other things, the moments when Beck is moved to incandescence by a liberal caller and shouts, climactically, his signature line: "Get off my phone," a phrase memorialized with the acronym GOMP.

On TV Beck routinely works himself into tears. He barks with fury. He seethes. He dreads. He weeps for his nation. He worries about imaginary betrayals. He is a buffoon. And his great vision for America is some kind of goo-goo civic togetherness in which we overcome various plots "to keep us from uniting," in which we get together and realize we "are not alone." References to the transformative power of brotherhood are one of Beck's great set pieces,

repeated in all manner of contexts. However, the only mass social movement in American life whose members actually address one another as "brother," who actually believe they can change the world through solidarity—organized labor—is an institution Beck despises with a surpassing ferocity.

Beck's books are boring stuff. If you've read much conservative literature, you've heard it all before. Beck reproduces standard-issue conservative talking points, bemoaning crazy lawsuits or the 1992 House banking scandal in precisely the same way you have seen crazy lawsuits or the House banking scandal bemoaned a dozen times already. He is given to preposterous numerology, reminding us how patriotic we all felt on September 12, 2001 and then insisting that 9/12 actually stands for "Nine Principles" and "12 Values," the latter of which turn out to be a virtue list in the manner of the Boy Scout law. All of which might lead a fan to conclude it was lucky the 9/11 terrorists attacked when they did instead of, say, February 24, because then they wouldn't have affirmed our nation's timeless principles and values.

And you could write an entire essay about the damage the man has done to journalism. According to the liberal media watchdog group Media Matters for America, the unfounded rumors to which Beck has given encouragement include: The Obama administration is supposedly setting up a secret, parallel army; the Treasury is possibly issuing secret bonds; the secret motivation for the Democrats' health care initiatives is an urge for "reparations." The grand conspiracy that fathers all others is invisible, of course, and Beck is always careful to acknowledge he doesn't know for sure, but he seems to find clues everywhere: in offhand statements by the president, in the board members of liberal groups, in the art found in and around Rockefeller Center in New York City. (My own conspiracy theory: Beck is *just maybe* a shill for gold interests, which prosper when disaster fears run wild, inflation seems imminent and the price of gold rises. As I write this, gold is trading near its all-time high, and Beck is appearing in ads for something called Goldline International.)

But here's the thing: For all his raving, Glenn Beck is not a marginal figure. His ideas are embraced by leaders of the Republican Party. He is defended by prominent conservative pundits and columnists. Men who held positions of enormous public power in the Bush administration appear regularly on his program, where they never seem to resent *(continued on page 157)*



"You should call this composition 'Concerto for the Left Hand,' Monsieur Ravel."

“SUIT UP!”

TO CELEBRATE *HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER*'S 100TH EPISODE, CO-STARS NEIL PATRICK HARRIS, JOSH RADNOR AND JASON SEGEL TIE ONE ON

The trio shows how it's done in this season's collections from Hickey Freeman, Paul Smith, Hugo Boss and Isaia

↑ **NEIL PATRICK HARRIS**

Suit (\$3,315) and shirt (\$200) by

PAUL SMITH.

Tie (\$160) by **PHINEAS COLE.**

Pocket square (\$70) by

PAUL STUART.

Belt (\$125) by **TORINO.**

A man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a dark pinstriped suit jacket, a checkered shirt, and a striped tie, holds a large yellow umbrella. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“I HAVE FOND
MEMORIES OF
PARACHUTE
PANTS!”

“We feel more like family than friends,” says Josh Radnor, referring to his *How I Met Your Mother* cast mates Neil Patrick Harris and Jason Segel. That’s the kind of special feeling forged when a dynamic cast comes together to produce a sophisticated comedy. Speaking of sophistication, we put the boys in this season’s sharpest suits. While Harris may be the best-dressed man in Hollywood off the set, Segel—known for not wearing any clothes in *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*’s full-frontal scene—says he still needs help. “Right after *Sarah Marshall*, the publicist said to me, ‘Listen, you’re kind of successful now, so you really have to step it up. You can’t keep dressing like this.’ Now my costume lady for that film and *I Love You, Man* puts outfits on hangers for me marked MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY.... It’s embarrassing, but I kind of love it.” —NICK HARAMIS

➤ **JOSH RADNOR**

Suit (\$1,195) and shirt (\$185) by

HICKEY FREEMAN.

Tie (\$85) by **BOSS BLACK.**

Tie bar (\$65) by **JAN LESLIE.**

Belt (\$125) by **TORINO.**



▣ **JASON SEGEL**

Suit (\$795), shirt (\$95) and tie (\$85)
by **BOSS BLACK**.

"I'M FROM THE
TOM WAITS
SCHOOL OF
FASHION."

↓ **NEIL PATRICK HARRIS**

Suit (\$1,984), shirt (\$287) and tie (\$119) by **PHINEAS COLE**.

↓ **JOSH RADNOR**

Suit (\$895) by **PS BY PAUL SMITH**.
Shirt (\$45) and tie (\$45) by **PERRY ELLIS**.

↓ **JASON SEGEL**

Suit (\$2,995) by **ISAIA**.
Shirt (\$325) by **ETRO**.
Tie (\$125) by **BARNEYS NEW YORK**.



“IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT, I’D RECOMMEND HAVING YOUR OWN WARDROBE DEPARTMENT.”
—NEIL PATRICK HARRIS

the book of Genesis

BY R. CRUMB

The legendary illustrator takes on the Bible. In this chapter, we discover that Jacob's attempt to forge a tribal alliance is thwarted by his sons' appetite for vengeance

AND JACOB CAME IN PEACE TO THE TOWN OF SHECHEM, WHICH IS IN THE LAND OF CANAAN, WHEN HE CAME FROM PADDAN-ARAM, AND HE CAMPED BEFORE THE TOWN.

AND HE BOUGHT THE PARCEL OF LAND WHERE HE HAD PITCHED HIS TENT FROM THE SONS OF HAMOR, FATHER OF SHECHEM, FOR A HUNDRED KESITHS.



AND HE SET UP AN ALTAR THERE AND CALLED IT EL-ELOHEI-ISRAEL.*



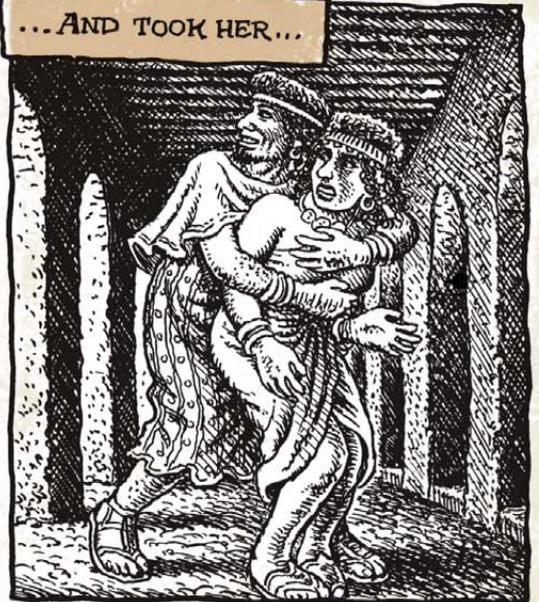
* EL-ELOHEI-ISRAEL: THE NAME MEANS, "GOD, GOD OF ISRAEL."

Chapter 34

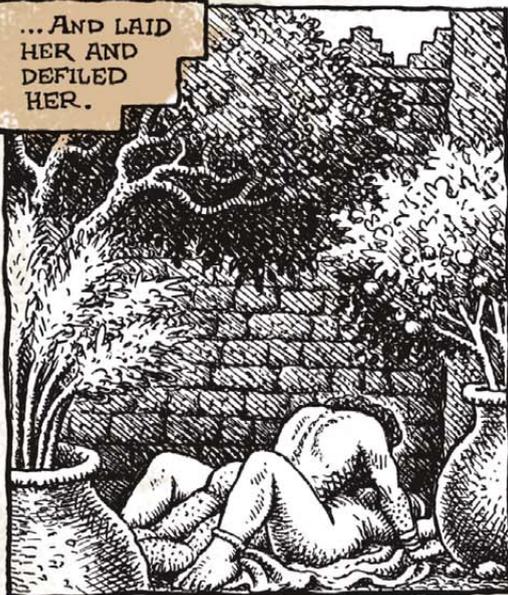
AND DINAH, LEAH'S DAUGHTER, WHOM SHE HAD BORNE TO JACOB, WENT OUT TO SEE SOME OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE LAND. AND SHECHEM, THE SON OF HAMOR THE HIVITE, PRINCE OF THE LAND, SAW HER...



...AND TOOK HER...



...AND LAID HER AND DEFILED HER.



AND HIS VERY SOUL CLUNG TO DINAH, DAUGHTER OF JACOB, AND HE LOVED THE YOUNG WOMAN, AND HE SPOKE TO THE YOUNG WOMAN'S HEART.



AND SHECHEM SPOKE TO HAMOR, HIS FATHER, SAYING...

GET ME THIS GIRL AS WIFE!



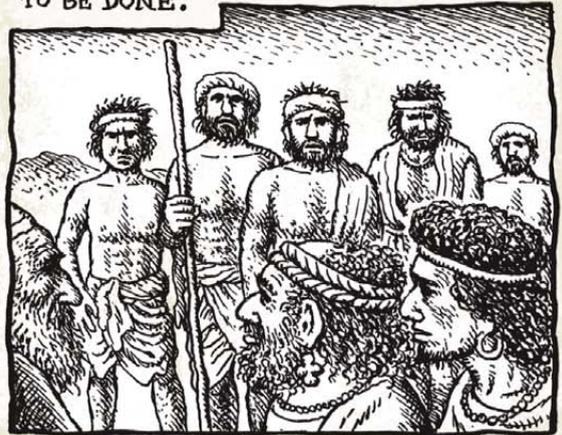
AND JACOB HAD HEARD THAT HE HAD DEFILED DINAH, HIS DAUGHTER, AND HIS SONS WERE WITH HIS LIVESTOCK IN THE FIELD, AND JACOB HELD HIS PEACE TILL THEY WOULD COME HOME.



AND HAMOR, SHECHEM'S FATHER, CAME OUT TO JACOB TO SPEAK WITH HIM.



AND JACOB'S SONS CAME IN FROM THE FIELD AS SOON AS THEY HEARD, AND THE MEN WERE PAINED, AND THEY WERE HIGHLY INCENSED, FOR HE HAD DONE A DESPICABLE THING IN ISRAEL BY LYING WITH JACOB'S DAUGHTER, A THING WHICH OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE.



AND HAMOR SPOKE WITH THEM, SAYING...

PRAY, GIVE HER TO HIM AS WIFE, AND ALLY WITH US BY MARRIAGE!

SHECHEM, MY SON, HIS VERY SOUL LONGS FOR YOUR DAUGHTER!



YOUR DAUGHTERS YOU WILL GIVE US, AND OUR DAUGHTERS TAKE FOR YOURSELVES, AND AMONG US YOU'LL SETTLE, AND THE LAND IS BEFORE YOU!

SETTLE AND GO ABOUT IT AND TAKE HOLDINGS IN IT!



AND SHECHEM SAID TO DINAH'S FATHER AND TO HER BROTHERS...

LET ME FIND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES, AND WHATEVER YOU SAY TO ME, I WILL GIVE! NAME ME HOWEVER MUCH BRIDE-PRICE AND CLAN-GIFT, I'LL GIVE YOU WHAT YOU SAY, AND GIVE ME THE YOUNG WOMAN AS WIFE!



AND THE SONS OF JACOB ANSWERED SHECHEM AND HAMOR HIS FATHER DECEITFULLY, AND THEY SPOKE AS THEY DID BECAUSE HE HAD DEFILED DINAH THEIR SISTER, AND THEY SAID TO THEM...

WE CANNOT DO THIS THING...

...TO GIVE OUR SISTER TO A MAN WHO HAS A FORESKIN!

THAT'S A DISGRACE FOR US!



ONLY IN THIS WAY WILL WE AGREE TO YOU - IF YOU WILL BE LIKE US, EVERY MALE TO BE CIRCUMCISED!

THEN WE CAN GIVE OUR DAUGHTERS TO YOU, AND YOUR DAUGHTERS WE CAN TAKE FOR OURSELVES, AND WE CAN SETTLE AMONG YOU AND BECOME ONE FOLK!



BUT IF YOU WILL NOT LISTEN TO US, TO BE CIRCUMCISED, WE WILL TAKE OUR DAUGHTER AND GO!



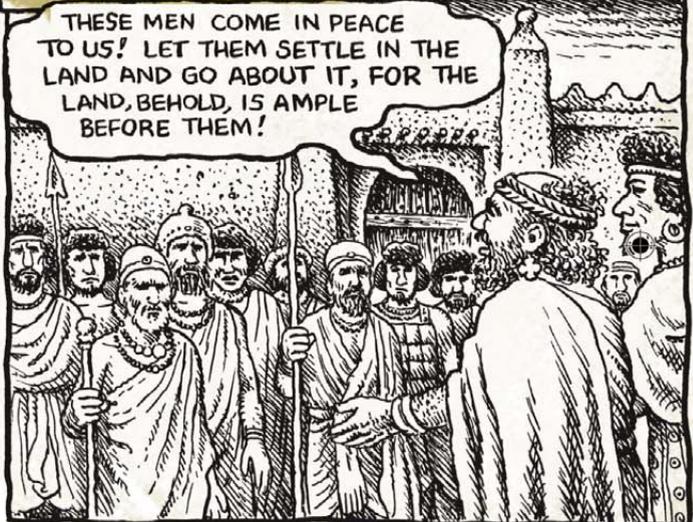
AND THEIR WORDS SEEMED GOOD IN THE EYES OF HAMOR AND IN THE EYES OF SHECHEM, SON OF HAMOR.

AND THE LAD LOST NO TIME IN DOING THE THING, FOR HE WANTED JACOB'S DAUGHTER, AND HE WAS THE MOST HIGHLY REGARDED OF ALL HIS FATHER'S HOUSE.



AND HAMOR, WITH SHECHEM HIS SON, CAME TO THE GATE OF THEIR TOWN, AND THEY SPOKE TO THEIR TOWNSMEN, SAYING...

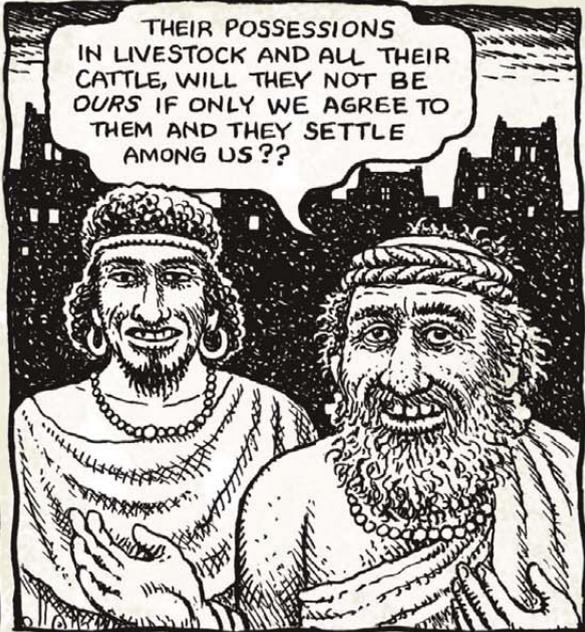
THESE MEN COME IN PEACE TO US! LET THEM SETTLE IN THE LAND AND GO ABOUT IT, FOR THE LAND, BEHOLD, IS AMPLE BEFORE THEM!



WE SHALL TAKE THEIR DAUGHTERS AS WIVES AND OUR DAUGHTERS WE SHALL GIVE TO THEM. BUT ONLY ON ONE CONDITION WILL THE MEN AGREE TO US, TO DWELL AMONG US AND BE ONE FOLK; THAT EVERY MALE OF US BE CIRCUMCISED AS THEY ARE CIRCUMCISED.



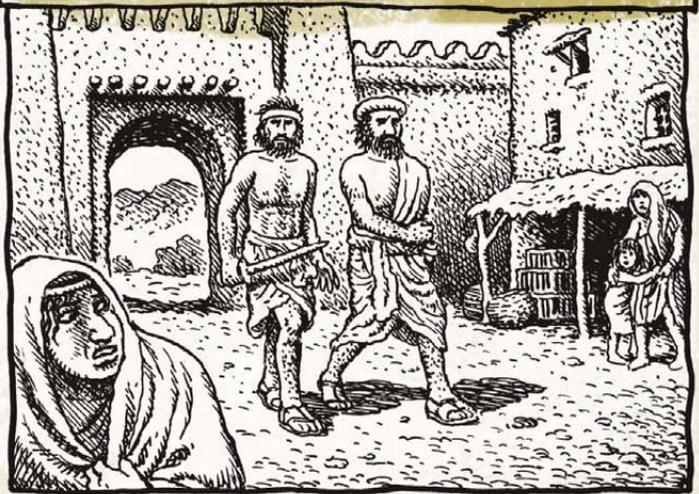
THEIR POSSESSIONS IN LIVESTOCK AND ALL THEIR CATTLE, WILL THEY NOT BE OURS IF ONLY WE AGREE TO THEM AND THEY SETTLE AMONG US??



AND ALL WHO CAME FROM THE GATE OF HIS TOWN LISTENED TO HAMOR, AND TO SHECHEM HIS SON, AND EVERY MALE WAS CIRCUMCISED, ALL WHO CAME OUT OF THE GATE OF HIS TOWN.



AND IT CAME TO PASS ON THE THIRD DAY, WHILE THEY WERE STILL HURTING, THAT JACOB'S TWO SONS, SIMEON AND LEVI, DINAH'S BROTHERS, TOOK EACH HIS SWORD, AND CAME UPON THE CITY UNOPPOSED...



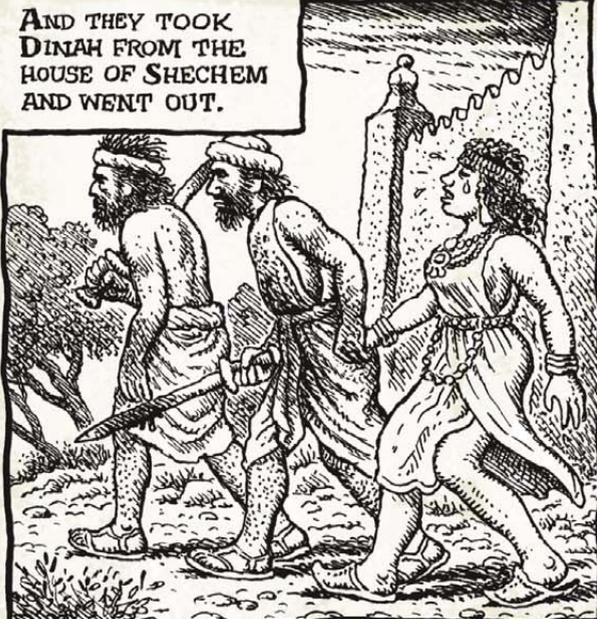
...AND THEY KILLED EVERY MALE.



AND HAMOR AND SHECHEM HIS SON THEY KILLED BY THE EDGE OF THE SWORD.



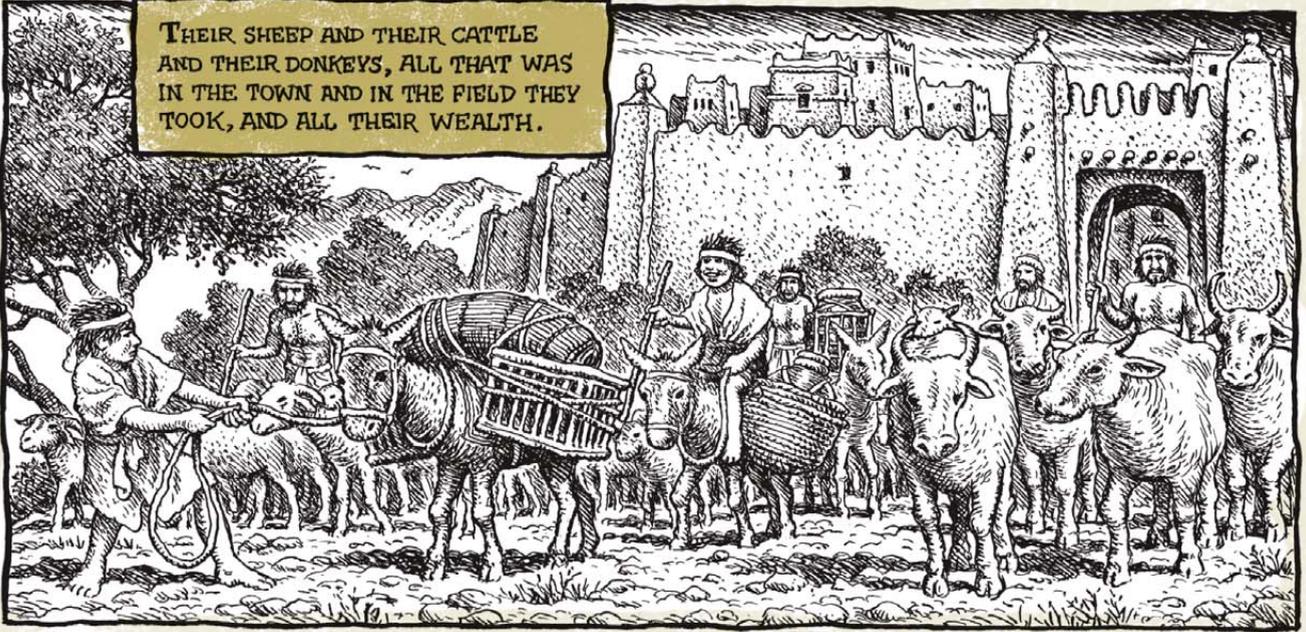
AND THEY TOOK DINAH FROM THE HOUSE OF SHECHEM AND WENT OUT.



THE OTHER SONS OF JACOB CAME UPON THE SLAIN AND LOOTED THE TOWN BECAUSE THEIR SISTER HAD BEEN DEFILED.



THEIR SHEEP AND THEIR CATTLE
AND THEIR DONKEYS, ALL THAT WAS
IN THE TOWN AND IN THE FIELD THEY
TOOK, AND ALL THEIR WEALTH.



AND ALL THEIR YOUNG ONES AND
THEIR WIVES THEY TOOK CAPTIVE,
AND THEY LOOTED EVERYTHING
IN THEIR HOUSES.



AND JACOB
SAID TO
SIMEON
AND LEVI...

YOU'VE STIRRED
UP TROUBLE FOR ME,
MAKING ME ODIOS
AMONG THE INHABITANTS
OF THIS LAND,
AMONG CANAANITE AND
PERIZZITE, WHEN I'M BUT
A HANDFUL OF MEN!



IF THEY UNITE
AGAINST ME AND
ATTACK ME, I SHALL
BE DESTROYED, I
AND MY HOUSEHOLD!



AND
THEY
SAID...

LIKE A
WHORE OUR
SISTER SHOULD
BE TREATED?!



HOW TO UNDRESS FOR YOUR MAN



Dim the lights. Enter the star/Seductress! Vixen! Asp!/From shadows, he gasps./Cry havoc, and let slip the fruit from the jar.



Show no mercy. Assault the eyes./Be graceful, but make haste./Now you're stripped to the waist./Unbelt your garters, unhose those thighs.



At the gauzy final shine/The panties—begin to doff./Ask him, "Shall I take these off?"/Then slay him with a smile, the snarling kind.

THE

GREAT

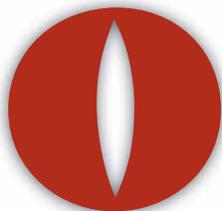
SOUTH FLORIDA

PYTHON

SCARE



WHEN A PYTHON KILLS A LITTLE GIRL, HYSTERICAL OFFICIALS HIRE HUNTERS TO MASSACRE 100,000 OF THE REPTILES LIVING IN THE EVERGLADES. BUT WHO ARE THE BIGGER SNAKES, THE PYTHONS OR THE MEN WHO SEEK TO KILL THEM? OUR REPORTER HEADS INTO THE SWAMP WITH HIS BOOTS ON BY PAT JORDAN



On a hot humid night in August, Tom Crutchfield and I went deep into the Everglades swamp south of Florida City to hunt Burmese pythons. The swamp stretched for miles around us, flat and dark and ominously silent. Every few seconds it was illuminated grayish blue by a flash of

white lightning and the silence was broken by a crack of thunder. The Seminoles, who have lived here for hundreds of years, call the Everglades the River of Grass, and it is home to a number of exotic native species—such as the Florida panther and the Florida alligator—and some non-native, invasive species, such as the Burmese python.

We were hunting pythons for a number of reasons. The snakes, which are indigenous to Southeast Asia, had been much in the news lately in south Florida. In July a pet python killed a two-year-old girl north of Orlando. Shortly afterward a hunter pulled a 14-foot-long python from a drainage pipe in Bradenton, close to a day care center. In 2005 an Everglades National Park biologist encountered a 13-foot Burmese python with a six-foot-long gator halfway in its mouth. Both were dead. In 2003 a group of tourists in the Glades came upon a death battle between a big gator and another python that lasted 24 hours before the python escaped.

But it was the two-year-old girl's death that precipitated "the Great South Florida Python Scare" in the media and among politicians and biologists. The media claimed it wouldn't be long before giant Burmese pythons, which can grow to 22 feet and weigh 200

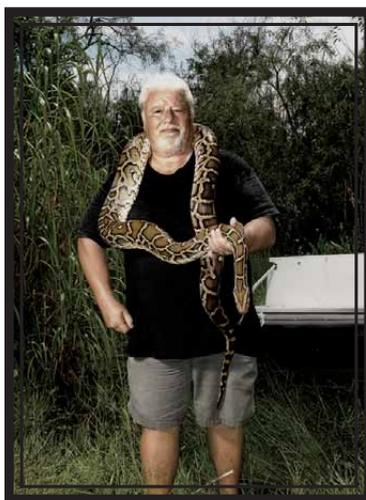
pounds, would begin swallowing tourists. Florida senator Bill Nelson agreed, saying, "Lord forbid a visitor in the Everglades encounters [a python]." Then he and Florida representative Tom Rooney pushed for federal legislation to ban the import and sale of such pythons and to send hunters into Everglades National Park to kill them. Governor

Charlie Crist issued seven permits to hunters—like the Quint character in *Jaws*—to go on state lands and massacre the python population.

Biologists claimed pythons were destroying the Everglades ecosystem by eating endangered species such as the Key Largo wood rat and the wood stork. "What are they not eating?" said one biologist. "Salad." Scientists claimed there were as many as 140,000 invasive pythons in the Everglades. If left unchecked, they predicted, the snakes would navigate north and eventually blanket the entire southern third of the United States as far as Maryland, where they would snack on every living creature that crossed their path because, as one of the largest reptilian carnivorous predators in the world, they have no known enemies except humans.

Crutchfield is not a python hunter by trade but a breeder of reptiles. He is one of the biggest high-end reptile dealers in the world—the godfather of herpers (i.e., reptile lovers, from the word *herpetologist*). As Crutchfield sees it, the python hunt is anything but what it seems to be.

That's why we were headed into the Everglades. There was a mystery to be solved about this great snake, and the answers were there in the creepiest place in America, where the very earth seems to slither beneath your feet in the darkness.



Tom Crutchfield, the godfather of herpers (reptile collectors), with a Burmese python in the swamps of south Florida.



Clockwise from top left: Senator Bill Nelson, Democrat of Florida, holds the skin of a 16-foot-long, 150-pound python that was pulled from a canal near Miami in July; Nelson was a major political force behind the order to hire hunters with taxpayer money to kill off the roughly 100,000 Burmese pythons living in the Everglades. Investigators at a crime scene remove another albino python that killed a little girl in a small town outside Orlando; her death sparked the great south Florida python scare. A PLAYBOY photographer snapped this shot of a python near the Everglades.

How did these pythons end up in the Everglades, which stretch from the southernmost tip of Lake Okeechobee to the southernmost tip of the peninsula, 150 miles south? Should state and federal agencies spend vast amounts of time and even vaster amounts of taxpayer money to purge the pythons from the Everglades? Is such an undertaking possible?

As it turns out, the story of the python hunt is one that is quintessentially south Florida, involving lots of money, crackpots, scammers, dangerous reptiles and even cocaine cowboys.

I had arrived at Crutchfield's reptile farm in the flat, desolate farmland west of Florida City on a sunny afternoon. He was outside, showing three "herp nuts" from Ohio the exotic reptiles he



"PYTHONS HAVE HEAT SENSORS ON THEIR FACE THAT SEE LIKE AN INFRARED CAMERA," SAID GATOR TIM, "LIKE IN THE MOVIE PREDATOR."



keeps in outdoor cages (if they are nonvenomous) and locked in his four outbuildings (if they are venomous). One of the men, a breeder of boa constrictors, called Crutchfield "a legend in this business. I'd get price lists from him and dream about buying his reptiles." Another breeds Cuban crocodiles in his basement.

Crutchfield is a short, stocky man of 61, with white hair, a white goatee and riveting blue eyes. He's a sixth-generation Floridian who can trace his ancestry to the Seminoles, the first "invasive species" to inhabit the Glades. On this day he wore a sweat-soaked T-shirt and baggy shorts. He gave me a tour of his reptiles. Fred, his giant rhinoceros iguana with canvas-like dark gray skin, was about 25 pounds and looked like a dinosaur in a 1950s B movie. Crutchfield showed me a pair of albino iguanas

that looked as if they had been hand-painted a brilliant yellow with pink markings. He was taking the albinos, along with some other reptiles, to a show in Daytona the next day. He hoped to sell them to some Japanese buyers for \$250,000.

Then he led me to one of his outbuildings with a sign on the door: DANGEROUS! VENOMOUS REPTILES. He unlocked the door. Inside, the room was warm and smelled of reptile scat. His reptiles were in glass drawers lined floor to ceiling against the walls. He pulled out a drawer to show me a pure white young albino ball python with rheumy pink eyes.

"Go ahead, smell it," he said.

He held the snake close to my nose. Its pink eyes studied me wearily. I leaned my face closer to its skin and sniffed.

"No odor," I said.

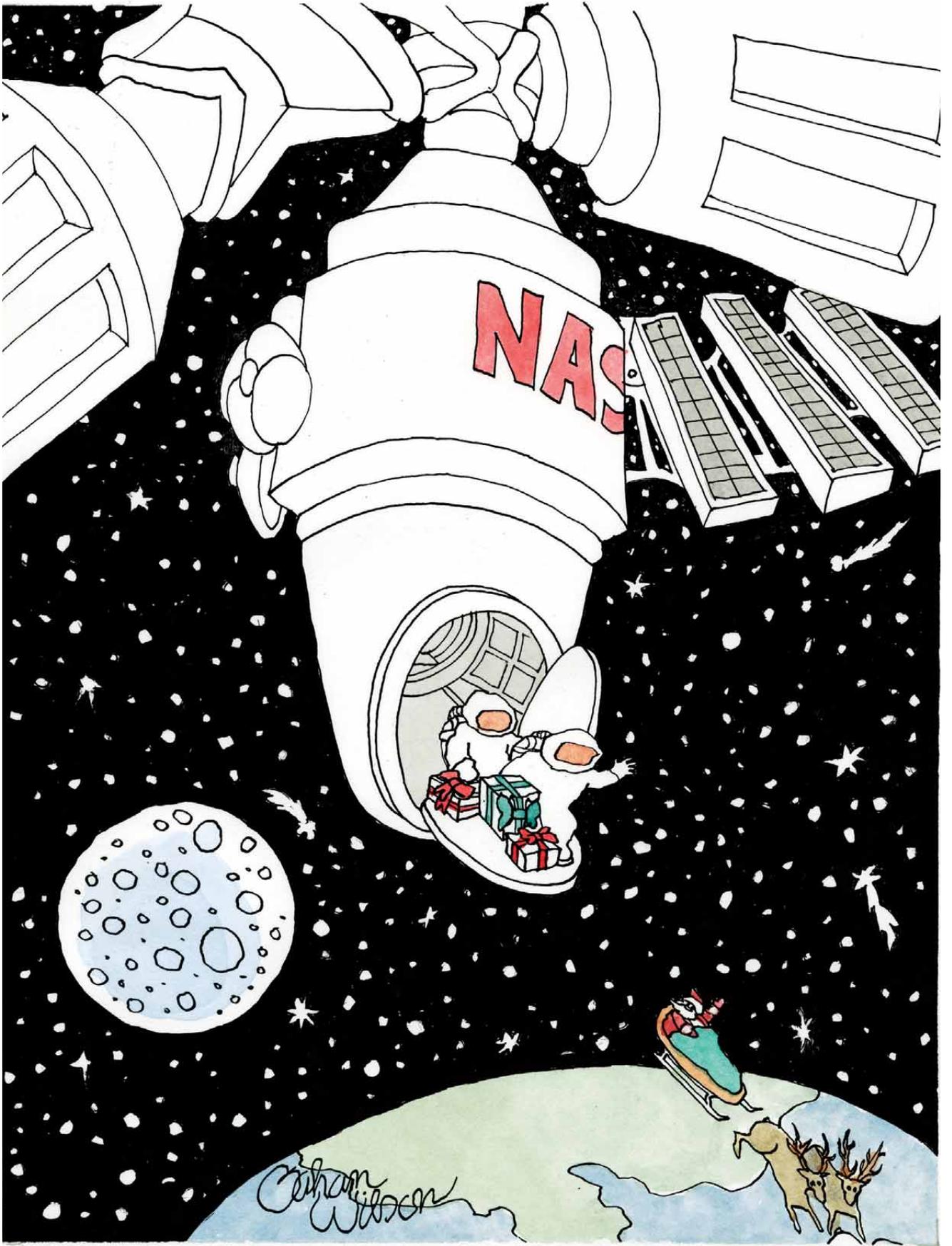
"Snakes don't have any odor," he said.

He opened another drawer with an albino southwestern rattlesnake in it. The snake rattled its tail. "Very rare and expensive," Crutchfield said. In another drawer, a yellow-and-pink cobra rose up and flared its neck, hissing its darting tongue. Crutchfield tapped the glass with his fingers. The cobra's head darted at the glass, hitting it with its fangs. White venom dribbled down the glass.

"Do you have a Burmese python?" I asked.

"Outside," he answered.

We stood in front of a cage in which a 10-foot Burmese python slithered with such excruciating slowness that it was mesmerizing. Then it coiled itself and was perfectly still. Burmese pythons are ambush predators, not hunters. They coil and wait for their prey, then grab them in their mouth with their inward-slanting teeth and coil their bodies around and crush them. Crutchfield said they can grow as much as 10 feet in a year—which is the problem with unsuspecting people who buy 12-inch baby pythons from Pet Supermarket for about \$50. They are usually not warned about the animal's growth spurt, and before long they have an unmanageable 12-foot, 120-pound snake in a tiny cage. *(continued on page 145)*



20

BY JASON BUHRMESTER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT SEBREE



Fig. 21

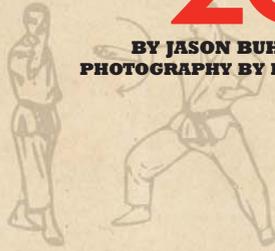


Fig. 03

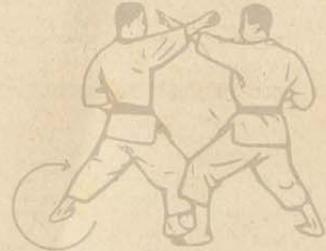


Fig. 39

QUINTON "RAMPAGE" JACKSON

THE MERCURIAL MMA CHAMP CLAIMS HE'LL NEVER FIGHT AGAIN. THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE WON'T GET SWINGING MAD ABOUT HIS *ULTIMATE FIGHTER* PROTÉGÉS, RUDE FANS AND CONVERSATIONS ABOUT HIS ARREST LAST YEAR

Q1

PLAYBOY: Before you announced you were quitting the UFC, you had just finished a stint as a coach on this season's *Ultimate Fighter: Heavyweights*. Did you enjoy coaching?

JACKSON: I actually hated coaching. The job fucking sucked. And they better not ask me to do it again. It's just fucking too much. It took too much time out of my day. I've got kids I didn't see, and I'd bust out crying whenever I looked at their picture. I wanted to train, but I could barely train myself because these guys needed so much attention. And I ain't gonna lie—the pay fucking sucked for how much work I did. It ain't worth it to me. Those guys are great, but I didn't like doing it.

Q2

PLAYBOY: How did you motivate your fighters?

JACKSON: Some of those guys were easy to motivate, and some of them weren't. It depends on the guy. Some guys you slap and they get motivated. Some guys you've got to tell them, "Do you want me to change your tampon?" You've got all different types of personalities.

Q3

PLAYBOY: This season of *Ultimate Fighter* included underground fighting legend Kimbo Slice. What do you think of his chances in the UFC?

JACKSON: Kimbo has a lot of learning to do, but he's willing to do it. He's learned so quickly that I think he's got a bright future in the UFC if he keeps progressing.

Q4

PLAYBOY: You've recently turned to acting. Tell us about *The A-Team*, the movie that caused you to quit the UFC.

JACKSON: I can't talk too much about it. I'm doing it now that I've finished this reality show. The movie was set a long time ago, and I was in the process of getting ready for it when *Ultimate Fighter* came up. I used to bond with my father watching *The A-Team* as a kid. My dad and I are still big fans of the show, so I am basically doing this for the childhood memories.

Q5

PLAYBOY: When was the first time you punched someone in the face?

JACKSON: My mom said I've been fighting my whole life. I have a cousin who's eight months younger than I am, and we literally fought every day for years. But the first time I punched somebody in the face who wasn't a family member was in kindergarten. I let this kid borrow one of my Hot Wheels, and he broke it, so I decided to break my foot off in his ass. I've been in so many fights it just seems natural.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Please tell us your cousin doesn't still want to fight you.

JACKSON: No, he doesn't want to fight anymore. He stopped wanting to fight a couple of years ago. But even after I did some professional fights he still came at me once or twice. I was like, "Man, come on. What are you doing?" So I had to beat him (concluded on page 142)

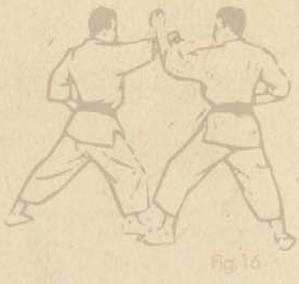


Fig. 17



Fig. 36



REBEL RIDERS
SIN CITY

WE IT HARD

IDE IT FAST



LAKE MEAD, NV
Kinetic riders - Surprise to Surprise

PLAYBOY'S

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

IT'S TIME TO
CELEBRATE
GOOD OLD-
FASHIONED
AMERICAN
CONSUMERISM



If you couldn't tell from the insane graphics, this board was built from the ground up to freestyle. But it's as at home flying off cornices as it is in the terrain park and features Burton's Channel binding system for ultimate mounting flexibility. (\$550, burton.com)



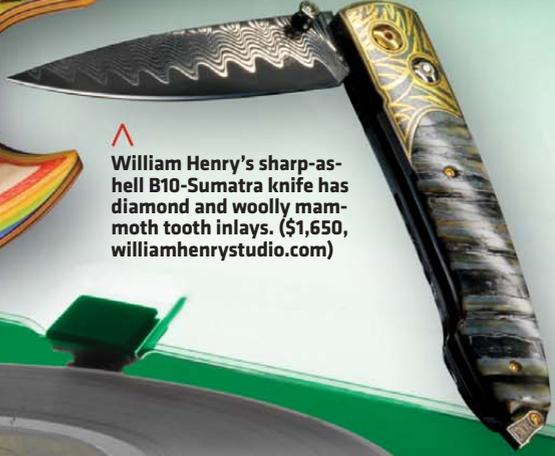
Behold fishing equipment giant Shimano's most badass reel: the Tiagra 130A. Going shark fishing? Bring cold beer and the right gear. (\$1,250, shimano.com)



Arne Jacobsen's classic Swan Chair looks as cool and contemporary now as it did when he designed it in 1956. (\$999, moderncollections.com)



◀ Slick paint job? No way. Gibson's Zoot Suit SG is made of multiple layers of dyed wood laminates. (\$2,000, gibson.com)



▲ William Henry's sharp-as-hell B10-Sumatra knife has diamond and woolly mammoth tooth inlays. (\$1,650, williamhenrystudio.com)



▲ Sinch.com puts cool, personalized imagery on blank CDs and DVDs. Order 100 CDs for \$95 or 100 DVDs for \$120.



◀ We adore Zenith's new 40th anniversary El Primero 1969 Original. And if ever there was a year to remember, it was 1969. Joe Namath's Jets, the Manson murders, Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia, the wedding of John and Yoko.... (\$7,900, zenith-watches.com)

▲ We love the convenience of MP3s, but you can have our vinyl when you pry it from our cold dead hands. Ion's LP 2 CD lets you rip your records directly to CD or computer. Which means you can get with the modern age without having to pay for everything twice. (\$450, ionaudio.com)



< Pentax's full-featured entry-level digital SLR sports a 12.4-megapixel sensor, can take HD video and comes in black, white or red. (\$650, pentax.com)

> This Masamoto Shiro-ko Hongasumi Kamagata Usuba Japanese sushi knife doubles as a ninja weapon. Just hold it up and your enemies will bow at your feet. (seven-inch knife, \$278; korin.com)



> Apple's only real competition in portable entertainment is the Zune HD. It does it all, and the user interface is better than Apple's. Yeah, you heard us right. (16 GB, \$220; 32 GB, \$290; zune.com)



> Father and son Nik and Jack Palmer hand-make leather-and-brass beauties at their Vancouver shop. Pictured: Leather Gladstone No. 10 L. (\$560, palmerandsons.ca)

> The Neuhaus T-2 tube amp takes digital output, does an analog conversion, then funnels the result through its sweet-sounding vacuum tubes.





◀ This Ken Wel model 632 buckle-back mitt is an exact replica of the 1928 glove Lou Gehrig played with. (\$80, akademapro.com)



▲ Designed in Italy in 1962, the Arco floor lamp sits in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art. That doesn't mean you can't buy your own. (\$2,700, dwr.com)



▲ She says: "So you love Marilyn Monroe?" You answer: "I guess you can say I wear my heart on my sleeve." The Frank cuff links go for \$150; the Marilyn for \$85; cufflinks.com.



➤ The Gerber Crucial has just enough and no more—knife, pliers, wire cutters, screwdrivers, bottle opener. (\$45, gerberstore.com)



▲ Triumph's Bonneville SE combines 1970s cool with modern guts. The DOHC parallel twin will get you where you're going fast. (\$8,600, triumphmotorcycles.com)

JOANNA

*DANCING WITH
THE STARS* PHENOM
AND WORLD-
CLASS MODEL
JOANNA KRUPA
REVEALS ALL
IN HER SEXIEST
SHOOT EVER

Beauties like Joanna Krupa don't come around all that often. Drop the photograph at left into a 1959 issue of *PLAYBOY* and she would fit in perfectly. The shot at right? That's 2009 all the way. She is a beauty for the ages, with a firm and elegant body that is almost inhuman in its perfection. In the words of Hemingway, she was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht.

Even rarer still, Joanna has versatile talents to match. She's a TV and movie actor, a dancer and a world-class model. With her "I'd Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur" PETA campaign, she is an activist as well. It seems

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY RANKIN





PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCO GLAVIANO



as if the only thing missing from her résumé is NASA engineer.

Born in Warsaw and raised in Chicago, she started out as a model in the late 1990s before moving on to acting. She is probably best known for her role on ABC's *Dancing With the Stars*. The competition is furious; this season's cast started with ex-Dallas Cowboy receiver Michael Irvin, former Ultimate Fighting champ Chuck Liddell, former supermodel Kathy Ireland and 11-time Olympic swimming medalist Natalie Coughlin, among others. But after week one, Joanna was leading the pack.

"I was over the moon," she says of that experience. But the show is a grind. "We have only four to five days to learn the next dance," she says. And then it's live on nationwide television. As of *PLAYBOY*'s press time, she was still going strong. "Whatever happens on the show, I just want to leave with a positive attitude, because it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Joanna's film credits include *Planet of the Apes* and *Ripple Effect*, and she has appeared on television programs as varied as *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and *The Man Show*. While we adore her effortless on-screen magnetism, here's what we love most about Joanna: She's a fighter, and she's afraid of nothing. She has called out Paris Hilton for being a brat, P. Diddy for wearing fur and Warren Sapp for being a Michael Vick apologist. Most famously, she publicly criticized gridiron hot dog Terrell Owens for being a lousy teammate when the two paired together on *The Superstars*, last summer's reality show that teamed pro athletes with celebrities.

"He was all about himself, which was uncool," she says flatly. "I spoke my mind. Afterward people said to me, 'So many of his old teammates and coaches would love to have said what you said.'"

As for this shoot, it's Joanna's second appearance in *PLAYBOY*. (Her first was in July 2005, and we're still getting letters from readers who loved that pictorial.) The studio shots were inspired by her idol, French actress Brigitte Bardot, who like Miss Krupa was an exemplar of style and a devoted animal-rights activist. "Nobody can replicate her," says Joanna, "but she was the inspiration. Hopefully I'll get to bump into her in St.-Tropez one day and tell her what a big fan I am."

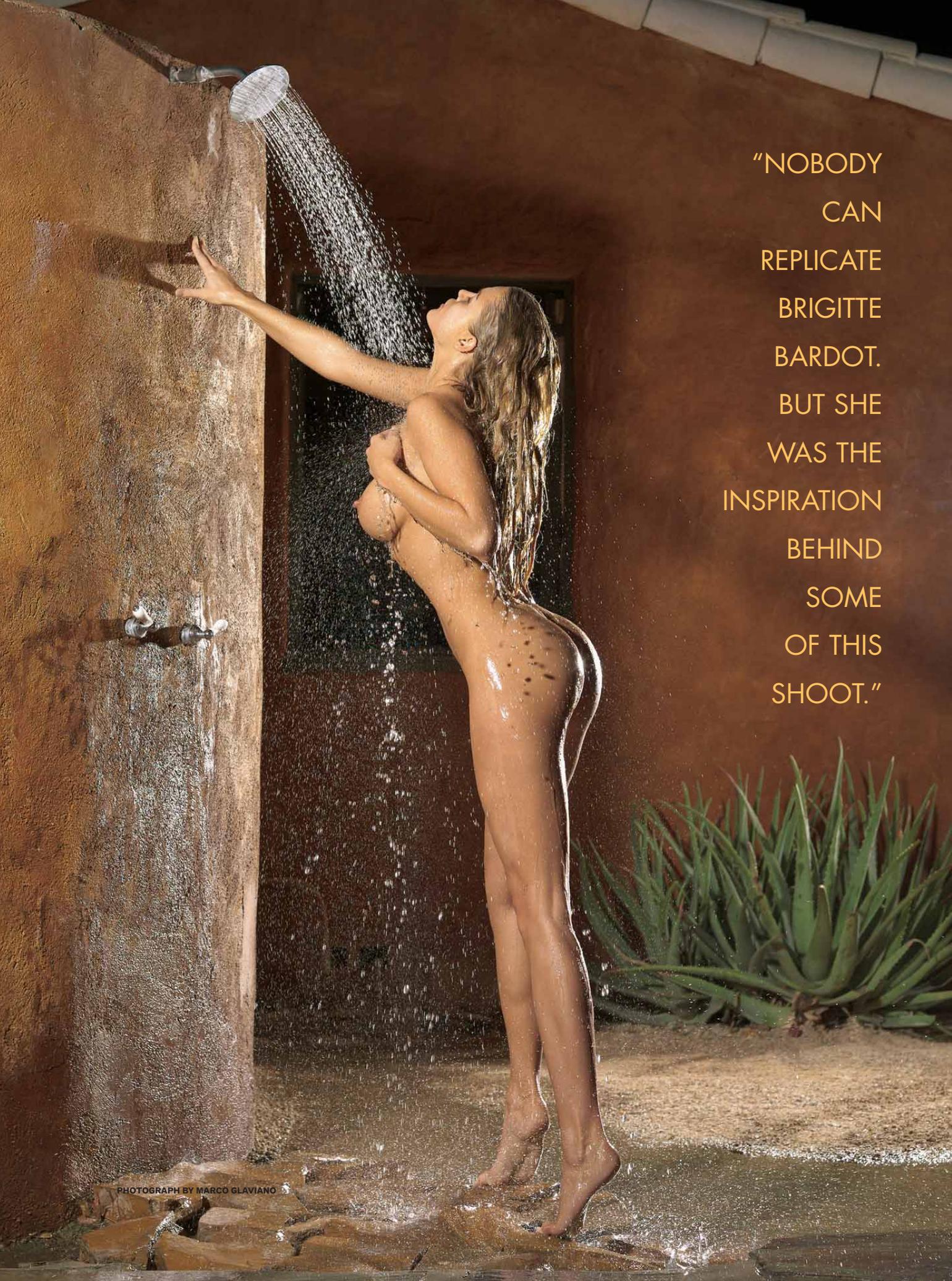
In person Joanna is charming, with a disarming smile and a certain indefinable charisma. These photos capture both sides of her. "My friend told me once, 'You're like an egg,'" Joanna says. "You're hard on the outside, a tough chick, but you're soft in the middle." Yes, we know what you're thinking. You'd like her served sunny-side up. Simply delicious.







See more hot photos
of Joanna at
playboy.com/krupa.



"NOBODY
CAN
REPLICATE
BRIGITTE
BARDOT.
BUT SHE
WAS THE
INSPIRATION
BEHIND
SOME
OF THIS
SHOOT."

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARCO GLAVIANO



JACKSON

(continued from page 128)

up again, probably like seven years ago. I haven't had to beat him up since.

Q7

PLAYBOY: What was your childhood like in Memphis?

JACKSON: I didn't really have a childhood because I grew up around people who were a lot older than me, so I grew up too fast. I kind of did the street life for a bit, so I learned a lot. But you know, growing up in the streets I learned not to be like the guys I followed, which turned out to be pretty good for me. Those guys, they didn't end up doing too much. They're still living at home with their mamas.

Q8

PLAYBOY: Before you began fighting MMA, you were a wrestler. How did you get involved in wrestling?

JACKSON: My mom remarried, and we moved to a new neighborhood. I used to be a big pro-wrestling fan, and I found out the new school had wrestling. Since I always wanted to be a pro wrestler, I thought, Maybe this is my chance. I walked up to the wrestling coach, who was at the gas station, and I asked him, "Hey, can I join the wrestling team?" It was in the middle of their season, but I joined, and I got pretty good. I got my butt kicked in the wrestling room every day. But the next year I went out, I was undefeated. It changed my whole life.

Q9

PLAYBOY: So why did you drop wrestling and switch to MMA?

JACKSON: I met one of my favorite wrestlers at a hotel when I was wrestling in the state championships. I can't say who it was, but I asked him for an autograph, and he was kind of rude to me. Then I saw him sign another kid's autograph as he was leaving, so that killed my dream of becoming a pro wrestler. I didn't want to have nothing to do with it.

Q10

PLAYBOY: You were arrested last year in Newport Beach, California for felony hit-and-run and felony reckless driving. You drove away even though your car has your name and picture plastered all over it and was seen by witnesses. What would you like to clarify about that incident?

JACKSON: I didn't really pay attention to the press, but I know one thing: A lady tried to sue me and say she had a miscarriage because of the accident, but the DA said it had nothing to do with the miscarriage. Anyway, that's old news.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Who gave you the nickname Rampage?

JACKSON: I got the nickname from my cousin when I was eight years old. I had a bad temper. When I would lose my temper my family thought it was amusing because I used to huff and hyperventilate. It was bad. But family members loved it, so they named me Rampage. When I was around 15, I tattooed it on my arm myself. When I started wrestling, it was still there, and it stuck.

Q12

PLAYBOY: What was it like in the early days when you were fighting on the MMA amateur circuit?

JACKSON: Those days sucked! I was a bouncer at a Vietnamese bar and a Vietnamese nightclub—two different places. I was training, and it was really bad getting off work at two, three in the morning and having to still train twice a day. I had nothing. I moved to California with a girlfriend, but we broke up two weeks before I fought my first professional fight. I was on my own after that.

Q13

PLAYBOY: What was your first tough fight, when you felt you were really tested?

JACKSON: I think it was my first professional fight against Marvin Eastman. It was a really tough fight. I had to fight on short notice again because somebody had backed out and I needed the money. I was basically broke. I knew I wasn't in good enough shape, and that messes with your mind. You're going to this fight and you know, man, your cardio is not good. You prepared for it for only two weeks, but you need that money. I lost and got paid \$500.

Q14

PLAYBOY: You got your professional start in the Pride Fighting Championships in Japan. Did you enjoy Japan?

JACKSON: I like people watching there. They dress so funny. I just like to watch them. It's like watching a bunch of living robots.

Q15

PLAYBOY: Is it true you didn't join the UFC earlier because of your friendship with Tito Ortiz?

JACKSON: Yeah, that has some truth to it. I was in Pride and trying to be champion over there, and Tito was champion in the UFC. We were the same weight class. We became friends by training with each other. We had the same coach, and I helped Tito prepare for a few fights and stuff.

Q16

PLAYBOY: If you ever returned to the Octagon, what would it take for you to fight him?

JACKSON: If a fight came along for the belt. That's probably the only way we would have ever fought—if we could have gotten a championship or something out of it, but not if we were just fighting for money. It's kind of odd, because we both have a lot of the same friends and the same training partners. Unless it was for a big goal, I don't think we would fight at all.

Q17

PLAYBOY: In 2007 you beat Chuck Liddell for the UFC Light Heavyweight championship. How did you celebrate?

JACKSON: I don't even remember that celebration. I actually just met the guy who drove me home that night. He saw me and said, "Hey, you left your shirt in my car." So evidently I lost my shirt, but I still had the belt. I didn't forget the belt! I celebrated pretty hard. It took me about three days to sober up.

Q18

PLAYBOY: What was your favorite weakness in an opponent?

JACKSON: My favorite weakness was somebody who didn't have a jaw, somebody who was scared to get punched, who didn't have a chin. I like knocking people out.

Q19

PLAYBOY: What's the hardest punch you've ever thrown in a fight?

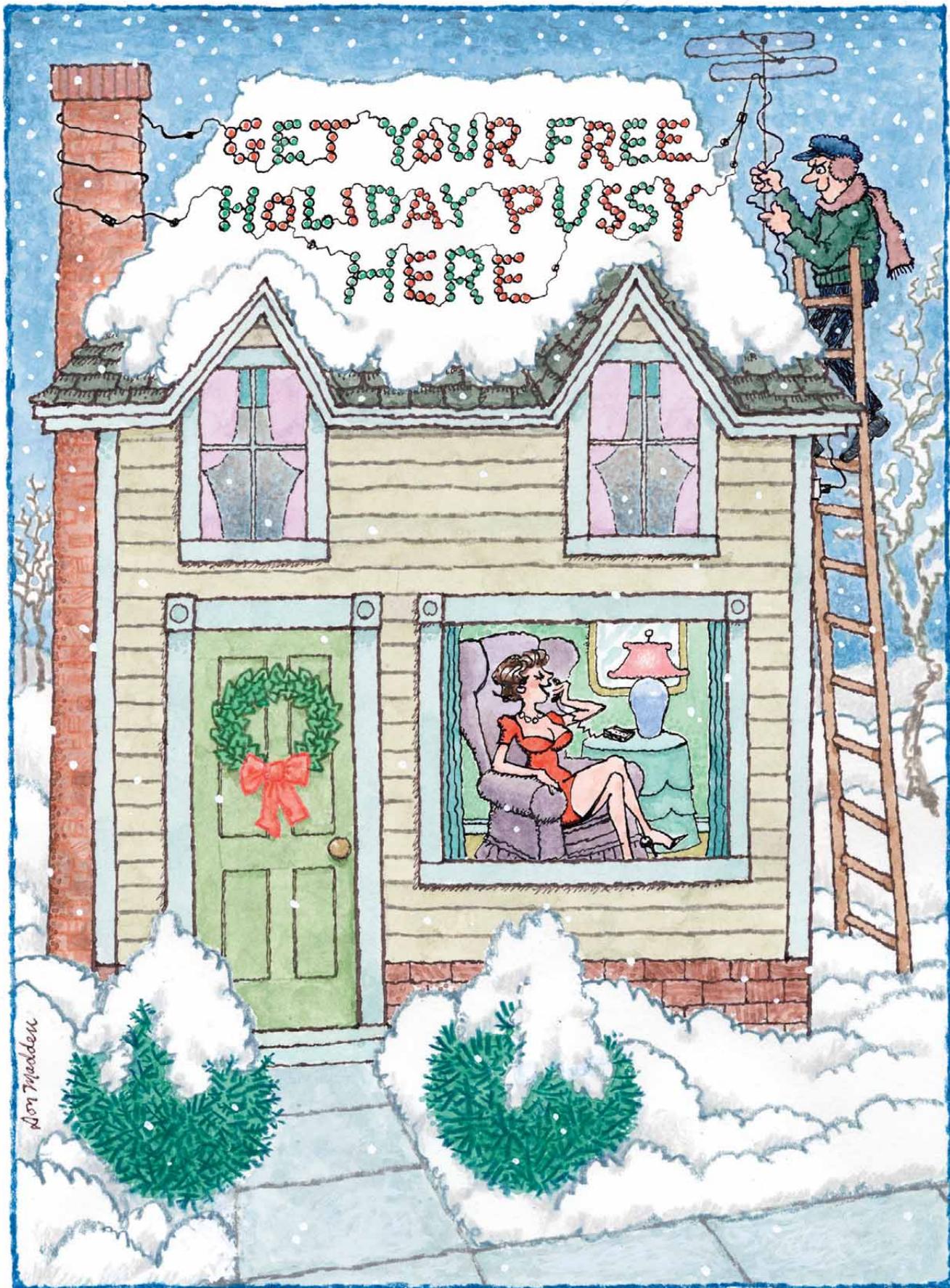
JACKSON: That was in my fight last December when I knocked out Wanderlei Silva. That punch was right on the money. It was very technical. I think that was the hardest punch I've ever thrown. He was out before he hit the ground. It still felt like it was nothing because I trained that punch so much. I connected and did everything exactly right. I just felt like butter.

Q20

PLAYBOY: What are your fans like?

JACKSON: Some people are just rude. People poke me, run up to me and say weird things. That's why I hate taking my kids places sometimes, because they hate if I stand around taking pictures all day when I'm supposed to be with them. Yesterday some guy grabbed me and spun me around. I thought it was one of my friends. He asked, "Are you Rampage?" I told him, "Hey, look, dude, just don't touch people, man." I don't say anything to them, or I say, "No, I'm not Rampage." I don't lose my temper or stuff like that, so they can't test me.





"I guess my ex is over the bitterness of our divorce, Pam. He offered to put up the holiday lights."

JAMES CAMERON

(continued from page 75)

where I grew up. A certain kind of showmanship gets in your blood when you grow up in a tourist town. In college in California I worked as a machinist, a bus mechanic, a precision tool and die maker, a high school janitor, whatever I could find. I'm pretty blue collar. I swear like a blue-collar guy when I'm on the set.

PLAYBOY: How did you make the transition to moviemaking?

CAMERON: I loved to write, draw and paint, but I also loved physics and astronomy. No career path seemed to reconcile those two directions except science fiction. Two of my closest friends in Fullerton were interested in filmmaking, but there was no film program. We formed a dumb-ass group of eventually four people, and every week one of us made his own little movie in which the other three would have to act, do stunts, set themselves on fire—whatever was necessary. Later we wrote a script and got it to a tax-sheltered group made up mostly of dentists and an investment guy who had dreams of doing *Star Wars*. We got \$20,000 from them, rented a \$200,000 camera that we completely disassembled because we had no idea how to operate it, and we made a movie even though we were monkeys and had no idea what we were doing.

PLAYBOY: What impact did *Star Wars* and George Lucas have on you?

CAMERON: My entrée into Hollywood came as a direct result of *Star Wars* because George Lucas suddenly made science fiction gold

instead of a ghettoized B-movie genre. When most people saw *Star Wars* there was the shock of the new. For me there was the shock of recognition, as if somebody had taken my private dream and put it up on the screen. I had gone through the same evolution George had: writing, drawing and envisioning these hyperkinetic World War II dogfights in outer space. Good thing I'm not paranoid, the kind of schizo who thinks the CIA is spying on his thoughts and then has to wear tinfoil on his head. I took *Star Wars* as a sign that what I had to offer was something people wanted.

PLAYBOY: Your experience with amateur films helped you get a foot in the door of low-budget filmmaking with Roger Corman's company, where you made miniature models and designed sets for *Rock 'n' Roll High School* and *Battle Beyond the Stars*.

CAMERON: On a Corman film everybody just rose to his or her own level—the opposite of the Peter Principle, in a way. You didn't think of a career; you thought, What's my next opportunity? If you got an opportunity to direct, you didn't question it. Ron Howard didn't question it when he got *Grand Theft Auto*; Francis Ford Coppola didn't question it when he got to do *Dementia 13*. These are kind of junk movies, but we were interested in the process, in learning. That's where I met writer-producer Gale Hurd, and the recognition that we would make a great team was pretty instantaneous. It took only a year or two for us to make a movie together.

PLAYBOY: The movie you made together in 1984, *The Terminator*; got you your first big directing job and made a star of Arnold

Schwarzenegger. Did Schwarzenegger's ascendancy in Hollywood and politics surprise you?

CAMERON: If you've known him for even a short time, you're not surprised by anything he accomplishes. He used to say, "You don't program yourself for failure; you program yourself for success." At first I thought it was just macho bullshit. But I've subsequently made many decisions using that principle, especially in recent years. The decision to show 16 minutes of *Avatar* to the public during a special Avatar Day was based on the principle of programming myself for success.

PLAYBOY: Niagara Falls, near where you spent your childhood, is a favorite wedding spot. Did growing up there make you hyperaware of marriage?

CAMERON: I don't know, but I *have* been married five times. I'm a perfectionist, so I kept trying until I got it right, which I have, I'm happy to report. Suzy Amis is a keeper. They were all great women, but there are people you can love and later not like, or it can be your rhythms and energies are too disparate to function together as partners. I found—and this was the big one—you have to work at it. Before that I had this attitude, Well, I'll do this until it doesn't work, and then I'll bail. You'll never stay married if you have that attitude.

PLAYBOY: What caused the attitude shift?

CAMERON: It was something a therapist said. I don't believe in shrinks, and they're not part of my life, but in this particular case I had agreed to go because it might help, and he gave me something that has stuck with me as a philosophy. He said, "You don't do this for her; you do this for you, so things make sense to you."

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You get into a relationship and make certain promises, and you have to live by a code, a set of values, for your own reasons, not to please the other person. Your word is your bond. It doesn't matter what kind of money is involved or how the situation subsequently changes. You have to be smart enough to go into a situation knowing the dangers, and you have to live by the agreements you make going in.

PLAYBOY: Three of your four ex-wives—Gale Hurd, Linda Hamilton and Kathryn Bigelow—are prominent in the movie business. If director Bigelow asked for your opinion of her film *The Hurt Locker*, could you be honest without the discussion reopening old wounds?

CAMERON: Kathryn and I are still close, and we'd work together on a film tomorrow. The key is to be honest but diplomatic, constructive, not destructive. She was interested in my input on *The Hurt Locker*, and I basically said, "You did a great job, and I wouldn't change a frame," and it was true in that case. She has seen *Avatar* at different stages and given good input. Her current partner, Mark Boal, who wrote *The Hurt Locker*, gave me notes as well. It's very collegial. I don't have a lot of those relationships, but I value the ones I do have.

PLAYBOY: When director McG's *Terminator Salvation* was up against Michael Bay's *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* at the box office last summer, McG said, "Michael Bay has a big cock, but I'd like to believe mine is bigger. If he's up for it, we can reveal ourselves on the *Spartacus* steps at Universal and put the question to rest." As co-writer and director of two *Terminator* movies, would you have been willing to drop trou with them to settle the matter?

CAMERON: No, I prefer we keep work and play separate. Being a good director probably doesn't have a whole lot to do with the size of one's penis, big toe, thumb size or anything else. That's about the dumbest fucking thing you could ever say. I'm surprised he didn't call me out.

PLAYBOY: As someone who has been accused of going off on the set, what do you make of those leaked tapes of Christian Bale berating a crew member on *Terminator Salvation*?

CAMERON: The *Avatar* crew all thought that was a hoot, and for the next few days we were all quoting what I thought was an inspired rant. The joke is I'm a tyrannical guy, but I said, "Man, I have to take my hat off to this guy. I could not pull a rant like that if I had to." I mean, I can get on a roll but not like that. I just had to bow down.

PLAYBOY: How old do you consider yourself to be emotionally?

CAMERON: Probably 14, and I'm happy about that. In some ways I'm even younger than that because I never want to lose the intellectual curiosity—of always wanting to know how stuff works and wanting to put things together with my hands. I can relate very well to my six-year-old, who's always building something. If I let him go he'd just take off into the woods and not come back until the end of the day, just like I used to do as a kid.

PLAYBOY: Are you already plotting how you might top *Avatar*?

CAMERON: I haven't decided. I always say that when a woman is in the midst of childbirth, don't ask her if she wants another child. I'm crowning right now.

PYTHON SCARE

(continued from page 126)

Today there are almost 11 million captive pythons and other reptiles in America, and each year, when they become too big, some are released into the Everglades, which has the perfect temperature, swampy environment and ecosystem. No one releases a python into the woods in Michigan in December.

Pythons became popular with the south Florida cocaine cowboys of the 1980s, who saw exotic and dangerous pets as proof of the macho nature of their business. These tough-guy wannabes couldn't afford lions and tigers (à la Tony Montana in *Scarface*), so they bought Burmese pythons, which were cheap to buy, feed and maintain. By the late 1990s a lot of people were taken with the big snakes.

Crutchfield said he doesn't believe pythons are dangerous as pets. "They can be trained to be tame," he said. "They're not harmful unless they mistake you for food. Pythons kill only what they can eat." Then he said, "Adrenaline junkies own snakes. The attraction is it's something beautiful that can kill you. But snakes don't have enough personality to be good pets. They're not smart. They don't respond to you. Now, lizards and iguanas like to be petted. Gators are smart too and have interesting personalities."

Crutchfield opened the python's cage and took it out. He held it up to me with both hands, like an offering. The snake lay draped over his arms like a long, thick rope. It was a beautiful, powerful-looking animal. Its skin was olive colored and dotted with large gold rectangles outlined in black. Despite the reptile's beauty, python leather is not much in demand by the fashion trade. A large skin will not even fetch \$100.

"Go ahead, pet him," said Crutchfield. I petted the python. Its skin was soft despite the scales, and very loose, like the skin of an old man. The loose skin allows its body to expand when it swallows something big.

Reptile lovers like Crutchfield believe the whole south Florida python scare is a political ploy to get federal funds to restore the Everglades from destruction caused not by pythons but by humans. They also believe biologists precipitated the scare to get federal grants, a.k.a. scientific welfare, which could support their snake studies for years. As for the seven licensed hunters, the herps claim they are motivated not by the danger of these snakes or by a sense of civic duty but by a desire to escape the anonymity of their lives, to get their face on TV and their story in magazines like *The New Yorker*.

"It's a joke," Crutchfield said. "So they're eating Key Largo wood rats. It's a goddamn rat! Feral cats are a bigger ecological threat. They kill just to kill. And Nile monitor lizards—they're finding them in Cape Coral now. They're a greater threat than pythons."

Florida authorities disagree.

In May, Senator Nelson tried to persuade United States Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to allow hunters to trap and kill pythons on federal lands (where hunting is normally prohibited). To make his point, Nelson invited Salazar to the Everglades to witness the python threat firsthand.

Forty people, including Salazar and Nelson, went out on airboats but came across no pythons, or maybe they did but couldn't see them. Pythons are almost impossible to detect because they blend into their environment. Once, a captured python was fitted with a tracking device and released into the Glades. Sometime



later, biologists tracked the python through the transmitter, and when they came to the exact spot where the transmitter indicated the python was, they couldn't see the snake at their feet.

Skip Snow, an Everglades National Park biologist, was prepared when Salazar didn't see any pythons on his airboat trip. Snow brought one of his own, a 16-footer, to show Salazar how big and dangerous they are. He and two others wrestled the big snake while Salazar watched. He was impressed.

Two months later, after the death of the two-year-old girl, Salazar announced a plan to rid the Glades of pythons. It had many parts: (1) Allow hunters on federal land like Everglades National Park to kill pythons with firearms; (2) organize a python response team; (3) study pythons; (4) trap pythons (Nelson's spokesman, Dan McLaughlin, said, "You could spend the next 10 years setting traps"); (5) fly drones over the Glades and use thermal imaging to spot pythons; (6) study pythons' diet; (7) institute a python hotline. One biologist said of all these plans, "Stop studying [pythons] and start killing them." The best way to kill pythons is called the "rapid-acceleration removal method." That is, run them over with a car when they try to cross a road.

Snow, 57, is the poster biologist for poli-

ticians like Nelson who want to publicize the great south Florida python scare. Snow is a master of street theater (e.g., bringing a python for Salazar) and keeps his own python skin in a laundry bag to impress people. He is also a media master, eminently quotable. His name and comments about the python threat have appeared all over the media these past months. Among Snow's quotes are the following:

"[Pythons are] an experiment run amok."

"[Pythons are] almost equivalent to a large Russian roulette game.... We just continue to fire away."

"[Pythons are] a species that is really made for invading."

"Invasives are the gift that keeps on giving."

"You never bet against a snake."

"Do you really want a snake that may grow more than 20 feet long or weigh 200 pounds, urinate and defecate like a horse, live more than 25 years and for whom you will have to kill mice, rats and, eventually, rabbits?"

So I called the Everglades National Park office and asked to speak to Skip Snow. I was put through to Linda Friar, the park's public information officer. She told me Snow was no longer allowed to talk to the media. But she would talk to me. She told me that if ENP workers find

pythons in the park, they can catch them and euthanize them. How? "We tend to gas them," she said. I tried to picture how one would gas a python. Stretch its mouth around a car exhaust?

"Our scientists don't believe they're easy to eradicate," she said. "They're difficult to find. They consume native species, but there has never been an incident in the park where they attacked a human." Then she sighed as if exhausted by, or maybe disgusted with, the great python scare. "The pythons have been getting an awful lot of media coverage," she finally said, "but I don't think they're a big threat."

Crutchfield and I drove down a rough, narrow dirt road in the heart of the Everglades on our own python hunt. Thunder cracked and lightning lit up the swamp stretching for miles around us. He drove slowly, hunched forward in his seat, his eyes studying the embankments on either side of the road, which were illuminated by his headlights.

I asked him when we were going to get out and hunt for pythons. I had dressed for an excursion into the swamp: boots, jeans and long-sleeve shirt to fend off mosquitoes. He said, "We are hunting for pythons. This is the best way to find them." Most of the swamp is a river of grass that hunters

Dirty Duck by Bobby London



can't walk on. And even if hunters could follow solid ground, it would be impossible to find a hiding python in the dark. So Crutchfield and most of the seven state-permitted python hunters just drive up and down swamp roads, hoping to catch sight of a python on an embankment.

"It's not very sexy," I said.

Crutchfield, peering out the window, said, "It's an exercise in futility. You drive for hours, waste gas, pollute the environment just to catch one every few days. You're never gonna get rid of them anyway."

Jeff Fobb, a permitted hunter, described python hunting as "like finding a needle in a haystack." Another python hunter claimed he had trained his beagle to sniff them out. His dog, Python Pete, got a lot of publicity until it was revealed he had never sniffed out a python in his life. Crutchfield laughed and said, "Python Pete is a fucking joke. How many snakes you gonna find with a dog on a leash in the swamp? Let the dog loose and a python will eat it." Another python hunter had already thought of that. He hunts with a dog he calls his Burma-bait Dog.

The most successful of the python hunters is Bobby Hill, a grizzled old-timer with a goatee. Hill hunts pythons with his 12-gauge shotgun for the South Florida Water Management District. He claims he has killed more than 300 pythons since 2004. *The Miami Herald* ran a front-page story about Hill, "Stalking the Everglades Python," complete with a photograph of him and his shotgun. Hill's narrowed eyes and grimly set mouth made him look menacing. His secret to python hunting? He can smell them. "The guy has a gift," said his boss, Dan Thayer.

Crutchfield made a sound of disgust and said, "Bullshit! You can't smell a python. You're never gonna find a lot of them."

We drove through an abandoned guard gate and headed down a long paved road that led to the little burg of Flamingo at the tip of the Florida peninsula. "I have noted a paucity of small animals in the swamp," said Crutchfield. "Possums, coons, rabbits. But the effect on the ecosystem is still unknown. Man killed predators, which caused an infusion of small game. Maybe the pythons are bringing the small game back to the level they should be. Let's face it: Pythons are here. Who gives a fuck?"

We drove up and down that paved road for an hour. We saw a few low-flying birds, owls and the brilliant lightning, and we heard the racket of insects. But we saw no pythons. I relaxed and smoked my cigar.

Crutchfield's obsessive adventures in the world of rare and dangerous reptiles have landed him in hot water at times. In 1999 he pleaded guilty to seven counts of smuggling Madagascar tree boa constrictors and Madagascar ground boas into the United States. He had previously been convicted, in 1995, of smuggling Fiji Island iguanas. He was sentenced to 30 months after he admitted he had smuggled more than 200 reptiles into this country. The assistant attorney general for environment and natural resources at the time, Lois Schiffer, said, "Trafficking in

rare species threatens our environment."

I asked Crutchfield about reptile smuggling. He said most illegal species were smuggled into the States in the 1980s as breeding stock. "Now a lot of reptiles, like pythons, are so cheap, there's no point in smuggling."

Like most herpers, Crutchfield believes pythons were released into the Glades en masse after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The hurricane devastated the area around Homestead and Florida City, which was home to a hundred reptile farms and zoos. According to Crutchfield and others, the hurricane blew away the cages and released thousands of pythons into the area. The small ones, he claims, were picked up by hurricane winds and deposited deep in the ENP. As proof of his thesis, Crutchfield points out that most of the captured pythons today have the same DNA.

Crutchfield also disputes biologists' claim of 140,000 pythons in the Glades. But even if these numbers are accurate, he said, "Pythons won't destroy the ecosystem. They'll evolve into it. Did you know the ENP even uses a picture of a python on its brochures to attract tourists?"

I asked him what he thought was the worst-case scenario for pythons in the Glades. He said, "Millions of dollars of taxpayer money will be wasted trying to get rid of them. This is all a waste because Senator Nelson and the biologists want Everglades restoration money and grant money."

"Gator" Tim Schwartzman knows a few things about the great south Florida python scare. A 26-year-old snake lover with an earring and a black goatee, Gator Tim took me inside a six-by-eight-foot python cage at Sawgrass Recreation Park, a reptile zoo outside Fort Lauderdale that he co-owns. Once inside, I almost stepped on a 10-foot male python coiled at my feet.

"They do blend into the surroundings, don't they?" Gator Tim said. "But don't worry; they're docile. They're just not affectionate. They won't cuddle and wag their tail when you come home."

I asked him why people get snakes. "I don't know," he answered. "Some people think they're kind of creepy, slithering with no arms or legs. In Jamaica the natives hang snakes from trees to scare away unwanted visitors. I think fear of snakes comes from Adam and Eve and the devil. But when I handle pythons for little kids, they're fascinated. Cute little girls go, 'Wow! Cool! Can I hold him?' They haven't been imbued with fear yet, until they become teenagers."

He then said sharply, "I'd move back if I were you." He pointed to a second, much bigger python slithering toward me, a 13-foot, 80-pound female with milky blue eyes. I stepped back from the snake, which was flicking its tongue at my bare ankle as if to see if it were prey. "Their eyesight's not very good," said Tim. "Pythons have heat sensors on their face that see like an infrared camera, like in the movie *Predator*." I stepped farther back. Tim said, "When she wraps up prey, I can hear the bones cracking."

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Pythons in captivity are fed once every two weeks, usually dead rats, rabbits or chickens weighing up to three pounds. Some python owners get their kicks by feeding their pets live mice they buy from Pet Supermarket. "It's disgusting," a girl at the cash register once told me. "I hate to sell those mice." In the wild, however, pythons can go as long as six months without eating. They prefer smaller prey to conserve their energy, but they can eat whole anything that is one and a half times their body girth. Their jaws are not solid like man's but hinged; they can stretch their mouth wide enough to swallow a deer.

I asked Tim if the male and female could mate. "Theoretically," he said, "but they haven't in two years. Maybe she's waiting for him to take her out to dinner first." When pythons mate, they intertwine like the medical symbol for up to an hour. A female can have as many as 80 eggs at a time, which is why they breed so successfully in the Glades.

Tim said the major misconception about pythons is that they are aggressive man-eaters. "Pythons fear people," he said. "They shouldn't be viewed as our enemy. Without them we'd be overrun with rats." He added, "If a dog kills a kid, we don't kill all dogs."

I asked him what the biggest threat to the Glades ecosystem was, if not pythons. He said, "Man. Man's been destroying the Glades for hundreds of years."

Before I left Sawgrass, Tim wanted to show me something. He went into a building and returned with a small snake wrapped around his hand. It had big, cute eyes and greenish-brown skin decorated with orange and black polka dots—a baby

anaconda. "She's been hand raised," said Tim. "She's very mellow. They live mostly in water, unlike pythons, which prefer dry land. They've already found a few in the Glades. A green anaconda can grow to 30 feet in length and weigh between 450 and 600 pounds. They are very aggressive. They have been reportedly eating people in South American jungles." Maybe so, but in the movie *Anaconda*, no matter how big the snakes get, it seems they're still unable to ingest Jennifer Lopez's booty.

Tim looked at the cute baby anaconda and said, "This could be the next invasive species in the Everglades."

Before I left I passed the dock where Tim keeps the park's airboats for excursions into the River of Grass. A six-foot gator was swimming around one of the boats. I barely paid attention. Gators are so commonplace in south Florida many people don't fear them. They are Floridians' state reptile. A road is named after them, Alligator Alley. A college football team is named after them, the Florida Gators. They are a major attraction at zoos and out in the Glades, where Seminoles wrestle them, to the delight of tourists. Yet the Florida gator is far more dangerous to man than any python.

Herpers in the United States have their own organization to help them combat the efforts of politicians like Nelson and Rooney and biologists like Snow to put restrictions on the import and sale of reptiles. It's called the United States Association of Reptile Keepers, and its president is a loquacious man named Andrew Wyatt. It was Wyatt, 45, a python breeder, who first put me in touch with Crutchfield when I called Wyatt's home in the Outer Banks

of North Carolina. At first Wyatt was nervous about talking to the media, assuming I had already made up my mind about the great south Florida python scare. After a few minutes he started talking fast without letting me ask a question.

Wyatt said the python scare was a "fairly tale promulgated by the media and politicians, a circus to demonize pythons. Biologists like Skip Snow spout off about irresponsible reptile keepers with no evidence. They appeal to Americans' morbid pleasure in the thought that exotic snakes are out to kill them, this scary, deadly beast lying in wait to eat their children. In captivity, pythons are puppy-dog tame."

I asked him about the two-year-old girl killed by a python. He said, "That python was nine years old and only eight feet long and 15 pounds. He was emaciated. That animal was abused. Maybe it wasn't the snake that killed the girl. The story is fishy." (The Sumter County sheriff's office assured me it was the python that killed the girl, despite her stepfather's shady reputation for drug dealing and domestic disturbance calls. In fact, he was recently arrested for trying to sell drugs to an undercover officer. A neighbor described him as the kind of man who gets his rocks off standing in his front yard with his albino python wrapped around his neck, as if to show passersby how fearless he is.)

Wyatt isn't the only person who thinks there is something fishy about that little girl's death. Crutchfield and Gator Tim do too. And oddly enough, so does Kenneth Krysko, a herpetologist at the University of Florida.

"I think someone else did it," Krysko told me over the phone. "I think there's a cover-up. There's no way an eight-foot python would try to eat a child. Pythons kill only to eat, and he didn't try to eat that little girl. There's no documentation a python ever ate a human." Pythons have killed people, however—12 since 1980, to be exact. In the first eight months of 2009, 20 people were killed by dogs, and more than 10 are killed by horses every year, according to Wyatt.

Krysko does think the herpers' claim that Hurricane Andrew seeded pythons in the Everglades is "a joke." He said, "It takes only a few people to let them loose for them to breed." As for the possibility of removing pythons from the Glades, Krysko said, "There's no magic bullet. The worst case is we'll never manage them. They'll expand their range north. The python hunters? They can't catch anything. In their first six weeks of python hunting, the state's seven permitted hunters found six pythons, and three of them were hatchlings."

The fear of little children being eaten is what has fueled the Florida python scare, first with the two-year-old girl and then with the python caught in a drainage pipe near a day care center in Bradenton. But that scare was even fishier than the two-year-old's death. It seems that one self-appointed python hunter, Justin Matthews, staged the scene. After the girl's death he put his own pet python, Sweetie, in the drainage pipe and then "captured" it to publicize the danger.



"I'm waiting for a break in the weather, then I'm jumping out the window."

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"I wanted to get some press," he said, "so they knew there was a place you could take them"—meaning people could bring the snakes to him—"and to let people know what can happen if they are released. So I staged the capture of the 14-foot python."

"Now it's time to feed the python," said Crutchfield. I followed him across the yard to a big plastic tub with a screen on top. Crutchfield pushed the screen aside to reveal about a dozen white rats with pink tails and eyes. He reached in. They scurried away, but finally he pulled out three of the squirming rats by the tail.

We walked back to the python cage. Crutchfield opened the door on the sleeping snake. He threw the rats into the cage, and in a blink of an eye the docile python snatched a rat in its mouth and instantly wrapped it up in its body. It held the rat's head still with its fangs while its powerful body squeezed. The rat's legs and tail twitched as the life was squeezed out of it. The look on my face prompted Crutchfield to say, "What's the matter? This is the way nature works."

It took 10 minutes for the python to suffocate the rat. When it was sure the rat was dead, it opened its mouth wider and wider, almost in a reptilian smile, and put the rat's head into it. It still held the rat wrapped up in its coils as it began to gulp it down slowly, in stages, like Linda Lovelace deep-throating Harry Reems. The two other rats scurried around the cage, sniffing the python's skin, oblivious of their fate.

Almost an hour later, all three rats had been devoured. I could see them as three distinct lumps inside the python's body, like three biceps on an extraterrestrial bodybuilder.

The python looked at me. It uncoiled itself and slithered over to the cage. It rose up and flicked its tongue to see if I was prey. It was still hungry. I stepped back.

Late that night I drove back to my home in Fort Lauderdale. On a whim I called James Billie, a former Seminole chief famous for his hunting prowess in the swamp. I asked Billie if he had ever encountered a python there.

"We caught a 12-footer once," he said. "He became part of our tourist attraction. The pythons are just another species that's been added to our repertoire in south Florida. I don't think they'll do any damage. But they scare the heck out of me. My boys too. They'll be in the swamp, cutting trees for my chickee business"—Billie builds chickees, open-sided Seminole huts that people use in their backyards for barbecues and as bars—"and all the while they're listening for hissing sounds."

Billie then said that a year ago a friend of his was fishing in the swamp when a snake swam by that was bigger than his boat. "A python?" I asked. Billie said, "No. It had round, black spots on it. It was an anaconda."



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DOPE

(continued from page 70)

convictions overturned. In 2001, commenting on another case in which Lucas was accused of making similar misrepresentations of CIs, the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals noted, "It is unclear how Agent Lucas could have made such statements of an affirmative character for which there is no basis without having acted either deliberately or recklessly.... Accordingly, we will assume that this was a deliberate or reckless misrepresentation."

For more than 15 years Hidalgo has been confined to various prisons in the U.S., fighting to get his conviction vacated. Recent developments in Ohio have raised his hopes. Says Joseph Rosenbaum, Hidalgo's attorney, "If you look at the actions of Lucas in our case—allegations of evidence tampering, perjury, withholding evidence in relation to criminal informants—you will see all the patterns that are coming out in Ohio. There's a timeline in Lucas's career of misrepresenting the truth, an uninterrupted trail of deceit. And he's been able to get away with it for a long time."

The use of criminal informants—rats, snitches and stool pigeons—has been part of the prosecution of the drug war since its inauguration in the late 1960s. Its defenders contend it's necessary to use unsavory characters to catch

other criminals. But in many cases the CIs are professional con artists whose experiences in the criminal underworld far outstrip those of the agents and prosecutors who are their overseers. The instances of case agents and government lawyers being played by crooks are far more prevalent than the Department of Justice cares to admit.

One person who has been a vocal critic of the DOJ's dependence on CIs is Michael Levine, former DEA agent and author of the best-selling memoirs *Deep Cover* and *The Big White Lie*. "I can't tell you the number of times," he says, "I've heard fellow agents, cops, training instructors and prosecutors say, 'Mike, never trust an informant.' But I have never once heard a prosecutor say that to a jury."

He adds, "Over the years I have seen the DEA and other law enforcement agencies become more and more dependent on rats. The question is: Do you have to put yourself in league with the devil for some higher good? I think the net balance is we lose." Still, Levine does not blame the informants themselves, noting, "A rat cannot take control of an investigation unless the people who are supposed to control him become as immoral and corrupt as he is."

The career of Lee Lucas has been particularly dependant on the use of rats in general and one rat in particular. In the early 1990s Lucas formed an alliance with Helmut Groebe, a charming German-born con artist

who would become his informant benefactor. Some of Groebe's scams resulted in prison stints, and he had been convicted of fraud in Bavaria. Lucas and Groebe launched criminal stings around the globe, making Groebe rich and adding international luster to the unpolished former bouncer from Cleveland.

As a young man, Groebe once bilked hundreds of thousands of dollars out of a wealthy German widow and a doctor he'd known for years. Groebe slipped out of Germany to Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1980s. He promptly ripped off his own 20-year-old daughter, whom he hadn't seen in 18 years, for \$100,000. During the next decade Groebe lived the life of an international playboy and predator in Brazil and south Florida.

It is not clear exactly when Groebe signed on as a paid informant for the DEA, but he met Lucas for the first time in the early 1990s. This was a pair made in heaven, or maybe hell: an experienced con man and a young, gung ho agent.

One Lucas-Groebe sting involved German businessman Wolfgang Von Schlieffen. Von Schlieffen had achieved great wealth as an investor in real estate, construction and the import-export business in the Miami area. He lived the good life, owned a yacht and luxury vehicles, a Rolls Royce among them.

Von Schlieffen trusted Groebe, who had a polish and mastery of English that he admired, and agreed to meet with Groebe's business associates (Lucas and another undercover agent) interested in condos and cars. At the meeting, much to Von Schlieffen's dismay, the men spoke rapid-fire English and kept steering the conversation to the subject of narcotics. They even flashed a small package he thought was cocaine. A transcript of the conversation shows Von Schlieffen, in fractured English, struggling to explain he was not interested in a cocaine deal. Nonetheless, he accepted a \$10,000 down payment from Lucas for what he thought was an automobile transaction. He was arrested on the spot and charged with money-laundering conspiracy charges.

Lucas testified at Von Schlieffen's trial, referring to him as "the Count." He claimed the Count "pacified the thing and put the deal together." Von Schlieffen was found guilty and was sentenced to eight years.

Von Schlieffen spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on lawyers to clear his name. After serving seven years in prison, he was released when U.S. District Judge Wilkie Ferguson ruled in his favor, dismissing the conviction as fraudulent. The judge was especially critical of the prosecution's lawyers and agents, who he determined had acted in bad faith by using a "treacherous" informant, adding, "The only people who can protect the system against the rogue actions of confidential informants are those who use them: the government."

Von Schlieffen died in 2003, but his estate was posthumously awarded \$356,000 in damages.



"Just one question. What's wrong with the conventional desktop Christmas tree?"

Some DEA officials contend that our narcotics problem is less the result of excessive demand or porous law enforcement than it is corruption among foreign public officials. To illustrate this point, in the early 1990s the DEA focused on Faustino Rico Toro, a

controversial figure in the Bolivian military. Colonel Rico Toro had been accused of human rights violations and aiding drug smugglers, and after he was named the country's drug czar he was targeted by the DEA.

In 1994 Bolivian police arrested Rico Toro on an extradition request from the U.S. attorney in south Florida. Extradition proceedings dragged on for months until Rico Toro agreed to enter a federal detention center in Miami, where he learned that federal prosecutors had linked him to drug deals, citing 500 audiotapes and 14 videotapes. His primary accuser was a man he had never met: Helmut Groebe.

The case was weak. Rico Toro had never been caught with drugs, there was no physical evidence, they found no hidden assets typical of a drug kingpin, and he was not on the surveillance tapes. Other than Groebe, who said he met with Rico Toro in Bolivia, there were no witnesses against him. In 1995 Lucas, now stationed in Bolivia, sought to rectify that. He and other agents paid a visit to Juan Padilla Burela, a farm manager who had met Groebe through a relative.

According to Burela's sworn affidavit, Lucas offered him money for testifying against Rico Toro. Burela had already stated at a previous trial that he didn't know the colonel, but Lucas didn't seem to care. Reacting to their pushy behavior Burela became angry and asked the agent to leave. He later learned Groebe and additional agents offered cash for testimony to other co-conspirators.

While detained in Miami, Rico Toro hired private investigator Gary McDaniel of Pretext Services in North Palm Beach to help his defense. McDaniel was the first person to unravel the Lucas-Groebe relationship. He uncovered a mountain of incriminating evidence known to various prosecutors but never turned over to defense lawyers, in violation of the law. McDaniel was astounded that a case as sensitive as the prosecution of a foreign official would be handled by an agent in his mid-20s, especially one who was "being led around by the nose" by a con artist like Groebe.

Eventually a financially destitute Rico Toro pleaded guilty to a minor drug charge. But the battle had only begun for McDaniel. During the next decade he sought the attention of Lucas's supervisors in the DEA and DOJ. Says McDaniel, "I'm an old military man, so I made sure my various letters and inquiries went up the chain of command to supervisors of divisions and ultimately to the DOJ's Department of Professional Responsibility. I made sure everyone signed off on those letters. In some cases I was told, 'Gary, we are aware of the problem.' But nothing was ever done."

A 1997 German documentary, *King Rat*, detailed the life of Groebe and his relationship with Lucas. McDaniel was interviewed, as was Michael Levine. On camera Levine refers to Groebe as "a danger to democracy." As to why "reprehensible" CIs are used to make cases, Levine says, "It's done for one reason: to make the agent look good, to make the DEA look good, to make the U.S. drug war look good."

It is not clear why Lucas wound up back in Cleveland. In courtroom testimony Lucas

would claim that nearly five years in Bolivia—known in the DEA as a hardship post—gave him the choice of his next assignment. Others claim Lucas left a paper trail that was potentially embarrassing to the DOJ and was buried in a low-profile regional division. Whatever the reason, Lucas returned home in 2000 as a star agent, a big fish in a small pond.

The DEA's regional office isn't even based in Cleveland; it's in Detroit and had a reputation for lethargy. Lucas sought to change that. According to a prosecutor who worked with Lucas, "He was tireless. Some of us wondered if he had any kind of personal life. He fed more drug cases into the system in a year than some agents do in a lifetime."

There were some complaints about Lucas's cases. In a July 2003 confidential memo, FBI agents detailed an interview with Joseph Pinjuh, an assistant U.S. attorney in the Northern District of Ohio. Pinjuh had concerns about the "quality and truthfulness" of Lucas's investigation.

In many cases a startling number of incriminating conversations that Lucas attested to were mysteriously not recorded due to equipment malfunction. Many supposedly occurred just before, after or even between recorded conversations. Pinjuh also found that claims crucial to establishing probable cause for warrants were not backed up by facts or evidence. Also, the FBI memo maintained Lucas and his sometime partner, Detective Jamal Ansari of the Cleveland narcotics squad, had beaten a suspect in custody. Turns out Lucas was being investigated by the FBI on charges of official misconduct and excessive use of force. Lucas would eventually be cleared in 2005 but only after his DEA supervisors complained to the DOJ about the FBI's investigation and successfully shut it down.

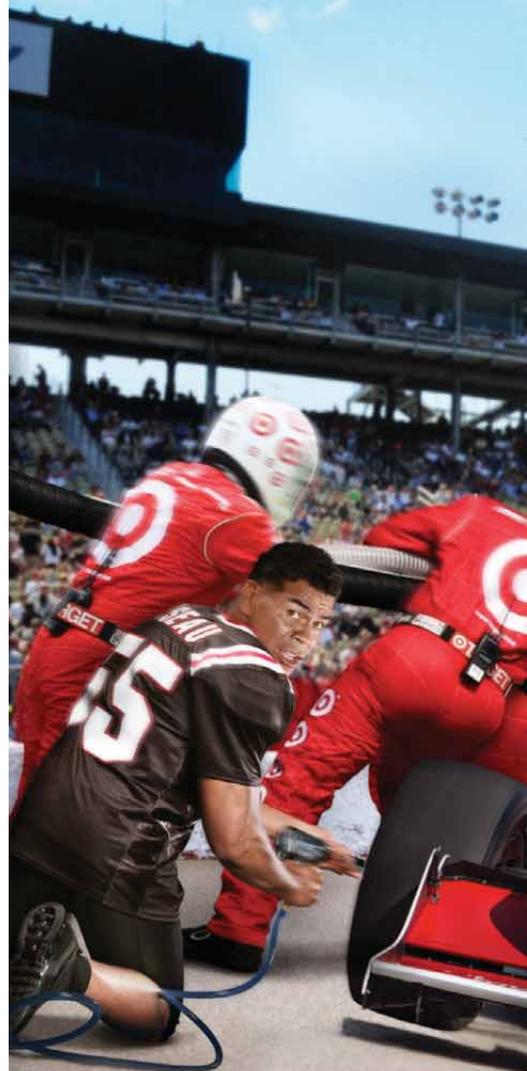
In June 2003 Pinjuh and another assistant U.S. attorney met with Lucas and Cleveland narcotics cops and criticized the "lack of probable cause in law enforcement stops, lack of control in drug buys and a continuing theme of poorly handled recorded conversations." The meeting, according to Pinjuh, was "somewhat heated." Lucas bridled at the questioning.

But Pinjuh wasn't the only one. In a pre-trial correspondence U.S. District Judge Peter Economus all but called Lucas a liar. Pinjuh's superiors were worried about the judge's denigration of Lucas's credibility, most likely because he'd created an issue that would be used against Lucas in future cases. So Pinjuh was instructed to approach the judge. According to the FBI memo, "Judge Economus did agree to reword the opinion and dropped a sentence from the opinion regarding Lucas's lack of candor."

Pinjuh told the FBI agents he did not believe the issue of Lucas's problematic testimony was ever forwarded to the DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility.

The FBI agents filed their memo, and it was forwarded to U.S. attorney Greg White. In January 2004 White spoke to Lucas and stressed that he could not make cases stick without collaborating witnesses available at all his drug buys. Little more was done to restrict the activities of an agent who was so prodigiously feeding the beast, making federal prosecutors look busy and effective by handing them a steady stream of dope cases.

SOME JOBS ARE THE PITS.



SPORTS JOBS

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In mid-2005 the Richland County sheriff's department contacted the DEA office in Cleveland. Months earlier the sheriff's department had picked up local thug Jerrell Bray holding stolen diamond rings bought from a burglar. Bray was a career criminal and none too bright. He'd served 14 years in prison and did not want to go back. He offered his services as a snitch, claiming he could make undercover crack buys all over Mansfield.

Lucas didn't know much about Mansfield, but he agreed to meet. Sheriff's Deputy Charles Metcalf, who championed using Bray as a drug informant, was excited. If Lucas got involved, it would lead to the formation of a task force, which meant federal funding—money allotted for the U.S. government's war on drugs—money to make dope buys, to purchase fancy surveillance equipment, to pay agents working long overtime hours on the company tit.

They met with Bray in the county hoosegow. Thirty-two years old and overweight, Bray was skittish and lacking in self-confidence, a grade-school dropout who had been diagnosed early as a schizophrenic. During his incarceration Bray was cited for 22 violations and served weeks in solitary confinement. On the street he was thought of as someone who acted out

of fear instead of toughness, the kind of homeboy who shoots first and asks questions later.

Bray's value as an informant was evaluated by a group known as the Metrich Enforcement Unit, an organization that fostered cooperation between various law enforcement agencies in Richland County. Bray was rejected by Metrich analysts. City police reached the same conclusion and told the sheriff's office he shouldn't be deployed and was not to be trusted. The task force proceeded anyway. Lucas had handled Cuban refugees and international playboys; surely he could handle a bottom-feeder like Jerrell Bray.

To begin, Lucas, Bray and the task force made a list of targets. Many of those falsely accused say task force members gave the list of suspects—and quite possibly the entire investigation—the informal name Niggers With Rims, as in black males with no discernible income driving around in cars with expensive hubcaps. The theory was they had to be drug dealers—or close enough to be guilty by suspicion. According to Bray, Lucas set the tone by telling him "We get them any way we can" in order to "get the motherfuckers off the street." Lucas accompanied Bray on many undercover buys. He knew how to act and talk like a thug; it was part of his repertoire.

The buys went off without a hitch. People knew Bray well; he was an established dealer in town. Later they'd say the reason Bray went into business with the law in the first place was to eliminate his competition.

Operation Turnaround was not designed for random buys; as with any big drug case, the agents needed to establish a conspiracy that connected various suppliers and sellers. They focused on Dwayne Nabors, a 33-year-old businessman and father of three who owned Platinum Status, a custom-made rims and auto accessories store. To the agents it made sense. If you were going after niggers with rims, why not go after the man who sold them the rims?

Nabors often saw Bray around his shop. "I called him Mister Talk-a-Lot," says Nabors, "because his mouth was always running." Nabors even knew that Platinum Status was under surveillance. He saw what he assumed were narcotics agents' cars parked in a lot across the street. He figured they were tracking Bray. "I used to say, 'Let them watch,'" remembers Nabors. "There was nothing going on here."

A sociable type with an easygoing manner, Nabors had once pleaded guilty to drug possession. He was 18 at the time, "young and stupid," he says. After serving three and a half years, he married, started a family and built a successful business, which he first ran out of his home before moving to one of Mansfield's main thoroughfares. By all accounts Nabors was an exemplary citizen and a shrewd businessman. He rose early, worked six days a week, paid his taxes promptly and spent much of his free time being a father to his children.

Then in November 2005 the foot soldiers of Operation Turnaround descended on his home at 4:30 A.M. and arrested him on federal narcotics charges. His house was searched. There were no drugs, but cops found two handguns that belonged to Nabors's brother, so illegal possession of a firearm was added to the charges.

While in county jail, Nabors was astounded to hear that Lucas and Ansari claimed he had been involved in directing the sale of \$10,000 worth of cocaine to Bray. Before a grand jury, Ansari claimed he saw Nabors and a dope dealer named Albert Lee pull something out of a secret compartment from the door of a Buick before Bray went inside a house to finalize the deal. Nabors was portrayed as the kingpin of a cocaine conspiracy, with Platinum Status as a front for the sale of dope and laundering of profits.

At trial he was able to show he was nowhere near the coke transaction, and little evidence was produced to prove him a drug kingpin. The trumped-up charge was likely a ploy to force him to plead guilty in exchange for a reduced sentence. Nabors took a huge risk by turning down the plea bargain. He was facing a life sentence. "I was scared," he remembers. "I got kids who were maybe never going to see their father again. I didn't know if I was doing the right thing, but I knew I was innocent."

After a one-week trial Nabors was acquitted of the narcotics charges but found guilty of gun possession. He was sentenced to five years in prison.

Operation Turnaround was like a sick tree, with long branches and plentiful foliage but rotten roots. Investigators knew early on there was reason to believe



"You may be a little underdressed for our Christmas card. Put this Santa hat on."

Nabors was not a coke dealer. Three days before the trial Ansari and Blas Serrano interviewed Lee. After pleading guilty and being sentenced to 10 years, Lee told investigators Nabors hadn't given him cocaine and gave them the name of the person who had. By law, Ansari and Serrano were required to record Lee's statement and put it in a memo, which they did. They were also required to turn such evidence over to the defense, who never received it.

"That's the kind of conduct that could cost you your ticket to practice law," said Sam Shamsky, Nabors's attorney. "That's the kind of conduct that costs a person his freedom."

Of all the criminal tactics used in Operation Turnaround, the most egregious was the use of stand-ins, willing or unwitting substitutes for the marks Bray, Lucas and other cops later fingered for crimes. One of the first stand-in cases to be exposed involved Roosevelt Williams, who was on a flight to Chicago—and had documents to prove it—at the time Bray testified he participated in drug transactions.

Lucas and Bray swore under oath that Williams was their man, though, again, they had been warned they had the wrong person. On the night one transaction took place, a Mansfield police undercover squad just happened to have the same location under surveillance for another investigation. Perry Wheeler, a veteran Mansfield police detective with a long history of investigating dope and gun cases in north central Ohio, saw the deal go down. Wheeler was familiar with Williams, and he knew the man Lucas and Bray identified as Williams was somebody else. Wheeler met with Lucas, cop to cop, and told him so. He sent Lucas a photo of Williams, all to no avail. Lucas said he was positive he purchased crack from Williams.

When Wheeler attempted to investigate further, detective Metcalf called a police sergeant and left a message: Word on the street was that if Wheeler kept prying he would be shot at by a Mansfield hood who went by the name of Uncle Wee Wee. Wheeler knew Uncle Wee Wee as an associate of Bray's.

The stand-in used to get Williams indicted was actually a thug named Robert Harris. Bray was slick—he staged the event so that Harris sold \$2,000 worth of crack to him and Lucas. Bray identified the dealer as Williams, then Harris gave the money back to Bray.

Another innocent Mansfield man, Lowestco Ballard, was almost framed this way. A crack transaction was videotaped by a backup unit, though it was done so the participants' faces were impossible to identify. At trial Lucas testified that he was face-to-face with the dealer, who he swore was Ballard. Fortunately for Ballard the man they used was five-foot-nine, while Ballard is a lanky six-foot-four. Ballard was able to show he wasn't on the tape. He was found not guilty but only after he spent nearly a year in pretrial detention.

Geneva France was not so lucky. She was framed by Karmiya "Shay-Shay" Moxley, a female friend of Bray's girlfriend. France knew Shay-Shay, and she had also met Bray a few times. Bray once tried to get France to go on a date. When she turned him down, he told her he could put her in the trunk of his car. "I'll take you to Cleveland," he said, "and

nobody will ever find you." When France heard Bray had said she'd sold him crack, it sent a chill up her spine. At trial she was fingered by another man, a person she had never seen before in her life: Lee Lucas.

In order to verify France had sold them crack, Lucas and the task force claimed to have used a photo of France for positive identification. The photo they used was not entered into evidence at trial, so ruled by presiding Judge Gaughan. Only after France had been convicted was it revealed that the photo they had was a school photo from the sixth grade, when France was 11 years old—a picture that bore little resemblance to the woman they framed on drug charges.

"When I finally saw the photo they used to frame Geneva," says France's attorney, Edward Mullin, an ex-Cleveland cop, "it made me sick to my stomach."

By mid-2007 Operation Turnaround had seemingly run its course. As with most federal narcotics busts, the fear of severe mandatory minimum sentences led to plea bargains in the majority of cases (the Drug Policy Alliance estimates that 95 percent of all federal narcotics cases are plea bargained). The Nabors and Ballard cases resulted in acquittals, as did two others, but 23 people, a good number, had been incarcerated, which justified the federal expenditures and man-hours. Niggers With Rims was a success.

It all began to unravel in May when Carlos Warner of the public defender's office came to handle the case of Joshawa Webb, the only white defendant. Webb had been convicted on minor narcotics charges twice before. In fact, he told Warner, "I'm a drug dealer. I've sold marijuana and powder cocaine to my friends, but I've never sold crack. I didn't do what they said I did."

"Of course I was skeptical," says Warner. "But Josh is the kind of person who, in the past, when guilty of something would cop a plea and seek the best deal for himself. Here he was saying no to a plea deal even though he was facing a possible life sentence. He insisted he was innocent and that Bray and Lucas were lying."

The task force had submitted audiotapes as evidence in the Webb case. Warner listened to them and became convinced the voice identified as Webb's was not his client's. Furthermore, the tape had strange gaps and elisions. The lawyer had the tapes analyzed by two separate experts; each concluded they had been altered.

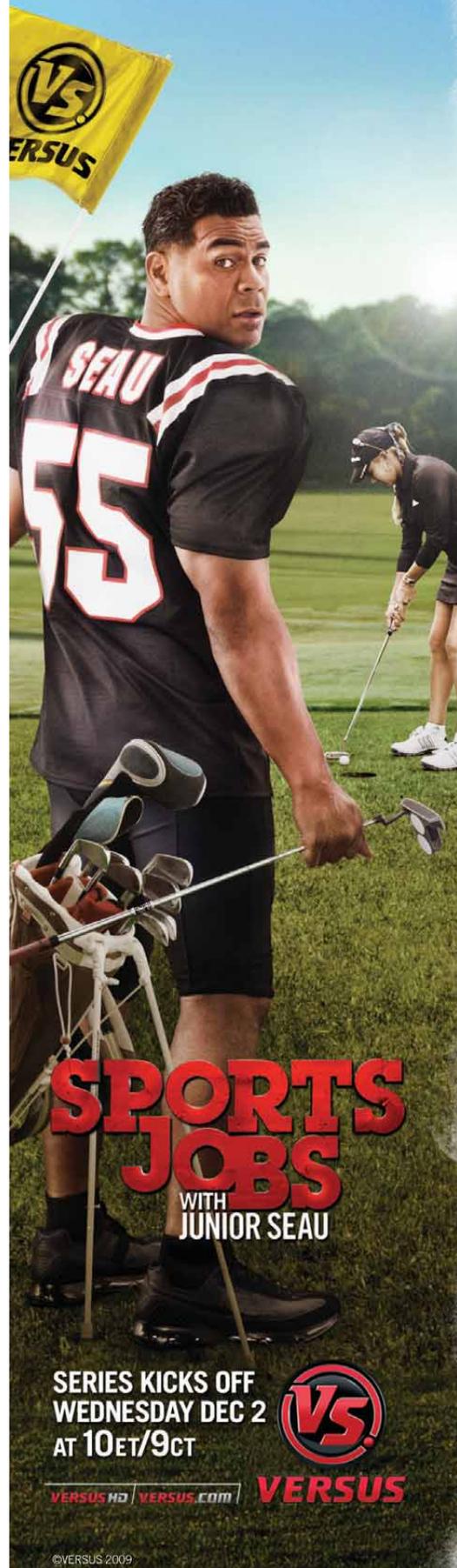
Warner had questions, and only one person could give him answers: Bray.

Since Operation Turnaround concluded, Bray had reverted to form. He had been paid at least \$8,450 for the Mansfield drug busts and was back on the street. Emboldened by his Justice Department training, he set up a \$700 marijuana purchase. Midway through the deal someone pointed at Bray and shouted, "Hey, that's the guy who set up my bro."

Bray allegedly pulled out a .38-caliber handgun and opened fire, hitting a person in the back and stomach. He was caught and charged with attempted murder.

According to Bray, he immediately placed a call to his benefactor, Lucas. Bray filled him in and insisted that Lucas help him out. After all Bray had done for him, Lucas had to take care of him. Lucas reassured Bray,

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telling him he was like a brother to him.

The next day Lucas contacted Bray's brother and told him the wounded man was the stepson of a police officer. There was nothing he could do for Jerrell.

By the time attorney Carlos Warner arrived at Cleveland City Jail, the former star CI had been stewing in lock-up for a week. In a visiting room Warner told Bray, "I believe this audiotape has been tampered with."

Responded Bray, "You're only scraping the surface with that tape stuff."

In two meetings Bray poured his heart out to Warner and another investigator. Bray claimed that at least 30 people were put in jail for crimes they hadn't committed. Even some of the people who had pleaded guilty were innocent. He had been encouraged to make cases by Lucas, Serrano and the task force.

Bray's confession bordered on hysterical. He cried, pounded the table and told Warner that by telling the truth his life was in danger. Lucas and Ansari, he said, were bigger than the government, and he was afraid of them. He said, "I'm letting you know, man to man, everything I tell you may spin your head, but it's true. Go look up Dwayne Nabors's case, go look up Geneva France's case, go look up—what's the other?—there are just so many of them."

"We will investigate what you tell us," said Warner.

"There's no investigator that can protect me and my family," said Bray. "I am a no-good lying scum that slept with this shit."

Bray claimed that when he was on the stand at the France trial, he looked at her face and realized for the first time what he was doing was wrong: "It was just my thirst for money, and I couldn't get a job." He said prosecutors and agents had told him they could help him out, and Serrano prepared him for trial by telling him if he ever felt like he was lying to say "I don't understand."

Warner mentioned how federal prosecutors would come down hard on Bray. "They want to shut you up. They don't want you to talk."

"Let me tell you something," said Bray. "From me to you, this might be the universe punishing me for the shit that has happened to other people's lives, not being able to see their kids, their mothers, their sisters, their brothers. Understand what I'm saying; this might be it right here."

After Bray's confession became public, naysayers went on the offensive: Bray was seeking to save his own skin. He had turned on Lucas because Lucas would not help him beat an attempted-murder rap. He was a stone-cold liar. But on a taped recording of Bray's second interview with Warner the anguish and regret in his voice are palpable and real.

Bray was now the proverbial hot potato. Federal authorities placed him in protective custody and assigned as his counsel John McCaffrey, a former FBI agent turned criminal defense attorney. McCaffrey tried to verify many of Bray's claims. It was at first a bumpy ride. Bray failed two polygraph tests. "It was in his nature to withhold information," says McCaffrey. "He kept wanting to keep things to himself that he could use for bartering purposes down the road." Eventually McCaffrey and other investigators obtained signed confessions from many of the people Bray used as stand-ins. Concurrently, the FBI reopened an investigation into the career of Lucas.

Throughout 2008 and into 2009 the dominoes began to fall. First eight people convicted via Operation Turnaround were released from prison, then 15 more. Bray pleaded guilty to lying on the witness stand and committing civil rights violation; he was sentenced to 15 years in prison. In May 2009 Sheriff's Deputy Charles Metcalf pleaded guilty to one count of civil rights violation for his role in the Dwayne Nabors case. Later, Ansari agreed to cooperate with federal investigators; he will not be charged with any revealed crimes relating to the investigation.

In June three men convicted by Lucas in a separate case involving the sale of PCP demanded and received a hearing into circumstances surrounding their trial. Under questioning from a special prosecutor, Greg White, Joseph Pinjuh and others in the U.S. attorney's office took the stand. Some acknowledged that Lucas made cases too quickly and was sometimes sloppy. "He was running at 150 mph," said one assistant U.S. attorney. Pinjuh described Lucas as "a loose cannon." However, none of them said they doubted his truthfulness or veracity.

One assistant U.S. attorney who tried to sound alarm bells about Lucas was Thomas Gruscinski, a man who felt the consequences of challenging the productivity of the golden goose. Gruscinski met with Lucas for a 2003 investigation of Akron grocers who were suspected of laundering black market proceeds. Lucas bragged to Gruscinski that "he could make trees talk" and told the AUSA that he planned to pull over a grocer on a routine traffic stop. He would take a drug-sniffing dog so he could claim probable cause to search the grocer and seize his assets. Gruscinski felt the scheme was illegal and wanted no part of it. He later was told that Lucas went over his head to a supervisor for approval to make the stop. When Gruscinski wrote an interoffice memo complaining about Lucas, he was taken off the case.

At the hearing for the three PCP dealers, Gruscinski took the stand and testified that he believed his criticism of Lucas was the reason for his dismissal.



Lucas's trial is scheduled to begin in January 2010. He has pleaded not guilty. It will be one of the most significant criminal prosecutions ever in the Northern District of Ohio. Testifying against Lucas will be his former CI Bray and his former partner Ansari, not to mention untold agents, deputy sheriffs, cops, prosecutors, dope dealers and others involved in cases overseen or facilitated by Lucas.



"And then I said to myself, Hey, in all that mess, who's been thinkin' of good old Santa...?"

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The man has his defenders. At his indictment in May the courtroom was filled with fellow DEA agents, police officers, prosecutors and friends, people who contend Lucas is a crackerjack agent who is being used as a scapegoat. A prosecutor who worked with Lucas on numerous drug cases says, "He is the hardest-working law enforcement official I've ever known. These people criticizing Lee don't know the kind of work he put into his cases. He made solid cases and put a lot of bad people behind bars. He did what a law enforcement official is supposed to do."

The defense of Lucas as a good cop is a slippery slope. Even if Lucas were to be found not guilty, Bray has already pleaded guilty to fabrication of evidence, which calls into question a lifetime's worth of criminal cases. Many people currently incarcerated are likely to be set free—not just innocent people but actual criminals and dope dealers Lucas knowingly or unknowingly convicted using bogus evidence. Whether Lucas was corrupt or merely ignorant, his actions will lead to the release of hardened criminals. What kind of law enforcement is that?

His wayward trajectory was charted long ago. Back in 1995 at the trial of Peter Hidalgo, Lucas testified that he was, if anything, overly cautious when dealing with informants. "With everyone I deal with in my job, besides my partners, I am careful," he said. When it came to informants, "You watch them from the nature of what they do. They're informants.... They're involved with other drug dealers. That is their whole function."

The defense attorney interjected, "You want to corroborate as much as you can, correct?"

"Exactly," answered the agent. "The whole reason you do surveillance is corroboration. It's a large part of our work."

In the Mansfield drug cases, there was little corroboration. The reason a sixth-grade photo of Geneva France was used was because there were no surveillance photos. That may have been intentional.

James Owen, a renowned criminal defense lawyer representing France, Nabors (who was released after two and a half years), Ballard and others in a civil lawsuit against Lucas, the DEA and Richland County sheriff's deputies sees the trial as a possible cover-up. Says Owen, "How was an agent with a checkered career like Lucas—a man whose work had been called into question numerous times

in the past—set loose in Mansfield to make wrongful conviction cases, and who knew about it?" To Owen, Lucas was aided and abetted by a criminal justice system that allowed him to operate and encouraged his behavior. With Lucas exposed, the same system seeks to protect itself by cutting off a rogue agent. "Why wasn't Blas Serrano indicted? Why was Deputy Sheriff Metcalf allowed to plead guilty to a minor charge and return to his job, free of any punishment? Why is Greg White allowed to retire into a cushy job as a federal magistrate without having to explain what he knew and when he knew it?"

In August Owen's clients delivered a letter to Special Prosecutor Bruce Teitelbaum, who is handling the Lucas investigation. The victims demanded to see documents currently under seal by a federal order. They wrote, "We

In the Northern District of Ohio Lucas had an exalted reputation as an agent who delivered a high volume of cases; he made the world go round. With narcotics charges you don't need much of a case. Lucas was good at securing an indictment (his word and the word of a CI was usually enough), and severe mandatory sentencing ensured a wealth of plea bargains. Lucas wasn't so good at producing evidence for trial—surveillance videos, corroboration, even believable photos to verify identities. There is a temptation to be sloppy with dope cases because you can be. Lucas and his team could easily have made a dozen legitimate arrests in Mansfield, but that wasn't enough to justify the allocation of federal money and the formation of a federal task force.

The day after the announcement that

Lucas had been indicted, the new U.S. drug czar, Gil Kerlikowske, made the startling declaration that the DOJ would no longer use the phrase *war on drugs*. In *The Wall Street Journal* Kerlikowske is quoted saying, "Regardless of how you try to explain to people that it's a 'war on drugs' or a 'war on product,' people see a war as a war on them. We're not at war with people in this country."

Kerlikowske's statement seemed to suggest a shift in how the DOJ views narcotics prosecutions. But in the following months he appeared to backtrack by announcing, "We will continue to vigorously prosecute any violations of the drug statutes in this country." When contacted to comment on drug policy in general and, more specifically, the Lucas case, a spokesperson for the

U.S. Office of National Drug Policy responded that Director Kerlikowske could not "fit it into his schedule." Official spokespersons for the DOJ, DEA and U.S. Attorneys Office also declined to comment. Whether the drug war is over or even in remission remains to be seen. But if anyone wants a clear assessment of how narcotics prosecutions have skewed criminal justice and subverted the notion of due process, they don't need to look far. Innumerable federal agents, cops, U.S. attorneys, prosecutors and judges facilitated and benefited from the efforts of Lucas. Every case he supervised over the years is now tainted.

In a courtroom in downtown Cleveland it is DEA agent Lucas who will stand accused, but his co-conspirators are legion.

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view any refusal to allow us access to this information to be a cover-up that simply continues the crime committed against us."

Owen argues that a federal judge needs to appoint an independent commission to investigate Lucas's career, why he was allowed to make cases and how those cases were facilitated by others.

Nabors remembers when he took the stand and prosecutor Serrano demanded, "Why? Why on earth would a federal agent like Lee Lucas frame you on drug charges? What could possibly be his motive?" Nabors did not have a good answer, and he is still baffled by the question.

What did Lucas have to gain by framing a bunch of innocent African Americans in Mansfield? The answer is to be found in the inverted morality of the war on drugs.



CONSERVATIVE

(continued from page 112)

Beck's fulminations against deficits or bail-outs. And a publishing company owned by the Mormon Church issued the DVD in which he tells the story of his conversion to that faith.

Another thing: Beck may be misinformed, but he is not an idiot or an empty windbag. On the contrary, he is a highly talented performer. His TV monologues go seamlessly from juvenile sarcasm to genuine outrage, ascending always to stratospheric indignation before returning the viewer to the terra firma of low TV humor. He is self-deprecating and, at times, genuinely funny. He tells the story of his conversion to Mormonism with real humor and no trace of his usual viciousness.

Beck is also fantastically prolific, issuing books of serious nonfiction, humorous pastiches in the familiar TV-comedian mode and fiction, too. The dude cranks text: In 2009 he published two books proper, one audiobook, one introduction to another author's (awful, conspiracy-minded) book and one older book reissued with a new introduction. In 2008 he published a work of fiction, a DVD of his election year "comedy tour" and another DVD in which he tearfully tells an auditorium full of people the story of his sad and cruel life and his eventual conversion to Mormonism. This in addition to his constant churning of words as a TV host. He also spent part of last summer on another "comedy tour," which I'm sure will someday be made available for purchase in some manner.

DREAD WITH A SMILE

Maybe it is an unwritten rule of celebrity that all famous people are required, at some point in their career, to write a spiritual self-help book. Still, I was surprised to discover one penned by Beck, a man whom I knew, when I began working on this article, only as one of the meanest bastards of all times. I was further surprised to find that this particular how-to-be-happy book—it's called *The Christmas Sweater*—was a thinly disguised account of the broadcaster's childhood. I mean, do bullies like Beck even have childhoods?

And here is the bit of advice that concludes the climactic scene of *The Christmas Sweater*, delivered by a wise, angelic stranger

to a teenage ingrate, a Beck figure known as Eddie: "You are joy, Eddie. You are joy."

Glenn Beck is joy? The guy who invented the GOMP? The man who once thought to while away his hours on the airwaves with fantasies of killing various liberals with a shovel?

How very strange this is. *The Christmas Sweater* is a mixture of nostalgia, confession and heavy-handed symbolism. The book was no doubt meant to be an addition to the heartwarming middle-class Christmas genre, with a blurb comparing it to the kitsch classic *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* and extolling it as "the best kind of gift." (My copy of *The Christmas Sweater*, which I bought secondhand for \$4, carries an inscription commending the book as "a new Christmas story tradition!" and is

Beck's favorite references, a work he apparently regards as one of timeless genius. Generally speaking, the anchorman is a great fan of sentimental kitsch. *The Christmas Sweater* looks back fondly to the days of the Firestone Christmas albums. On his TV program Beck frequently pays homage to Norman Rockwell and Jimmy Stewart.

Now, there's nothing new about spokesmen for the middle class loving Norman Rockwell, of course. But a cardinal feature of the warm old middlebrow aesthetic is its lack of critical edge: It is warm, enveloping, affirming. Yet here we find it dished up with a huge side order of scoffing, mockery and hate. Beck's TV program, on the other hand, is probably the most negative and manipulative bit of dread mongering ever broadcast. Every

episode of his show brings more tales of indoctrination in the schools, the coming of Obama's private army, the infiltration of government by men of crazy, alien views. Treachery is everywhere. The world is surely ending. According to *Time* magazine, he calls his studio the doom room. Beck doesn't want you to be happy; he wants you to shake with fear.

Just think about the contrast: Beck, the boyish and lovable comedian, relates the story of his childhood—and then damns and double damns the treacherous "socialists" among us. Beck, the tearful patriot, extols the heartland—and then heaps calumny upon politically correct euphemism. His precious American things (the Constitution, the founding fathers) are invio-

lable, always to be revered; the objects of other Americans' reverence (Franklin Roosevelt, public schools) are to be ripped into whenever convenient. It's like the story of the John Birch Society as told by Frank Capra. It's Babbitt with a stiletto.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

Beck has described his political epiphany as follows. Back in 2007 or 2008 the TV host was walking down a street in New York City, worrying about "the economic nightmare that is on its way" thanks to the federal deficit, a fairly routine concern for him. Then the answer came to him, "and best of all, the thinking and worrying had already been done for me." It was this: "The questions we face were foreseen by the greatest group of Americans to ever

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signed "Grandma.") It is awash in cheap profundity, with grand revelations about the nature of happiness (clue: material things don't cut it) and hackneyed teachings about personal responsibility (insight: we choose whether or not to be happy). The book's climax, however, is basically borrowed from the movie version of *The Wizard of Oz*: The troubled teenager's epiphany comes when he decides to "come home" by walking through a swirling storm, leaving behind an awful monochrome cornfield for a beautiful Technicolor landscape. As he makes this journey, the juvenile Beck figure is guided by God instead of Glinda the Good Witch, but the story still ends with the teenager waking up from a deep sleep and realizing it was all a dream.

Then again, *The Wizard of Oz* is one of

live, our founding fathers.” They were a really smart bunch, and “they knew we would be grappling with issues like the ones we face today at some point, so they designed a ship that could withstand even the mightiest storm.”

As far as I know, Beck has never accused one of the country’s founding fathers of having been a secret socialist, although it would not be a hard case to make, given, say, Alexander Hamilton’s ideas about industrial development and Beck’s extremely low standard of proof. (He does accuse the English colonists at Jamestown of this sin, however. The initial failures there were, per Beck, “pure socialism in action.”)

No. The founders were virtually incapable of error in Beck’s mind. They knew how society should be organized, and they drew up a plan that was well-nigh perfect: the

Constitution. (In *Arguing With Idiots*, Beck admits there is a punctuation error in the Constitution. This is a big admission coming from him.)

Beck knows it is perfect for two reasons. First, because America is rich, with Americans inventing lots of things over the years. The Constitution thus gives us “prosperity principles,” like a really good self-help book or something. (Elsewhere, of course, Beck scoffs bitterly at worldly success, but we don’t have time for that now.)

Second, we know it’s perfect because the founders were basically stenographers for the Almighty. “The words contained in our Constitution, while written by our founding fathers, come directly from God,” Beck writes, “as do the rights they grant us.”

What the founders and the Constitution

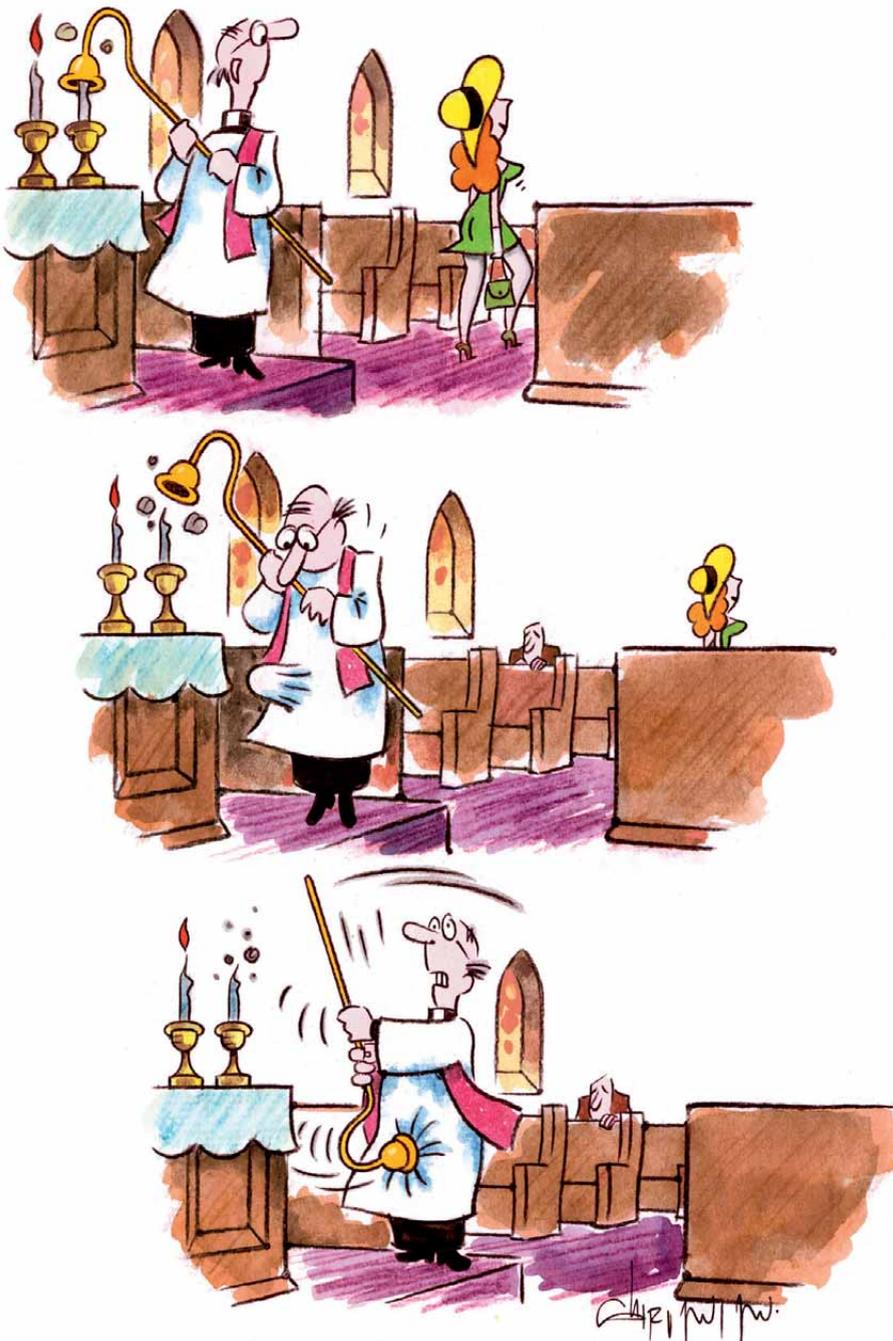
were all about is pretty simple: free-market economics. Do as the founders say—or as Glenn Beck thinks they say—and you will get rich. Deviate from the founders’ God-prescribed course, and you will have problems. Simple, right?

When Beck writes “We have no idea who our founders really were,” I am in hearty agreement. There is something so brain-rattlingly foolish about his understanding of history that it embarrasses me merely to set it down among the shapely babes of *PLAYBOY*. The Federalist period was a time of robust, freewheeling debate, with voices from all sides advocating this course or that. The founders themselves disagreed all the time—among other things, over the issue of a national debt. (Jefferson feared it, Hamilton didn’t.) But here in Beck world they speak with one mellow voice; they are puppets of God, automatic writers for the divine will.

The funny thing is, Beck’s political views and even his vision of the founding generation are actually repudiated by the very founder Beck loves most. I refer to Thomas Paine, the Revolutionary War pamphleteer upon whom Beck and so many other wingers these days are weirdly fixated. Beck named one of his 2009 books after Paine’s famous 1776 pamphlet, *Common Sense*—not because of any specific insight, it seems, but because he likes to imagine we are living today under an “out-of-control government” every bit as offensive to “common sense” as that of George III. During his *Common Sense Comedy Tour* last summer Beck reportedly took to the stage dressed as Paine.

But Paine gave the world more than those two words. And when we open Paine’s even more famous work, *The Rights of Man*, a defense of the French Revolution, we find that it begins with a denunciation of the very idea of one generation binding future generations. “You must heed the call of generations past,” Beck pontificates in his homage to Paine. “The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies,” Paine slapped back in 1791. “Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow.”

Should we read *The Rights of Man* all the way to the end, we find Paine calling on the English government to furnish the public with old-age pensions, subsidies to the poor, payments to mothers on the birth of children (welfare!) and guaranteed employment for everyone in the large cities. Should we carry our interest in Paine so far as to read his 1797 pamphlet, *Agrarian Justice*, we will find—I hope you are sitting down for this, Beck—that Paine proposed a national pension system based on a property tax! Now, hating Social Security is such a no-brainer on the right—the host himself has called it a Ponzi scheme—that perhaps Beck’s followers can be excused for assuming that old Tom Paine was right there with them down to the last shake of their Ayn Rand placard. Still, they might have bothered to consult the Social Security website, where they will find Paine’s pamphlet reproduced as one of the “key early documents” in the struggle for old-age security.



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And there is something more than a little peculiar about a devoted Mormon like Beck being a Paine fan. Until a short while ago Paine was mainly remembered as the man who despised organized religion. Debunking religion's historical claims was, in fact, the subject of Paine's most famous work, *The Age of Reason* (1794), in which the pamphleteer trashes the Bible book by book, describing the story of Jonah, the virgin birth and the crucifixion all as bad jokes on a gullible mankind. In a famous passage this scoffing founder wrote, "Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason and more contradictory in itself than this thing called Christianity. Too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince and too inconsistent for practice, it renders the heart torpid or produces only atheists and fanatics."

But the contradiction simply passes. It carries no penalty. Thomas Paine savages

your worldview, and so you don't wear tricorne hats and declare yourselves modern-day Paines. Deregulated capitalism crashes and our Internet-age right persuades itself that what we need is more deregulation.

GOD, NATURE AND THE MARKET

Glenn Beck's understanding of politics is a simple one: We have the owner's manual God gave us, the Constitution. Through the political system it established and through "marketplace realities," we once obeyed the "laws of nature." We didn't do this through some intellectual scheme, either: Our otherworldly founders "understood that WE are an intuitive people." (And as the hero of *The Christmas Sweater* was told, "You have to stop thinking so much and instead start *feeling* again.")

Ah, but today our leaders are not "intuitive"; they do not do things by feel. They are intellectuals, "experts and elitists." Thinking so much is precisely their problem. They believe they are smarter than everyone else. And with their fancy ideas and brilliant schemes they have led us astray. "These people could not

be more out of step with the Founders if they tried," Beck cries at one point.

It is not enough to describe Beck's understanding of politics as one in which liberals vie against conservatives; it's earthier than that. It's nature vs. artifice, the public vs. government, capitalism and freedom vs. socialism and tyranny.

Now, you may be aware that the grand sweep of global history has for decades been running capitalism's way. The Cold War ended in the late 1980s; free-market economists soon established such a lock hold on the world's political imagination that for a while it seemed as though the prominent ones were issued their own former Eastern bloc or third world country to remake in Milton Friedman's image. Tuned-in types talked about the "Washington consensus" in trade matters, and just about every pundit was required to write a Tom Friedman-style book about the miracles of the freewheeling global marketplace.

But maybe that was all just propaganda, designed to lull our modern-day patriots back to sleep. If you listen to Beck, what you know is that socialists have actually been winning for a very long time. Secretly, of course: The correct term for our rulers' ideology, Beck instructs us, is *progressivism*. It is a diseased doctrine that holds the state above the individual, that reveres "experts," that controls both parties and that is "taking us down a subtle road to tyranny."

Actually, it's not so subtle; it's more of a loud and obnoxious road, a road that rears right back and slaps you in the face. At some point in 2008, for example, Beck noticed that the Treasury Department was bailing out American banks. This confirmed the worst: Socialism was almost here! We were about to nationalize the banks! In his book-length homage to Paine, Beck asks, "Did all of those companies really need that money, or was it in the government's interest to force it down their throats so they'd have some control over them?" A person who reads newspapers may be troubled by the bailouts but may also consider, when answering Beck's question, that the government refused to put the "zombie banks" into receivership and that the government has so far declined to vote its shares in the banks it partially owns. But such a person would have failed the quiz: Of course the government bailed banks out in order to tighten its grip on us.

Everywhere in Beckland we encounter ulterior motives, sneaky maneuvers, treachery and plots—plots so big they stretch across the centuries, resurfacing here and there as the generations pass and the opportunities present themselves.

The political system, for example, is a scheme so malevolent it's barely comprehensible: "Political parties are intentionally causing problems so they can later attempt (and fail) at fixing them," Beck writes. "The greater our problems, the more we're supposed to need them around."

Federal regulations are also maliciously conceived. Such rules aren't about making the economy safer or better, Beck assures us; "they're about breaking your spirit. They're about sending you the message that you are no more important or



"I'll stick to my own special blend of espresso. It keeps me up all night."

significant than the spotted owl or a salt marsh harvest mouse.”

Meanwhile, the oppressors are scheming to get us. “For those who continue to fight and resist, the government is watching,” Beck warns. “It doesn’t matter if common sense or even facts are on your side—if something goes against the Progressive agenda, it will be targeted.”

The political tradition from which Beck arises is not conservatism per se; it is the famous paranoid style. Beck’s favorite political theorist, apart from the founders, is the late conspiracy theorist W. Cleon Skousen, whose many demented works Beck frequently promotes. Beck has suggested that modern art is a communist trick, along with the dismantling of the European colonial empires and the termination of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Viewers of his TV program know of his frequent episodes of fear about the coming totalitarian takeover. They have been dazzled by the charts with which Beck links all the sinister liberal organizations that have come together to deliver us into the hands of Obama. Indeed, he embraces the paranoid style so reliably that he even makes jokes about it himself: A Beck book chapter about the coming “continental government” in which U.S. sovereignty is to be surrendered to a Canadian-Mexican superstate controlled by evil elites is also cluttered with sidebars teasing Beck for his paranoia and offering advice about tinfoil hats.

Even so, the omnipresence of conspiracy is central to Beck’s act. When Beck smirks and giggles while the footage rolls and the liberals blab, it’s because Beck sincerely thinks he’s onto them. He knows their secret. And his audience knows too.

HE SURROUNDS US

So what is it about this preposterous man, crying and raging as he spells out his flimsy ideas? In his 2003 book *The Real America*, Beck devotes a few sullen pages to the subject of his predecessor, Senator Joseph McCarthy, the notorious Red-hunting demagogue of the 1950s. Beck admits McCarthy was “one of the worst things that ever happened to America” but not for the reasons agreed on by everyone else. Beck’s objection is that McCarthy “made cries of communism a joke.” He discredited Red hunting so thoroughly that “Nowadays when you say, ‘Um, you know, So-and-So is a Socialist,’ everybody laughs.” (Generally speaking, however, while McCarthy denounced “subversives,” he did not hunt socialists, only members or former members of the Communist Party. Beck may find socialism and communism indistinguishable, but the Socialist Party, although feeble, was above ground and perfectly legitimate in McCarthy’s heyday.)

Pity Glenn Beck, laughed at by the crowd merely for engaging in the all-American pastime of singling out the pinkos. And pity him even more for having to get a Red scare going when there is no Soviet Union to make the whole thing seem plausible.

But where did the Red baiters of yore actually go astray? Beck partially rules out the standard charge—that they recklessly

accused innocent people—but he doesn’t say much more than that. The rest of Beck’s work, however, suggests an answer: It’s that the Red hunters of the past were far too fastidious in their accusations.

Newspaper readers among us may recall that some of our greatest anticommunists were liberal Democrats (Lyndon Johnson, Harry Truman); they may also remember that our allies in the Cold War (Britain, France, Germany, Israel, Italy) were periodically ruled by socialist parties. If Beck is aware of this, it must strike him as a particularly cunning bit of Progressive duplicity: In much of his oeuvre, after all, communism and socialism are interchangeable names for the same thing, while “a Trojan horse called ‘liberalism’” is identified in his 2003 book as communism’s vehicle of choice. These are views the great Red hunters may have held privately but that would have sentenced them to the Birch Society fringe had they stated them outright.

Which brings us to the most perplexing question about Beck’s meteoric popularity. How can you have a Red scare with no Reds? How can you pump up fear of a communist takeover when the Soviet Union has disappeared and Red China is even more capitalist than we are?

The answer is simple—if you feel rather than think: The absence of actual communists simply frees the Red hunter from scruple. There are no bright lines separating liberals from communism anymore, and the whole political spectrum to the left of pure laissez-faire libertarianism blends into one Red mess. It’s like the photos that illustrate Beck’s 2009 book, *Arguing With Idiots*: a Soviet military officer who makes stupid arguments (opposing private schools, for example) and a founding father in a powdered wig who slaps him down (“Frankly that sounds a little socialist”). Soviet communism versus 18th century federalism is the only choice out there. The grand sweep of politics can now be seen as a whole: Liberals are socialists; socialists are communists; welfare-state France is not appreciably different from Mao’s China; Hank Paulson’s TARP equals Joe Stalin’s USSR.

And the rest of us? Why do we make Glenn Beck’s books into number one best-sellers? Why do we tune in every day to hear the latest installment in the “march to socialism”?

Because it’s fun to have those tricky comics back. It is thrilling to imagine that everyday liberalism is secretly a form of totalitarianism, that just under that friendly politician surface lies a monster who will enslave us and that you alone, with your band of brothers, know the secret. It is fun to think that you are a modern-day Tom Paine when you denounce the “public option” on a blog’s comments page. It makes you feel heroic when you stand up and insult the Democratic member of Congress who you have convinced yourself is scheming to indoctrinate your child. And it is flattering to believe that when you grumble about your overpaid union workers, you are really speaking up boldly for human freedom itself.



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Chelsea

(continued from page 64)

in fame little people more than make up for with their Egg McMuffin bodies. Have you ever seen a little person dressed up like a reindeer? A-dor-able. If you aren't friendly with any little people willing to dress up like a Christmas character for your amusement, find a fat baby. You'd be surprised how many parents will loan out their morbidly obese babies to complete strangers. In fact, anything overweight is funny, especially if it hasn't fully developed yet. Even a really chubby cat can be fun, but make sure to declaw it first. Put a Santa hat on a cat with even a modicum of personal dignity and it'll try to scratch your eyes out.

DON'T LET CHILDREN BOGART YOUR CHRISTMAS

When I was a little girl I remember waking up on Christmas morning and running downstairs to open the gifts I'd bought for myself because my parents had dropped the ball and I was essentially raising myself. Even though I knew Santa was a big fat lie, there was still something magical about Christmas, with the snow falling outside and all of us gathered around the tree and me, as the youngest of six kids, opening my presents and pretending to be surprised. I felt the holiday was all about me.

But that changed as we got older. My brothers and sisters started getting married and having their own kids, and Christmas lost some of its magic. All of a sudden I wasn't the center of attention anymore. The kids have all the fun, and the rest of us are just chaperones with only food to look forward to. We might as well be watching the action from behind a glass partition or at least on television, in which case we would have the option of turning the volume down.

My nieces and nephews essentially

hijacked Christmas from me. I have nothing against children on general principle, but, at least during the Christmas season, they're not welcome in my home.

WHEN IN DOUBT, GIVE CASH

Whether you're looking for the perfect Christmas gift for a sibling, close friend or co-worker, nothing will put a smile on their face like cold hard cash. Nobody gets mad if you give them a fat envelope full of unmarked bills. You're basically telling them, "I trust you. Go out and go off." If they want to buy drugs with the money, that's their business; I think it's important to give people options. What's more, you'll never have one of those awkward moments when you catch them regifting your present, or run into them at a shopping mall and realize they're returning your gift for store credit.

KEEP THE HOLIDAYS SECULAR

I have nothing against people with religious convictions, but let's be honest: Christmas isn't really a religious holiday. Whatever you believe or don't believe is terrific, but please give the rest of us a break. I'm a big proponent of the separation between church and everything else in the world, and it's time to take back Christmas for those of us who don't want to hear about angels and shepherds and babies with glowing heads. Besides, ever since Jesus started dating Madonna, I can't take him so seriously anymore.

A secular holiday party is a happy holiday party. Not only will your guests be more comfortable and less likely to get into screaming fights, but it's just more fun for everybody. If you're doing it right, Christmas should be a celebration of family and friends and having a good time, with just a sprinkle of porn thrown in.



BROTHERS

(continued from page 60)

military branch of the nation almost as high as that of his Meigs ancestor who served General Washington, obviously earthbound in those days. I faded from view with a lame leg while, contrary to the best doctors at the Point, Steven Olds did not die promptly of Hodgkin's disease and was able to conduct a life as a husband and father of two handsome girls, whom I met by accident while campaigning for the U.S. Senate in California in 1982.

A question often asked of those mistakenly considered "only children": Were you lonely as a child? True answer? No. In my lifetime there were already too many people coming and going. However, had I known the Olds boys earlier the dark side of Merrywood might have been much less stomach-turning. Steven, the stepsibling closest to me in age, became a friend, but, unfortunately, he wanted a career on the silver screen. For a time he sang on a Washington radio program. During this period, Ella Raines told me Robin was jealous of our attachment. I also recall the powerful effect the film *The Prince and the Pauper* had on me as I watched a pair of American twins named Billy and Bobby Mauch, who enacted the leads in the film based on Mark Twain's novel, an intensely populist romance of the Prince of Wales and his look-alike poor boy from the London slums. I daydreamed about both twins. Later I got interested in the psychology of twins, as had Twain by the time he had written that darkest of American novels, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, where a black baby is switched with a white one, and the "wrong" one gets shipped down the Mississippi to be sold to slave dealers and a short brutal life. It is the most chilling tale of those terrible days. When the Prince Bobby Mauch read my reference to the movie he wrote me about his reign as King Edward VI in England. We were not destined to meet though he lived relatively nearby in northern California. He had ceased to act but made his living as a film editor. His twin, Billy, lived on the East Coast. It was like living in one of Henry James's ghost stories, both emotionally satisfying and tantalizing as one observed the poor of London rise against their masters while I...what? Fell in love with a ghost boy from the screen? He died not long after our correspondence began.

Robin faded into national legend, which took an odd turn when whoever was president at the moment, along with other high officers of state, came to Colorado Springs to celebrate some sort of anniversary, and Robin received them with a banquet and much good humor. Robin acted as gracious host to the brass, and perhaps as an unconscious response to the shaving of his magnificent mustache he enhanced his position as an American warrior legend as the festive triumphant dinner ended. He looked about for something to relieve himself into: This turned out to be an empty flower vase behind his chair at the banquet table, which he then proceeded to use, ending his career as an Air Force bureaucrat and placing himself firmly at the heart of an agreeable military legend. Robin, need I say, took early retirement at a ski resort in a place called, with Twainsian preciseness, Steamboat Springs. Old Mark would have liked him. I did.



"This is great, but I didn't say I wanted a watch. I said I wanted 'to watch!'"

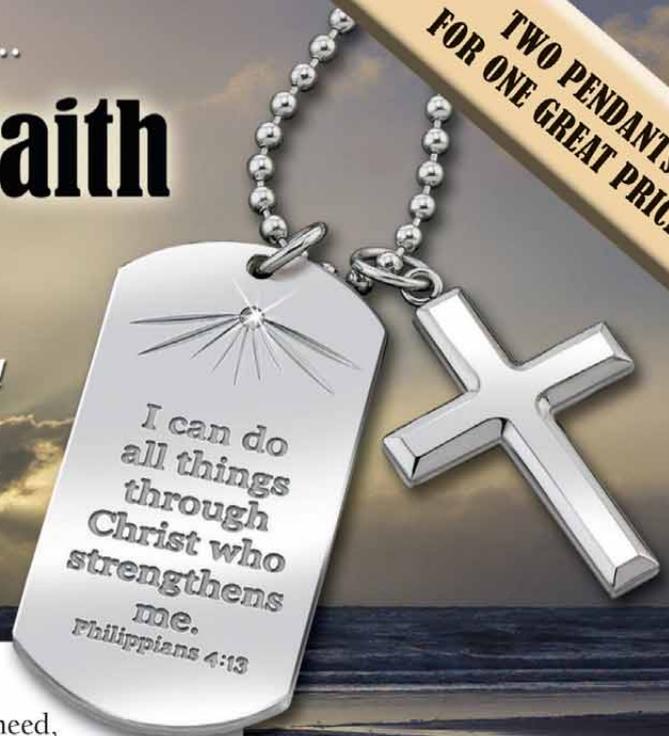
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LAURA

(continued from page 48)

turned somewhat askew as if wary of receiving a backhand slap at the decisive moment. Flora let Jules do everything he desired except kiss her on the mouth, and the only words said referred to the next assignment.

One evening after a hard day picking up and tossing balls and pattering in a crouch across court between the rallies of a long tournament, the poor boy, stinking more than usual, pleaded utter exhaustion and suggested going to a movie instead of making love; whereupon she walked away through the high heather and never saw Jules again—except when taking her tennis lessons with the stodgy old Basque in uncreased white trousers who had coached players in Odessa before World War One and still retained his effortless exquisite style.

Back in Paris Flora found new lovers. With a gifted youngster from the [Lanskaya] school and another eager, more or less interchangeable couple she would bicycle through the Blue Fountain Forest to a romantic refuge where a sparkle of broken glass or a laced rag on the moss were the only signs of an earlier period of literature. A cloudless September maddened the crickets. The girls would compare the dimensions of their companions. Exchanges would be enjoyed with giggles and cries of surprise. Games of blindman's buff would be played in the buff. Sometimes a voyeur would be shaken out of a tree by the vigilant police.

This is Flora of the close-set dark-blue eyes and cruel mouth recollecting in her midtwenties fragments of her past, with details lost or put back in the wrong order, TAIL between DELTA and SLIT, on dusty dim shelves, this is she. Everything about her is bound to remain blurry, even her name, which seems to have been made expressly to have another one modeled upon it by a fantastically lucky artist. Of art, of love, of the difference between dreaming and waking she knew nothing but would have darted at you like a flatheaded blue serpent if you questioned her.

She returned with her mother and Mr. Espenshade to Sutton, Mass., where she was born and now went to college in that town.

At eleven she had read *A quoi rêvent les enfants*, by a certain Dr. Freud, a madman.

The extracts came in a St. Leger d'Exuperse series of *Les [grands] représentants de notre époque*,

though why great representatives wrote so badly remained a mystery.

Mrs. Lanskaya died on the day her daughter graduated from Sutton College. A new fountain had just been bequeathed to its campus by a former student, the widow of a shah. Generally speaking, one should carefully preserve in transliteration the feminine ending of a Russian surname (such as *-aya*, instead of the masculine *-iy* or *-oy*) when the woman in question is an artistic celebrity. So let it be "Lanskaya"—land and sky and the melancholy echo of her dancing name. The fountain took quite a time to get correctly erected after an initial series of unevenly spaced spasms. The potentate had been potent till the absurd age of eighty. It was a very hot day with its blue somewhat veiled. A few photographers moved among the crowd, as indifferent to it as specters doing their spectral job. And certainly for no earthly reason does this passage resemble in rhythm another novel, *My Laura*, where the mother appears as "Maya Umanskaya," a fabricated film actress.

Anyway, she suddenly collapsed on the lawn in the middle of the beautiful ceremony. A remarkable picture commemorated the event in *File*. It showed Flora kneeling belatedly in the act of taking her mother's non-existent pulse, and it also showed a man of great corpulence and fame, still unacquainted with Flora: he stood just behind her, head bared and bowed, staring at the white of her legs under her black gown and at the fair hair under her academic cap.

A brilliant neurologist, a renowned lecturer [and] a gentleman of independent means, Dr. Philip Wild had everything save an attractive exterior. However, one soon got over the shock of seeing that enormously fat creature mince toward the lectern on ridiculously small feet and of hearing the cock-a-doodle sound with which he cleared his throat before starting to enchant one with his wit. Laura disregarded the wit but was mesmerized by his fame and fortune.

Fans were back that summer—the summer she made up her mind that the eminent Philip Wild, PH, would marry her. She had just opened a *boutique d'éventails* with another Sutton coed and the Polish artist Rawitch, pronounced by some Raw Itch, by him Rah

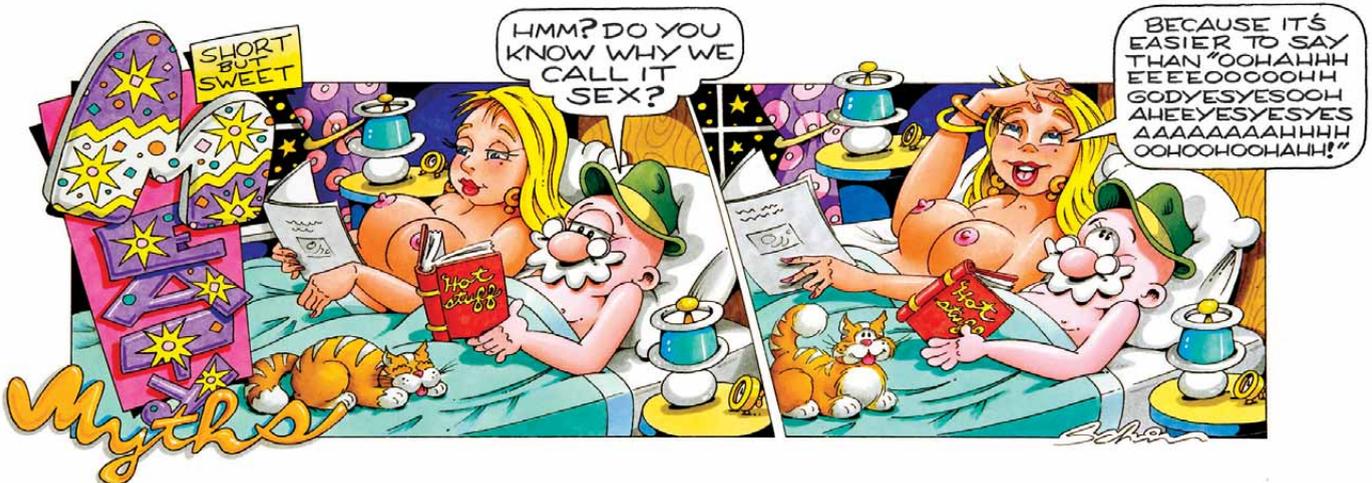
Witch. Black fans and violet ones, fans like orange sunbursts, painted fans with clubtailed Chinese butterflies, oh they were a great hit, and one day Wild came and bought five (*five* spreading out her own fingers like pleats) for "two aunts and three nieces" who did not really exist, but never mind, it was an unusual extravagance on his part. His shyness surprised and amused FLaura [Flora].

Less amusing surprises awaited her. Today after three years of marriage she had [had] enough of his fortune and fame. He was a domestic miser. His New Jersey house was absurdly understaffed. The ranchito in Arizona had not been redecorated for years. The villa on the Riviera had no swimming pool and only one bathroom. When she started to change all that, he would emit a kind of mild creak or squeak, and his brown eyes brimmed with sudden tears.

She saw their travels in terms of adverts and a long talcum-white beach with the tropical breeze tossing the palms and her hair; he saw it in terms of forbidden foods, frittered-away time and ghostly expenses.

The novel *My Laura* was begun very soon after the end of the love affair it depicts, was completed in one year, published three months later and promptly torn apart by a book reviewer in a leading newspaper. It grimly survived and to the accompaniment of muffled grunts on the part of the librarians, its invisible hoisters, it wriggled up to the top of the bestsellers list then started to slip, but stopped at a midway step in the vertical ice. A dozen Sundays passed and one had the impression that *Laura* had somehow got stuck on the seventh step (the last respectable one) or that, perhaps, some anonymous agent working for the author was [buying] up every week just enough copies to keep *Laura* there; but a day came when the climber above lost his foothold and toppled down, [dislodging] number seven and eight and nine in a general collapse beyond any hope of recovery.

The "I" of the book is a neurotic and hesitant man of letters who destroys his mistress in the act of portraying her. Statically—if one can put it that way—the portrait is a faithful one. Such fixed details as her trick of opening her mouth when toweling her inguén or of closing her eyes when smelling an inodorous rose are absolutely true to the original.



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PLAYMATE NEWS



SATELLITE OF LOVE

"I never knew I flew all the way to the moon and back!" Miss August 1967 DeDe Lind says. Well, she might not have, but a **PLAYBOY** calendar photo of her did. Astronaut Richard Gordon details on his website that, unbeknownst to him, the prep crew for *Apollo XII* stashed the photo they labeled MAP OF A HEAVENLY BODY in the command module *Yankee Clipper* to keep him company. Where exactly did they hide it? "It wasn't in my lunch box," Gordon says.

SCENT OF A GORGEOUS WOMAN

Holiday shoppers should keep an eye out for Miss February 1990 Pamela Anderson's fragrances. She is releasing two sprays: Malibu ("for flirtatious days") and Malibu Night ("for sensual nights") by Pamela Anderson. They are the opening act for her line of women's and men's products—they're environmentally friendly and not tested on animals, and a percentage of sales goes to PETA. She began planning for the beauty line in her tub. "I love baths," Pamela says. "My own beautification ritual starts there." The fragrances don't only make a woman feel wonderful, they make pretty accessories. "I love the bottle design as much as I care about the organic elements," she says. "It's glamorous, sexy, beautiful and chic." A nice complement to any woman's vanity.



FLASHBACK



Five years ago this month—geez, it feels like it was only last Christmas—we unwrapped Miss December 2004 **Tiffany Fallon**. Her down-home charm had made her Miss Georgia USA 2001. Thanks to popular demand we gave her a more coveted tiara and named her PMOY 2005. Since her crowning, she has married Joe Don Rooney of Rascal Flatts, had baby Jagger Donovan Rooney and competed on *Celebrity Apprentice*. (Trump fired her first. We're not sure how the guy looks at himself in the mirror.)

Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates? You can check out the Club at club.playboy.com and access the mobile-optimized site www.playboy.com from your phone.

DID YOU KNOW ?

We hear **Stacy Fuson** and **Qiana Chase** will be in *Iron Man 2* and will interact with Robert Downey Jr.'s Tony Stark.

PMOY 1994 **Jenny McCarthy** allowed her body to be pixelated for a new workout video game called *Your Shape*.

What's in Miss January 1999 **Brittany Binger**'s closet? She admits, "I own a couple of Daisy Duke short-shorts."

What does Miss January 2001 **Irina Voronina** look for in a man?



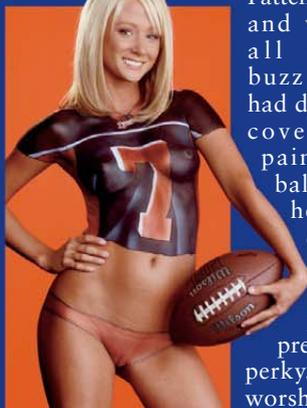
"Good manners!" she says. And where does she look for him? "The nicest boys are in Detroit and Dallas, where they haven't been spoiled by being around celebrities. They actually appreciate you."

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY HOSEA CHANCHEZ

—actor, *The Game*

"My favorite Playmate is PMOY 2007 **Sara Underwood**. She was at a Hollywood event I attended and was all the buzz because she had done a PLAYBOY cover in only a painted-on football jersey. I saw her on the red carpet, and she wasn't overdone—just naturally pretty, perfect and perky. Still, I had to worship from afar."



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Here's a night when Miss April 2009 **Hope Dworaczyk** (stripes) and PMOY 2008 **Jayde Nicole** (dress) didn't wait by the phone—they attended the OnlineButyCall.com Million Dollar Sweepstakes party.... Miss November 2003 **Divini Rae** became Mrs. Winston Fong in August, and as promised, she's sharing a picture of the event.



Here's the blushing bride on the happiest day of her life.... Also in August, Miss January 1999 **Jaime Bergman** and David Boreanaz, star of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel* and *Bones*, welcomed their second child, Bardot Vita, into the world. The excited couple had been trying



for several years to give their seven-year-old son, Jaden Rayne, a sibling.... Lucky ladies: Miss March 2009 **Jennifer Pershing**, Miss June 2004 **Hiromi Oshima**, Miss June 2008 **Juliette Fretté**, Miss October 2008 **Kelly Carrington** and



Miss September 2007 **Patrice Hollis** made an appearance at the Pearl River Resort in Choctaw, Mississippi. Good to know the resort has beds that sleep five.

THE TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY OF A PERFECT OFF-THE-FIELD MATCHUP



Miss August 2001 Jennifer Walcott and her fiancé, Adam Archuleta, are featured on E!'s *True Hollywood Story: NFL Wives*. Their hook: Adam recently retired from the NFL, and Jennifer is taking time off from modeling to start a family. Normally when an athlete or a model retires, his or her spouse can't relate. Not so with this pair—together they can write the lines for act two.



COLLEEN IS A SPINNER

Sick of Bing Crosby this season? Neither are we. But if you need some party music, we have Miss January 2004 Colleen Shannon's new DJ mix in heavy rotation. Check out djcolleenshannon.com for samples, club dates and details on where to download her mixes.



At the age of 56 PMOY 1986 **Kathy Shower** just shot an apparel campaign for MMA company Tapout. She's still a knockout.

G4 named **Hiromi Oshima** the seventh-hottest woman on the web and put her in anime outfits for a nerd's-delight shoot.

DID YOU KNOW ?





PLAYBOY CLUB CALENDAR MODEL SEARCH

WIN A CHANCE TO BE IN PLAYBOY MAGAZINE



MISS PLAYBOY CLUB AUGUST

CALENDAR GIRL DATA SHEET

Name: Heidi Jo Wheeler • Las Vegas

Bust: 34 C Waist: 24 Hips: 35

Height: 5'6" Weight: 120

Birth Date: October 16, 1980

Turn-ons: sense of humor, white teeth,
and someone who is adventurous

Turn-offs: bad attitude, conceitedness,
and lack of ambition



MISS PLAYBOY CLUB SEPTEMBER

CALENDAR GIRL DATA SHEET

Name: Jessa Lynn Hinton • Las Vegas

Bust: 34D Waist: 26 Hips: 34

Height: 5'9" Weight: 115

Birth Date: April 10, 1984

Turn-ons: _____
Great smelling men and nice abs.

Turn-offs: _____
Bad breath and bad attitude.



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PLAYBOY FORUM

THE CONFIDENCE MAN

IN AMERICA YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU DESERVE

BY JACKSON LEARS

From the days of President Reagan until quite recently, the businessman starred in a cultural role he had not played since the crash of 1929: the hero. In the symbolic universe of our second gilded age, tarnished myths acquired new luster: Bootstraps were pulled up, and self-made men proliferated. As CEOs inspired fawning attention from the mass media, the cult of personality returned to corporate life. Lee Iacocca, who supposedly saved Chrysler in the early 1980s, became the precursor of titans: Jack Welch, Warren Buffett, Bill Gates. These men became icons of entrepreneurship—embodiments of what individuals could achieve through discipline and daring.

The collapse of the bull market poses a fundamental challenge to the cult of the CEO. In retrospect, benefiting from a speculative bubble seems less a mark of genius and more a matter of being in the right place at the right time. “A German shepherd could have run GE” in the 1990s, said Welch’s successor. As inflated values shrank, geniuses were exposed as fools or villains. But villains make good copy too. The icon of this new age is Bernard Madoff, not Bill Gates.

Madoff is the most recent example of an enduring figure in American history: the confidence man. Although the term conjures up swindlers and rogues, the line between licit and illicit con artistry is difficult to draw. While Madoff has gone to jail, other CEOs who conned their investors have gotten government bailouts. In a deregulated economy, lots of confidence games are legal.

Whatever his legal status, the confidence man plays a complex role in our thinking about success. He is the shadowy double of our official ideal, the self-made man who struggles upward through disciplined achievement to become master of a huge organization. In contrast, the confidence man embodies the widespread (though rarely acknowledged) recognition that hard work alone is insufficient for monetary success. Sometimes you have to catch a break, pick up an inside tip, get in on the ground floor. Sometimes, too, you have to use guile and subterfuge to manipulate surface effects to win the confidence of lenders, investors or customers. Even such self-made men as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller (not to mention more recent examples) knew this. Confidence games are as American as Thanksgiving dinner, and looking at them in a larger context suggests a counternarrative to

our conventional stories of success. You don’t get what you deserve; you get what you get. Sometimes you get what you can get away with.

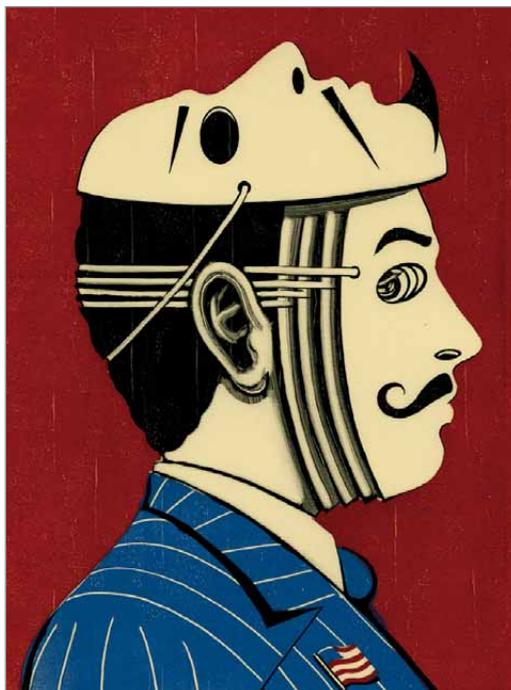
Confidence games can be traced at least as far back as Reynard the Fox, but the spread of market exchange encouraged them as never before. To counteract increasing mistrust in the market, moralists promoted ideals of prosperity through sincerity and struggle—self-made manhood. From the beginnings of modern capitalism the self-made man and the confidence man were secret sharers, two sides of the coin of success.

The New World provided abundant opportunities for both diligence and deceit. For immigrants to America the deployment of misleading surface effects was not simply about making money; it was about remaking the self. The confidence man, the shape-shifter, was entangled from the beginning in our assumptions about what it meant to be an American. Superficial impressions mattered a lot in the colonies and the early republic. Precious metals were scarce, so Americans turned to private banknotes. The bearer was legally entitled to present the note at an issuing bank and receive its face value in gold. But counterfeiting was epidemic, and frequent bank failures made even legitimate notes suspect. Symbols of value were ephemeral.

No wonder antebellum America swarmed with confidence men. Edgar Allan Poe described “diddlers” in New York, and P.T. Barnum found them in rural Connecticut. At the dry-goods store where Barnum worked as a clerk,

it was “‘dog-eat-dog’ and ‘tit for tat.’ Our cottons were sold for wool, our wool and cotton for silk and linen; in fact nearly everything was different from what it was represented.” Buyers and sellers “expected to be cheated, if it was possible.” He began to play the game for himself. He drew big crowds at his American Museum by exhibiting frauds like the Feejee Mermaid, then drew more crowds by casting doubt on the authenticity of the exhibit. He concluded that “the public appears disposed to be amused even when they are conscious of being deceived.” Barnum staged confidence games for the whole family.

The other side of confidence was faith, a necessary component of most transactions in an expanding economy where constant migration and abundant land allowed many people, especially white males, to keep a careful



DANIEL BEJAR

of faces. “It is good to be shifty in a new country,” said the fictional confidence man Simon Suggs in the 1840s. Shiftiness was encouraged by a paper



Bernie Madoff: Part of a long tradition.

economy. Land values were shaped by self-fulfilling fantasies.

The root of *credit* is *credo*, or “I believe.” Borrowing was “getting trusted,” in the argot of Victorian commerce, and this was a matter of creating a pleasing impression. Conventional wisdom held that “sayin’ is doin’.” The slogan summarized an economy where representations of things—stock certificates, prospectors’ maps, gilt-edged bonds—were often more important than the things themselves. The right sort of representations inspired confidence in the lender, investor or speculator. The line between investment and speculation could be drawn only in retrospect.

The depression following the economic collapse of 1837 provoked several years of retrospect. Novelist Catharine Sedgwick deplored investors’ abandonment of “toilsome enterprise...for the legerdemain of visionaries and speculators.” When their conjuring tricks were exposed, “suspicion overgrew confidence,” the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher recalled, “and the heart bristled with the nettles and thorns of fear and jealousy.” Five years later, in 1842, Charles Dickens found Americans still afflicted by “universal distrust.”

Nevertheless there were enough marks around to keep the games going, as one can see in the career of the original Confidence Man, who was given that label by the New York press in 1849. A dapper and genteel man, William Thompson struck up affable

conversations with strangers on the streets of Manhattan, asking after a few minutes if they had enough confidence in him to lend him their watches until tomorrow. Some did so, at which point Thompson would take the timepiece and scamper off laughing. A former victim eventually pointed him out to police, and Thompson was hauled off to prison. *The New York Herald* attacked the double standard that allowed Wall Street operators to live in opulence while Thompson languished in the Tombs. Both were engaged in comparable confidence games, for different stakes: “He has obtained half a dozen watches. They have pocketed half a million dollars.”

The Literary World took a more benign view. “It is a good thing and speaks well for human nature that at this late day, in spite of all the hardening of civilization and all the warning of newspapers, men can be swindled.” The man who was always on his guard “walks an iceberg in the marts of trade and social life,” lacking the “confidence of man in man” that was the glue holding together our unregulated market society.

Herman Melville explored these ideas with mordant irony in *The Confidence-Man*, published in the panic year of 1857. Setting the scene on the Mississippi riverboat *Fidele*, Melville puts his title character to work in various disguises—offering shares in a mining company, selling patent medicine, soliciting contributions to philanthropic causes. In nearly every case he encounters apparently shrewd customers who turn out to be credulous, unless they have something to sell themselves. As in Barnum’s country store, nothing is as it seems, and everything is up for grabs.

The literature of self-made manhood was a response to this world, an attempt to show that plainspoken truth could survive in the marketplace. Amid a crowd of confidence men, Horatio Alger’s boy heroes make their way, returning lost pocketbooks or miscounted change, demonstrating their trustworthiness with a firm handshake and frank countenance. So despite the widespread distrust of misleading surfaces, appearances remained the coin of the realm. Alger’s heroes are beneficiaries of lucky encounters with benefactors impressed by their apparent virtue. And their rise to respectability

is signified by nothing more solid than a new suit of clothes.

During the Civil War the federal government brought some stability to the paper economy by creating a uniform national currency, but Wall Street was still dominated by confidence men. James Fisk and Daniel Drew had worked as boys in traveling circuses, learning the “short cons” of shell games and three-card monte before they moved on to more ambitious frauds. When their controlling interest in the Erie Railroad Company was challenged by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Fisk and Drew printed as many stock certificates as they needed to maintain a majority share. Like Jay Cooke and other contemporaries, they specialized in bidding share prices far beyond anything that might actually be justified by the earnings of the company in question—“watering” stock, in the idiom of the day.

Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner dubbed the era the gilded age in their novel of 1873 (another panic year), creating Colonel Beriah Sellers, a promoter of dubious real-estate schemes whose “tongue was a magician’s wand that turned dried apples into figs and water into wine as easily as it could turn a hovel into a palace and present poverty into future riches.” The promise of magical increase was crucial to the promoter’s appeal. Twain himself was a sucker for it, and he nearly lost his shirt pouring thousands into a failed typesetting machine.

New confidence games proliferated amid the lurching growth of a deregulated economy. Perhaps the most significant were perfected by the fledgling advertising industry, which represented many national brands by the end of the 19th century. Advertising agencies had first to

win the confidence of prospective clients, then turn to the crucial task in marketing the advertiser’s goods, which involved “the creation of a feeling of confidence on the part of the purchasing public,” as the trade journal *Printers’ Ink* noted with emphasis in 1907. Everything depended on orchestrating the right surface effects. By the 1920s magazine advertising routinely evoked the neutral authority of science by creating a stock scene: the white-coated doctor telling the patient the bad news about his foul breath, frayed nerves or sluggish intestines. Sincerity, as every ad maker knew,



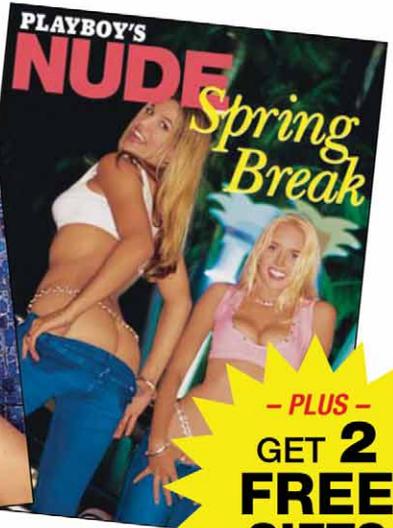
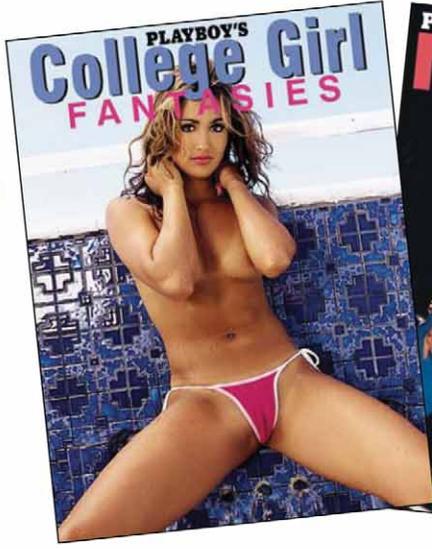
Charles Ponzi: The schemer shows he has nothing up his sleeve.



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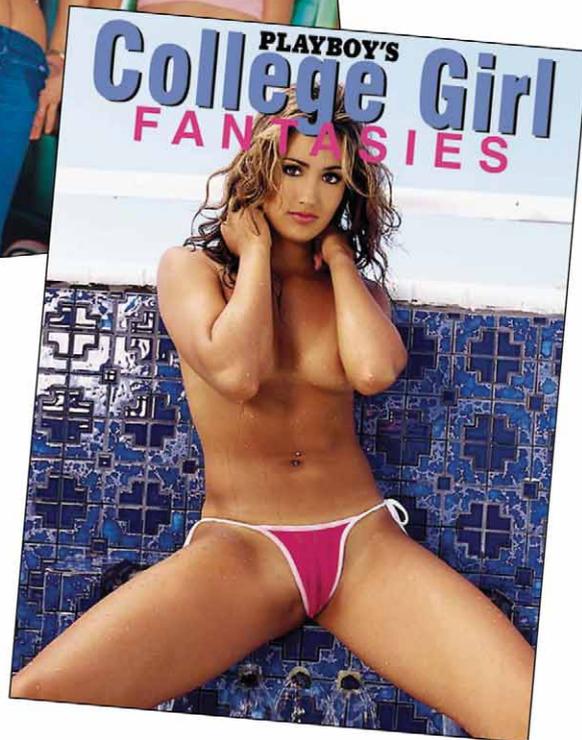
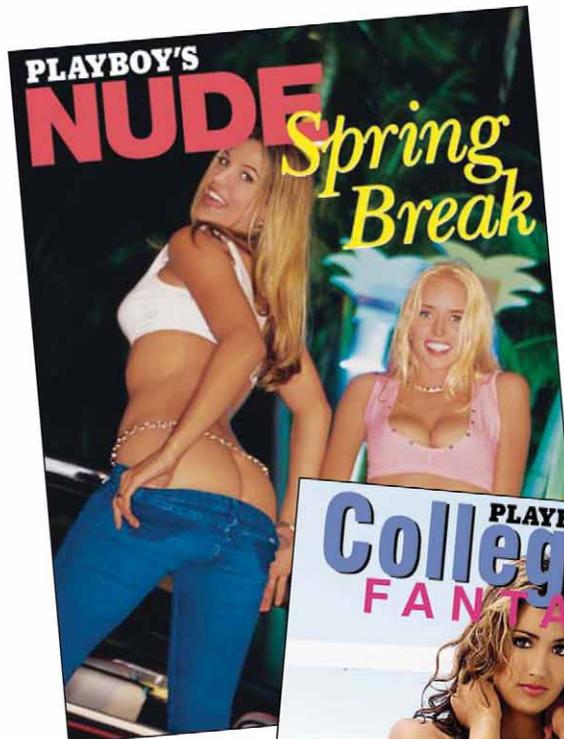


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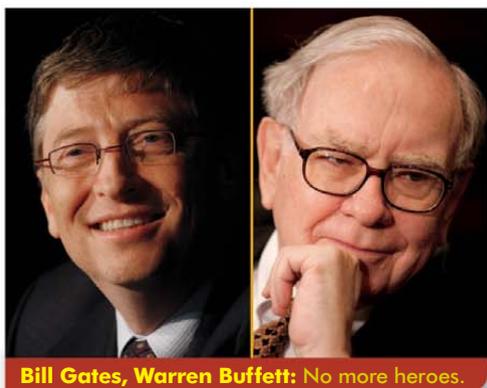
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Bill Gates, Warren Buffett: No more heroes.

could become a performance. Truth could be reduced to credibility.

And nothing was more credible than the appearance of transparency—the confidence man’s way of saying “Nothing up my sleeve.” Even Charles Ponzi asked for an audit when *The Boston Post* began to sniff around the edges of his scheme in the summer of 1920. He was convinced he could somehow cover his liabilities in time to look legitimate—if necessary by temporarily “borrowing” from the vault of the Hanover Trust, where he was a director. Ponzi’s brief fame was part of the celebrity culture bred by advertising. He presented his scheme as a plan to enrich ordinary people—and the people of Boston (especially his fellow Italians) bought into it, investing thousands even after Ponzi had been jailed. Much of his popularity depended on his skillful social performance as a loving husband, dutiful son and successful immigrant striver who wore custom-tailored suits and drove a Locomobile. And he promised investors they could live this way too.

Such fantasies flourished with special force in flush times. By the 1920s Wall Street brokers were smoother and leaner than the robber barons, and they spoke the “scientific” language of market research. But they pumped up security prices with the same abandon as their predecessors. The crash of 1929 and its aftermath unmasked elite pretensions to probity. Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Exchange and treasurer of the New York Yacht Club, embezzled from both institutions to cover his overextended liabilities. For decades after the crash, most Americans viewed Wall Street as the lair of confidence men. John Kenneth Galbraith, writing in the 1950s, observed that the crash had transformed “universal trust” into “universal suspicion.” The Great Depression

required a new kind of confidence man, and FDR stepped into the role—embodying hope, disdaining fear and regulating the confidence games of Wall Street.

But the longings that animated those games were deep and enduring. In 1925 the psychoanalyst Karl Abraham published a case study he called “History of an Impostor.” His subject (“N.”) wanted to be someone, anyone he wasn’t. Like the Midwestern boy Dexter Green in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s 1922 story “Winter Dreams,” N. was an outsider with his nose pressed up against the windowpane of a glamorous life, yearning for “the glittering things themselves.” That desire animated Ponzi and other confidence men as well as their dupes. Its most poignant expression was Fitzgerald’s Jay Gatsby, a confidence man who sums up his self-invention by saying, “I didn’t want you to think I was just some nobody.” This was the impulse motivating the con men who populated the American imagination from the 1930s through the 1970s. During those decades Wall Street con men were on a short leash, and marginal grifters were transformed into lovable scamps, portrayed in popular culture by the likes of Robert Preston (*The Music Man*) or Robert Redford (*The Sting*).

Ronald Reagan, as accomplished a politician as FDR, assured us that what Jimmy Carter had called a “crisis of confidence” was over. “America is back,” said Reagan, and the rebirth of America meant a release from economic regulation. As always during flush times, certain egregious sharpers provoked public outrage—Michael Milken, Ivan Boesky and “the smartest guys in the room” at Enron. But they were lightning rods whose disgrace distracted attention from the larger confidence game of inflating asset values.

Now, as always in the wake of a crash, we are engaged in rituals of recrimination and resolutions to return to the “real economy” of work and productivity. There is plenty of blame to go around, but

the big-shot confidence men deserve most of it—not only the lightning rod Madoff but the subprime lenders and securities bundlers whose frauds may have been technically legal. And as usual the dupes, the thundering herd of bullish investors, deserve a bit of blame as well. Still, it is worth remembering that Madoff and his less flagrant contemporaries were all part of an American tradition—not just its dark side but its very center: the dream of magical self-transformation through money, of something for nothing. The confidence man opens a chink in the virtuous armor of self-made manhood—an opening for smart luck, for taking advantage of “the breaks” or even manufacturing them.

Our tendency to place unwarranted confidence in shameless scams signifies a longing to break out of the grim prescriptions of the Protestant ethic and into a world where money has nothing to do with effort and earning—where the blessed stuff simply falls, like grace, from heaven and multiplies like magic. And indeed there are enough examples of this happening in our history to make the power of money sometimes seem magical. The problem is that the magicians are often merely con men.

Jackson Lears is author of Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877–1920.



DANIEL BEJAR

READER RESPONSE

WISH YOU WERE HERE

I take issue with Dubravka Ugrešić's "A Postcard From Europe" (June). The word *hope* is overused by those people who wish everything in life would be



Man cannot live on hope alone.

done for them. What happened to the entrepreneurial moxie that enabled anyone to be successful? You can't rely on your government or other people to provide for you. These hard times are turning me into a member of my grandfather's generation. I will have to work harder and save more because I will be supporting those who still hope for a free ride. Americans and Europeans alike need to learn to take responsibility for their own futures.

Casey Vaissiere
New Smyrna Beach, Florida

FEAR, LOATHING

In response to "Fear Your Neighbor" by Slavoj Žižek (September), I would remind readers that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. That was said more than 70 years ago. Hitler wasn't an ideological competitor; he was foolishly idealistic. I don't believe the cornerstone of government is an irrational, excessive and persistent fear of being left out in the cold. The truth is tensions have diminished, first through nuclear arms control talks between the nuclear superpowers and later through such things as NAFTA. The only "growth of fear in political life" that I can think of is the result of unfair gerrymandering to give one political party an advantage.

Anthony Frazer
Madisonville, Kentucky

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

The issue of Americans' unhappiness ("Why Are We Unhappy?" September)

is a hideously complicated matter, and explaining it would require several books the size of the unabridged *Oxford English Dictionary*. Here are some points to consider. Abraham Lincoln once said, "Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be." Being happy is an act of internal will. Money is not a barometer of happiness, despite the fact that we are bombarded with images of rock stars, movie icons and models and told to idolize those people. In addition, it seems Americans are being indoctrinated not to have any patience. We tell ourselves it's okay to hurt others and break the rules as long as we're not caught. Unfortunately, taking shortcuts and not working things through leads to disaster. This is one of many reasons our economy is so bad. Curtis White's idea of having everyone study metaphysics is a good one. Had I not studied that subject I probably would have ended up in prison. However, the comprehension of metaphysics is also an act of internal will. I have seen many people perform rituals without understanding them. Every ritual is designed to point those undergoing it to a greater awareness; it's up to the individual to comprehend the revelation.

C.X. Nemece
Irving, Texas

White must believe that everyone in this country has no capacity for making choices. Our work is "for the benefit of the will of others"? Funny, I thought it was a more reasonable arrangement: I work, and you pay me for it. Apparently we also have "no access to transcen-



Money is not a measure of happiness.

dence" in America. Take a walk in the woods, dude. You need some fresh air.

Caroline Mercury
Vancouver, Washington

MODELS NOT SO SMART

I strongly object to "Global Warming: Truth and Consequences" (October). Global-warming concepts are based on mathematical models of the world's climate, which are inherently flawed because they contain an infinite number of unknown variables. They are related to the Drake equation (the basis for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) and the TTAPS equations (the basis for the idea of a nuclear winter), none of which are real science. Carl Sagan's nuclear winter equations



It's hard to figure out global warming.

were mostly disproven after he predicted the Kuwait oil fires in the early 1990s would produce a year without summer; needless to say, that never happened. Our current models (many of which are used in global-warming predictions) are inaccurate only a few days in advance. Why would they be useful extended out to years?

Yevgeni Stepanov
Pleasanton, California

TRUCK AND JIVE

Perhaps Kenneth Powell (*Reader Response*, September) has never heard of deregulation, which certainly had more to do with the disappearance of trucking companies than unions did. Many trucking companies still haul but operate under different names. They were bought up and consolidated as a way to get rid of the unions. Powell must not have worked in the industry before deregulation, and he likely doesn't understand it as well as he thinks he does.

Mark Hanson
Chicago City, Minnesota

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GRAPEVINE



Modern-Day Madonna

LADY GAGA is the new Madonna. We take the hairstyle to be a starburst, not a halo, so we mean the sexy-quirky Madonna, not the virgin. While Gaga was trying to distract us with the hair and red face lace we spotted areola.

SETH BROWARNIK/STARTRAKSPHOTO.COM

Italy's PM Packs a Box Turtle

Escort PATRIZIA D'ADDARIO claims she "didn't sleep a wink" with Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. And she allegedly had this conversation with his friend: "You told me there would be a paycheck. He gave me a small gift—I don't know what, a little turtle."



ARMANDO GATTARINI/INCHEGRODOT.COM



KEN LETT/LENOVO.COM

She Must Have Struck a Power Chord

Meet RUYTER SUYS (pronounced "Rider Sighs") of Nashville Pussy, currently touring with Motorhead and the Reverend Horton Heat. This is the best guitar solo we've seen in a while; perhaps the other nipple will join in at the next show.



DAVE HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES

SEN LOWERY/GETTY IMAGES

Can't See the Line, Can You, Russ?

Had to break out that quote in honor of the 20th anniversary of *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*. But you can see the party lines on both the grown EMMA WATSON (of *Harry Potter* franchise fame) and PHOEBE PRICE (who will walk down any red carpet, even if it's at a Target).

Little Bird Upon Our Windowsill

Yep, British slang for "woman" is *bird*. The U.K. mag *Front* handed us this shot of its girl next door STACEY MASSEY. The Brits are also impossibly proper. Case in point: One of the magazine's readers commented on the photo, "Her exposed breasts are very pleasant."



FRONTIER.CO.UK

Dirty Dancing

We've been waiting for a reason to showcase Cyber Girl TRIANA IGLESIAS again. Well, she's on *Dancing With the Stars*...in Scandinavia. Good enough!



JUAN CARLOS DURAN

No Longer Lima Time

Exhibit A on why we should keep the border open: GLORIA JIMENEZ, a former Miss Peru who recently immigrated to the United States. Next month in *Grapevine* we tackle health care reform.



MICHAEL ANTHONY BERNAL

Fashion by Horny Teenager

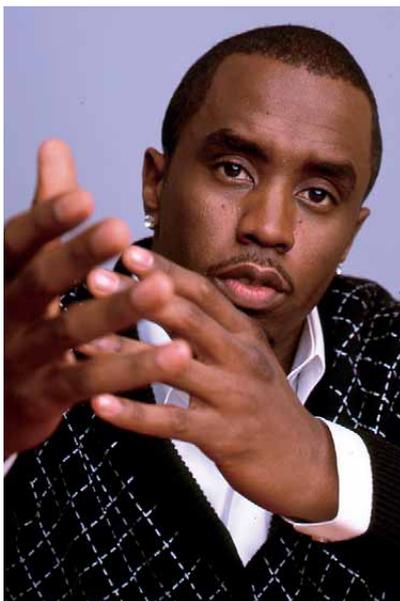
This is from a Barcelona fashion show. If couture is just designers putting models in whatever they desire, then we want in on the joke. You've been laughing among yourselves for years, right?



ALBERT GEA/REUTERS/LANDOV



REID ALL ABOUT IT.

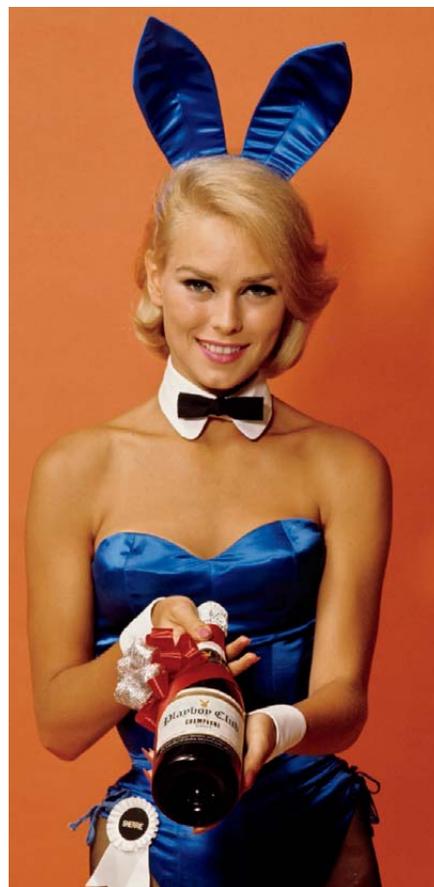


PUFF, THE MAGIC DIDDY.



THE FAST AND THE SERIOUS.

NEXT MONTH



BUBBLY BUNNY.

TARA REID—SURE, THE *AMERICAN PIE* STAR HAS ACCIDENTALLY REVEALED HERSELF A FEW TIMES, BUT IMAGINE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SHE STRUTS HER STUFF ON PURPOSE.

AL JAZEERA—WOULD YOU BELIEVE TERRORISTS ARE SENDING ENCODED MESSAGES THROUGH THE AL JAZEERA NETWORK? SOME PEOPLE IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY DID. A BIZARRE TALE OF CONFIDENCE AND GULLIBILITY BY **ARAM ROSTON**.

SEAN "DIDDY" COMBS—IN THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW* WE ASK DIDDY HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT NOT WRITING HIS OWN RHYMES AND HOW IT FEELS TO RULE THE WORLD AT THE AGE OF 40.

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OF LOVE AND MONEY—WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A WEALTHY LAWYER ASKS A CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AUTHOR TO HAVE SEX WITH HIM FOR CASH? COME BACK IN A MONTH AND **TONI BENTLEY** WILL TELL YOU.

THE FUTURE OF NEW YORK—**LUC SANTE**, NEW YORK CITY'S MOST DEVOTED CHRONICLER, PROVIDES A WEIRD REMINISCENCE OF THE CITY FROM THE YEAR 2100, AFTER THE PLAGUE.

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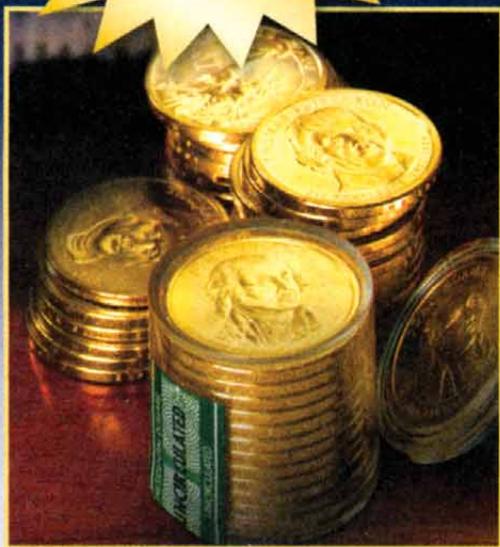
ON KATE MOSS—HOW CAN ONE MODEL LAST THIS LONG? PERHAPS BECAUSE SHE'S MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE. FELLOW LONDONER **WILL SELF** PONDERES THE CULTURAL PHENOMENON THAT IS KATE MOSS.

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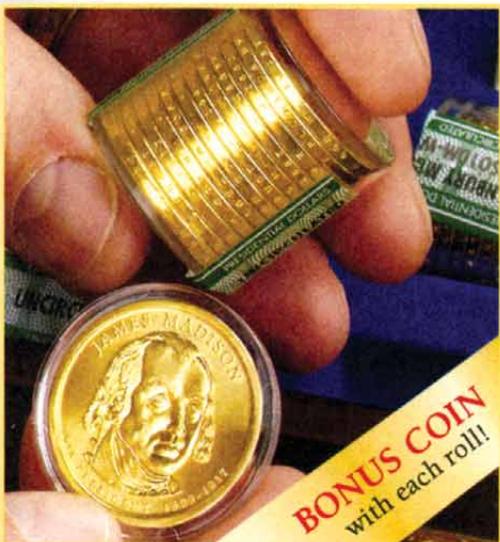
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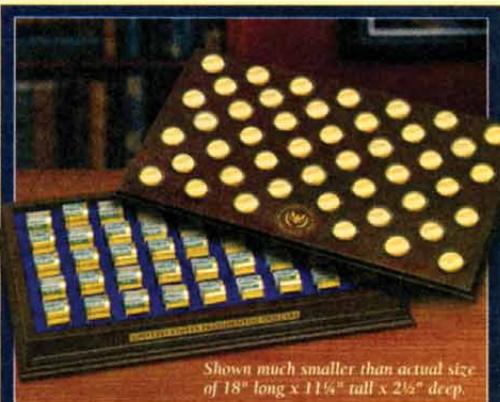
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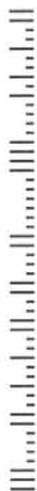


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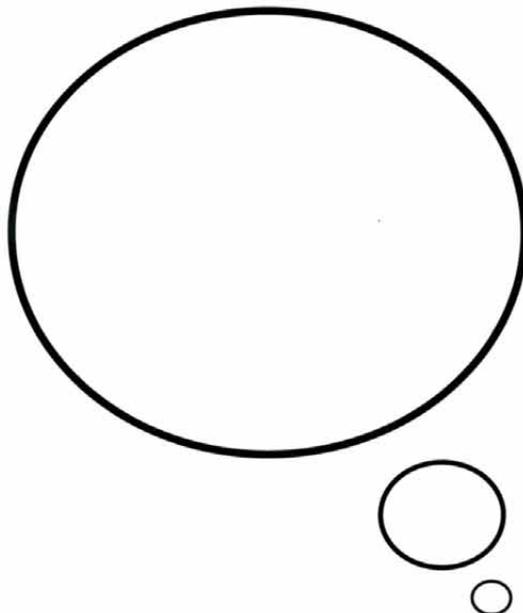


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