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PLAYBOY'S
FEARLESS

COLLEGE FOOTBALL FORECAST

THE TOP **25**
TEAMS

INTERVIEW: THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
NASCAR'S KURT BUSCH PETE CARROLL
VINTAGE ROADSTERS NEW PLAYBOY FASHION
INVESTMENT TIPS IRAQI BOMB SQUAD

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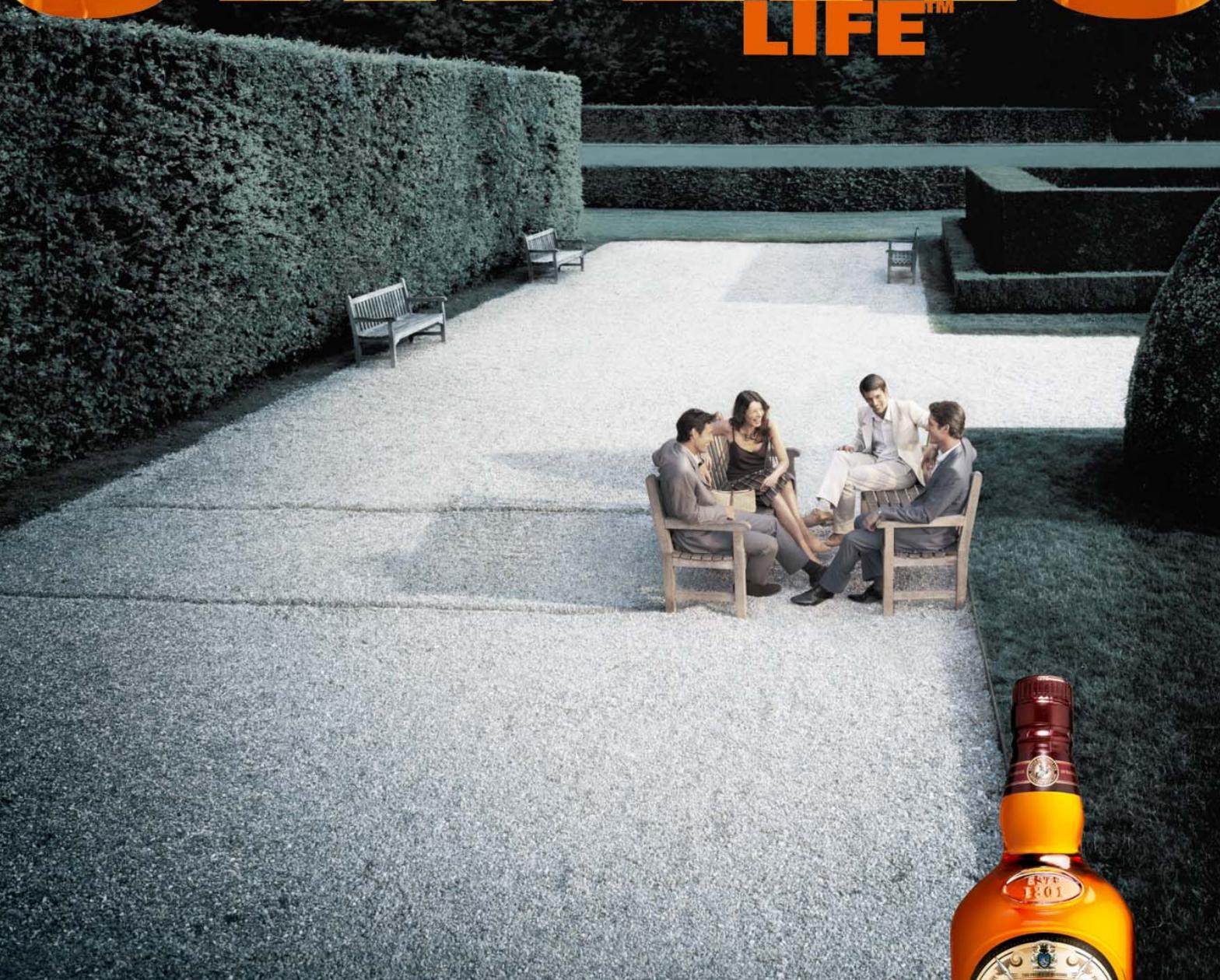
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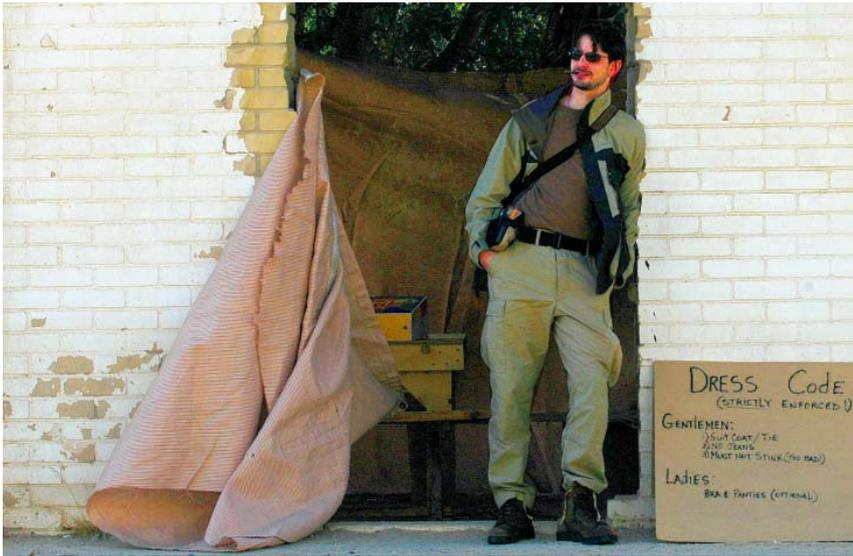
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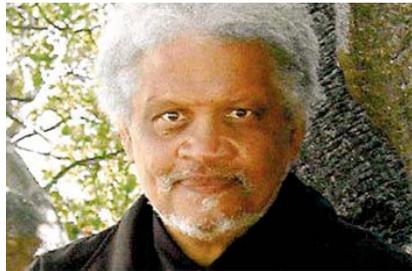




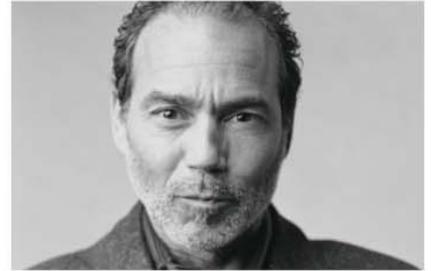
For *The Man in the Bomb Suit*, **Mark Boal** patrolled the explosive streets of Baghdad with the elite U.S. soldiers who defuse the deadly improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, favored by Iraqi insurgents. “These guys are running up to bombs while other people are running away from them,” says Boal, who spent nearly a month living with the men. “They encounter on a daily basis the most lethal weapons in this conflict. Other soldiers look at them as though they’re insane sword swallows or fire walkers. It takes a surgeon’s hands—a slipup will leave you dead or missing half your body. They also have to be vigilant 24 hours a day, seven days a week, because every working moment is a life-or-death situation. They defuse hundreds of bombs a month, but bombs are talked about only when they explode.”



Celebrated for his artwork in such comics as *Batman: Arkham Asylum* and the *Sandman* series, **Dave McKean** is also the director of *MirrorMask*, a visually awesome sci-fi movie out this month. Here he contributes the art for this month’s fiction, *The Fisherman and the Jinn*, by **Robert Coover**. “It is a sort of collage,” McKean reports. “A painting is scanned in, then pieces are played with and put in different places.”



Opening the *Forum* is an essay by writer and activist **Ishmael Reed**. Riding the bus to a new teaching job, the author of *Mumbo Jumbo* began to view the outcry over recent attempts to privatize Social Security in a new light. “If they used the kind of transportation that poor people depend on, our politicians—who are driven from event to event in limousines—would discover that people are hurting,” he says.



For this month’s fashion feature, *The New Playboy*, eight of the world’s most creative designers came up with innovative new looks for the contemporary man. Renowned photographer **Timothy White** captured the designs. “Instead of trying to be retro or futuristic,” White explains, “we were trying to be in the moment. Each shot tells the story of the designer and his contribution to the concept of *The New Playboy*.”



New York Times columnist and three-time Pulitzer Prize winner **Thomas L. Friedman** is one of the most widely read writers in the world. His pieces are reprinted not only across the U.S. but around the globe. His latest book, *The World Is Flat* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), is a radical reappraisal of the progress of globalization—and a hot topic in this month’s *Playboy Interview*, conducted by Contributing Editor **David Sheff**. “This is the golden age of being a commentator,” Friedman says. “What is so cool about the Internet is that I can go to Cairo and bump into a 20-year-old who’ll say, ‘You know, the third paragraph of your Wednesday column—I had a problem with that.’ But it’s also an awesome responsibility to get it right. And that’s why I sit around in fear.”

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PLAYBOY

c o n t e n t s

features

- 70 THE MAN IN THE BOMB SUIT**
Iraq has become a repository for just about every weapons system known to man. The situation is literally explosive, with an estimated 10 million mines buried in the dirt, often in populated areas. We patrol Baghdad with ace bomb tech Staff Sergeant Jeffrey S. Sarver of the Army's 788th Ordnance Company, an elite unit that protects troops from improvised explosive devices. Sarver's distinction: He has disarmed more of them than any man in the war. **BY MARK BOAL**
- 88 SPORT STARS**
The roadster is the ultimate sports car, and those designed in the 1950s and 1960s reached a pinnacle of style and performance that has yet to be matched. Get reverent about the five finest two-seaters ever built. **BY KEN GROSS**
- 94 MANY HAPPY RETURNS**
In a 50-year career spent studying financial markets, Wall Street vet Raymond F. Devoe Jr. has survived 18 bubbles. The man knows money, and he has sound advice on how to plan your financial future. **BY RAYMOND F. DEVOE JR.**
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fiction

- 84 THE FISHERMAN AND THE JINN**
The monotonous daily routine of an old fisherman is broken when he discovers a brass jar with a jinn inside. Should he wish for the end of disease? World peace? Or how about virility for 200 years? His wish is the jinn's command...if he can make up his mind in time. **BY ROBERT COOVER**

the playboy forum

- 51 BACK TO THE 1930s?**
To ride the bus with underclass America is to be transported to the Depression era, when there was no unemployment insurance or welfare government. Politicians today may be shocked by the backlash to their attempts to privatize Social Security, but that's because they go first-class and not Greyhound. **BY ISHMAEL REED**

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- 126 KURT BUSCH**
This young NASCAR champion has left other drivers in the dust with his skillful handling and unapologetically aggressive behavior on and off the track. We get his wheels spinning about Dale Earnhardt flipping him the bird, the perks of being a champ and why he wears all those caps. **BY WARREN KALBACKER**

interview

- 59 THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN**
A three-time Pulitzer Prize winner, this *New York Times* columnist and best-selling author has established himself as the leading popular commentator on globalization. His latest book, *The World Is Flat*, describes the technological revolution that has leveled the playing field for India and China to compete with the West. He chats candidly about the war in Iraq, the future of the Middle East and why two countries that are involved in Dell's supply chain will never wage war with each other. **BY DAVID SHEFF**



COVER STORY

Jessica Canseco, the gorgeous ex-wife of the controversial one-time MVP, finally breaks her silence about her five years as a baseball wife, coming clean about sex, lies and Jose's destructive steroid abuse. Senior Contributing Photographer Stephen Wayda scores big as the taut beauty pirouettes sans tutu. Our Rabbit watches closely from the waistline.



PLAYBOY



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BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS

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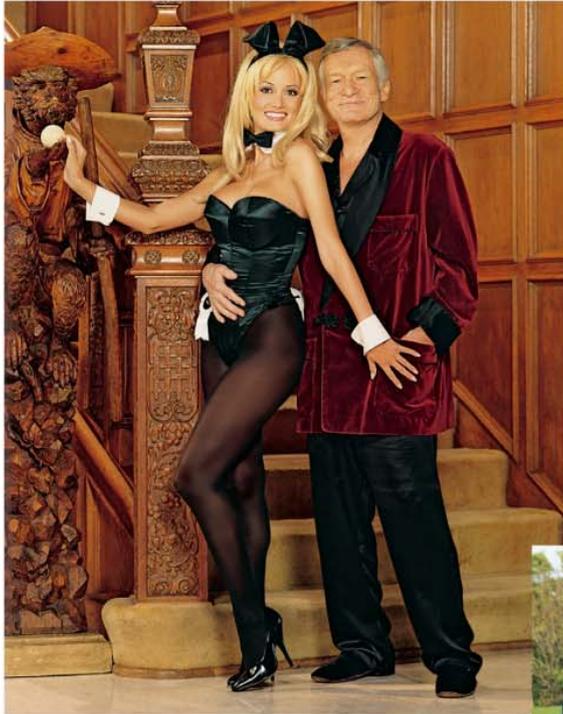
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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

ONE OF THE GREATEST

The Discovery Channel and AOL have named Hef one of the 100 Greatest Americans, along with presidents Washington, Lincoln, Kennedy and Bush, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Walt Disney, George Lucas, Muhammad Ali and Elvis. Good company.



HEF'S GIRLS GET REAL

The E! cameras have been tailing Mr. Playboy's girlfriends Kendra, Holly and Bridget for a new reality show, *The Girls Next Door*. What's it like to be young, blonde and dating Hef? You'll soon find out.



MAYOR MARTINI MEETS THE PMOY

With a nickname like Mayor Martini, it's no wonder Las Vegas mayor Oscar Goodman gets everybody shaken and stirred. He stopped by the Mansion Playmate of the Year party, bearing gifts for PMOY 2005 Tiffany Fallon and Hef: keys to the city. Vegas, baby!



GEAR AND CLOTHING IN LAS VEGAS

Next time you're blowing your winnings at the Forum Shops at Caesars in Vegas, make sure to stop by our new boutique, the first freestanding Playboy store in the U.S. It features memorabilia, artwork and clothes, and you may even spot a Bunny or two.



BEVERLY HILLS ROCK

"Beverly Hills, that's where I want to be," Weezer frontman Rivers Cuomo croons on the band's hit single "Beverly Hills." For the video, only one location made sense: the Playboy Mansion. Between takes, Hef, Holly, Bridget and Kendra showed Cuomo and his bandmates how to rock the backgammon board.



HANGIN' WITH H&F



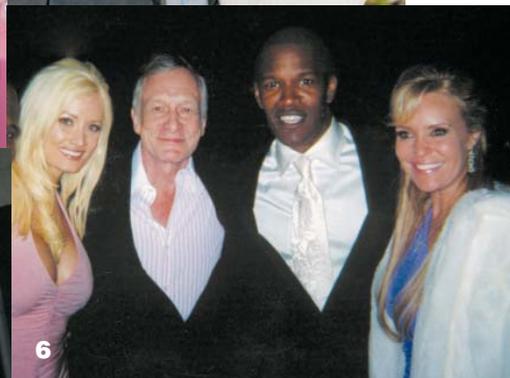
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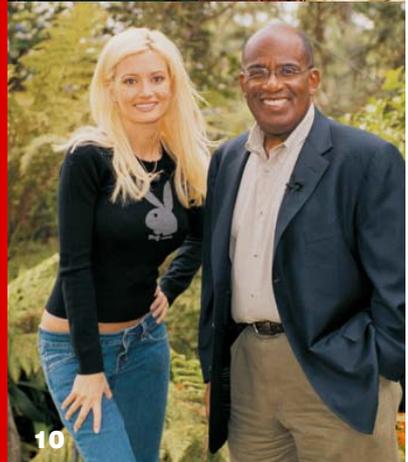


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When you're Hef, every day is an adventure. Herewith, a glimpse into his nonstop life. (1) Five decades of Centerfolds at the Mansion PMOY luncheon for Tiffany Fallon. (2) With June cover girl Bai Ling. (3) *Smallville's* Jensen Ackles with July cover girl Joanna Krupa. (4) PMOY 2004 Carmella DeCesare with pro football star Jeff Garcia at the Viceroy Hotel's PMOY postparty. (5) Joe Don Rooney and Tiffany Fallon. (6) Holly, Hef, Jamie Foxx and Bridget at an L.A. awards show. (7) The 1940s sex stars Jane Russell and Terry Moore visiting the Mansion. (8) When *Last Call's* Carson Daly brought his show to L.A., he asked Hef (with Bridget, Holly, Audra Lynn and Kendra) to stop by. (9) Backstage with Rob Schneider. (10) Holly giving Al Roker a tour for an NBC special on the Mansion animals. (11) Jerry Ferrara, Pauly Shore, Ralph Macchio, Adrian Grenier and Kevin Dillon filming *Entourage* at Hef's. (12) At *Prey* with Cyber Girl of the Year Amy Sue Cooper. (13) A visit from Raelians Shizue Kaneko, Rael and Sophie Deniverville.



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CHEATING HEARTS

The Playboy Fidelity Survey: Secret Sex (June) doesn't address one reason many men cheat: a lack of sex at home. My wife and I are in our early 40s. We get along well but have sex only about twice a month. She has no imagination in bed and expresses no desire to improve the situation. That's why I have affairs. I'm too young to give up



Cheaters never win, but they do score.

sex, and I'm tired of trying to sell her on the idea that sex can be fun, spontaneous and exciting.

Name withheld
New York, New York

My husband and I have been having problems outside the bedroom, so he started another relationship that isn't entirely about his physical desires. This makes cheating a murkier issue. People who have affairs aren't all meeting in parking lots and hotels just for the sex.

Name withheld
Atlanta, Georgia

As webmaster of Philanderers.com, I feel your numbers are bang-on in regard to why people stray, although I'd guess the percentage of women who cheat is higher than the 14 to 18 percent you found. My sense is that women are more reluctant than men to reveal the truth about their indiscretions, even when guaranteed anonymity. The high number of affairs could, as you claim, be attributed to the sexual revolution. But it may also be a symptom of our culture's emphasis on instant gratification. If you believe what you see on prime-time television, everyone is cheating and getting

away with it. Our motto? If you can't be good, at least be careful.

Doug Mitchell
Toronto, Ontario

FROM A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY

I enjoyed *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Star Wars Galaxy* (June), but you overlooked an important aspect of the series. The best thing about the GFFA is that female characters are not just damsels in impossible outfits waiting to be saved. They are women in improbable outfits fighting right in there with the guys.

Rebekah Adams
Starwarschicks.com
New Hope, Minnesota

THE ROOT OF EVIL

Rohan Gunaratna's *Khalid Sheikh Mohammed: The Brain* (June) is superb. Mohammed's arrest has been a devastating blow to Al Qaeda. While I'm not discounting his fanaticism and crimes, he's brilliant in the way ancient warrior kings were brilliant. KSM checks every box in our Darwinian hindbrain that says "This is a leader."

Evan Santos
Adelanto, California

TIFFANY'S THE ONE

Congratulations to Tiffany Fallon for being chosen Playmate of the Year (June). Although all 12 of the women are deserving, once again PLAYBOY and its readers made the right choice.

Gregory Hoodin
Cincinnati, Ohio

TOUR DE LANCE

The June *Interview* with Lance Armstrong is one of the best you've published. Keep kicking ass and taking names, Lance.

Danny Slimak
Hermiston, Oregon

MANY LIKE IT HOT

I have been in love with Marilyn Monroe my entire life and was thrilled to see the new image of her (*Marilyn Revealed*, June). When my son was in high school I rented *The Seven Year Itch* so he could see why I think she is so special. We weren't 30 minutes into the film when he turned to me and said, "Dad, I get it now!"

Jim Stone
Post Falls, Idaho

Marilyn Monroe has contributed in many ways to PLAYBOY's success. May I suggest that the magazine pay

its debt to her by revealing the truth about her death? I attended her autopsy as a deputy district attorney for the city of Los Angeles. The coroner concluded she had died from an overdose of the barbiturate Nembutal. Yet there were no needle marks on her arms nor any remnants of capsules found in her home. The circumstances of her death remain unclear.

John Miner
Los Angeles, California

KEEPING IT REAL

My husband and I read each new issue of the magazine together, and it has truly transformed our marriage. It gives us a way to share our fantasies. That feeds our sexual appetites, and we are becoming more intimate and passionate as a result. Thank you!

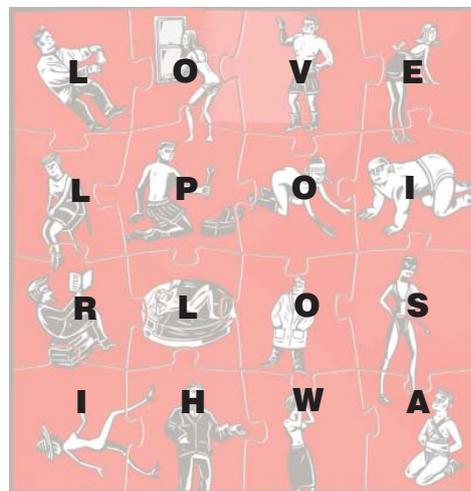
Cat McLaughlin
Killeen, Texas

PUZZLING RELATIONSHIPS

Robert Coover's short story *Suburban Jigsaw* (June) is great, but I couldn't solve the puzzle. Help! I've been working on it for two days.

Daniel Baker
New York, New York

The names that belong on each piece, from left to right and top to bottom, are Larry, Opal, Victor, Evelyn, Lucille, Pavel, Odette, Igor, Rick, Lily, Oscar, Sheila, Irene, Homer, Wanda and Alan. For the solution write the



The solution to Coover's conundrum.

first letter of each name in its appropriate box. Beginning at top left and moving in a clockwise spiral, the message reads, "Love is a whirlpool."

EYE-OPENER

Thanks for the great article on cocktails (*Into the Drink*, June). The Hemingway daiquiri must have been

The longer you wait



PHOTO TEST #2



...the better it gets.

Evan Williams.
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evanwilliams.com

Please act your age and drink responsibly. Evan Williams Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey. Bottled by Old Evan Williams Distillery, Bardstovwn, KY 40004 43% Alc./Vol. © 2005

one hell of a breakfast for Papa. One question: What is the simple syrup the recipe calls for?

Mark Seymour
Elkhart, Indiana

Simple syrup is half sugar, half water, boiled to dissolve the sugar into the solution, then cooled. Easy as cheese, only it's syrup.

MORE ON SCIENCE VS. RELIGION

Your articles about the origins of the universe (*The Meaning of It All*, May) are a great counter to the relentless babble from "people of faith" who reject abundant scientific evidence. However, I take issue with one of physicist Simon Singh's reasons for refuting the idea that the universe has existed for eternity. He writes, "Within a finite amount of time all the objects in the universe should have fallen toward one another, causing the universe to collapse." The universe would expand forever if its initial velocity at the time of the big bang were equal to or greater than the escape velocity. In the 1970s scientists had a good approximation of the velocity of the universe and were working to determine its mass to calculate whether it would expand forever. The discovery of dark energy, which acts against gravity, made those calculations moot.

Bob Whalen
Vista, California

As an astrophysicist who has spent more than 25 years teaching astronomy, I must counter Singh's assertions about the big bang. Not everyone who calls it "just a theory" is a Luddite. When Edwin Hubble began studying the motion of galaxies, he had to correct for the motion of the earth and sun. This Doppler motion shifts the wavelength of light either toward the blue (approaching) or red (receding). He assumed that the red-shifted light from galaxies showed them receding. This produced the idea of a big bang. But another scientist, Halton Arp, introduced more than 200 images of interacting galaxies that are at very different red shifts. An alternate explanation for the red shift that generally correlates with distance is light scatter from dark-matter dust.

Robert Soberman
Voorhees, New Jersey

Singh replies, "On its own, each of my reasons for believing in the big bang is not wholly convincing, but together they make a compelling case. Understanding dark energy is a gap in modern cosmology, but the mystery does not undermine the model. Arp's research is highly controversial and certainly not enough to overturn the theory. The vast majority of cosmologists agree that the big bang is basically correct and is a triumph of the human intellect. The expansion of the universe is still the best way to explain the red shift."

THE DONALD ON DEFENSE

The June *Grapevine* includes a photo of a "nipple slip" by Donald Trump's wife. Take a closer look. The nip could be part of the shadow of his hand.

Todd Harner
York, Pennsylvania

BAI LING, UNCUT

An outstanding pictorial! Bai Ling (*Bai, Bai, Baby!*, June) is one of the most beautiful actresses in the world.

Phil Brungard
West Haven, Connecticut

You say Bai Ling appears in *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*. I don't recall seeing her. What gives?

Jamar Perry
Vancouver, Washington

Ling's scene, which featured her nude and covered with tattoos as she comforted Natalie Portman, ended up on the cutting-



No doubt about it: Bai Ling is gorgeous.

room floor. Ling has suggested this had something to do with her PLAYBOY pictorial. George Lucas denies it, noting that the scene also featured his daughter. DazeReader.com summed up our feelings: "Hot intergalactic girl-girl action is sitting on a shelf somewhere, but we won't get to see it!" Pray to the Force for an expanded DVD.

GOING TO THE FIGHT

I was appalled by your suggestion in *Mantrack* that readers attend bullfights in Tijuana ("5 Reasons to Road-Trip This Month," June). Bullfighting is a cruel act in which a debilitated bull is brutally killed for entertainment. Even before the bulls enter the ring they are drugged so it's easier for the matador to stab and torture them. Real men are kind to animals.

Chad Raith
Greensburg, Pennsylvania



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babe of the month

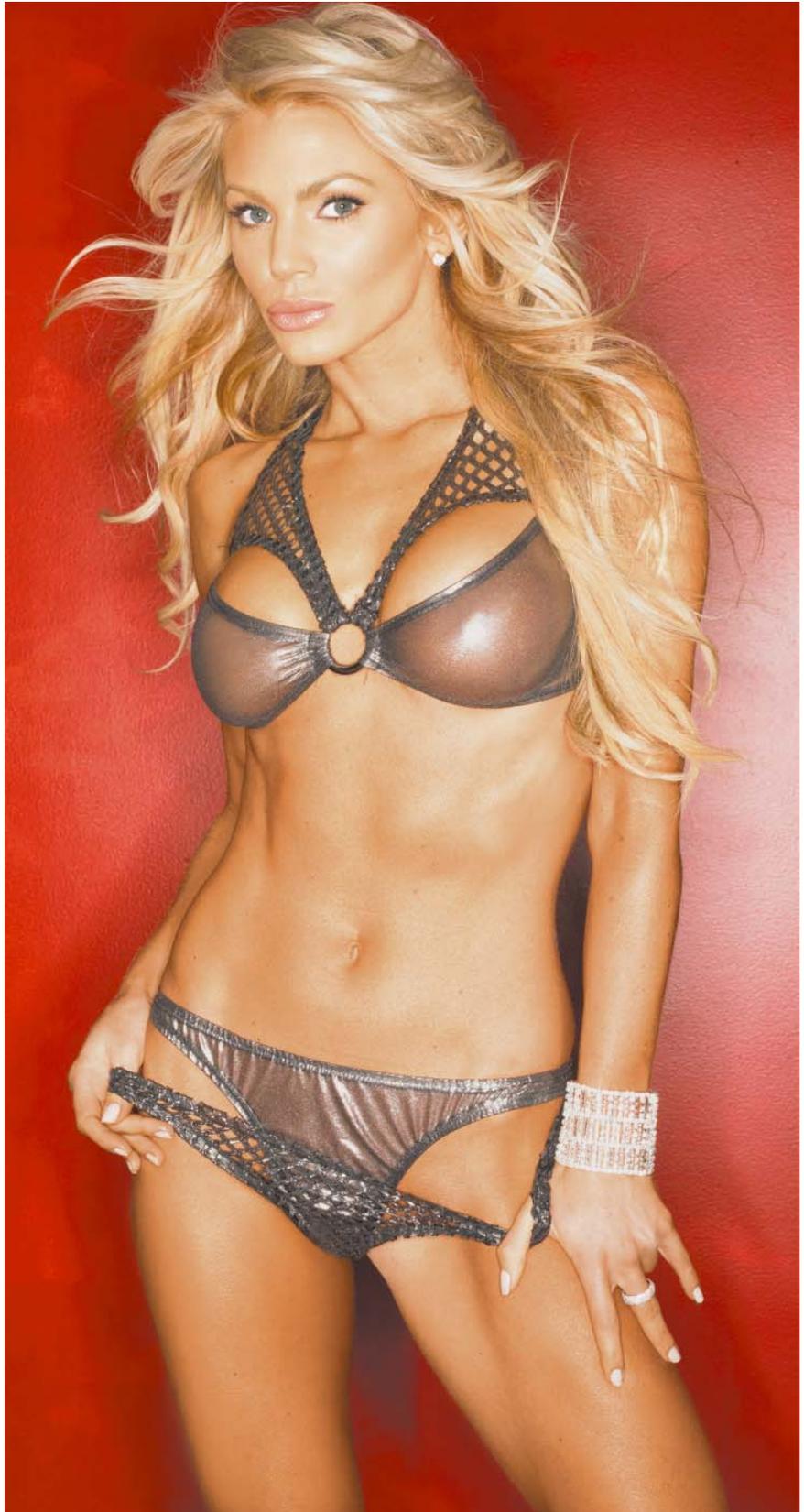
Gabrielle Tuite

What *Price* fame? This model and entrepreneur has some idea

We've often wondered why male contestants so readily lose their cool on *The Price Is Right*. Are they so enticed by the prospect of a new washing machine that they must charge the stage like horny rhinos? One look at Gabrielle Tuite, one of the spokesmodel sirens known as Barker's Beauties, and it all makes sense. "All those acting classes come in handy," she says. "You have to smile and act excited about everything." When not caressing name-brand appliances, Gabrielle pushes a few items of her own on her website, gabrielletuite.com: her first calendar, her line of jeans accessories and her cuddly self. "I sell a five-foot-long body pillow with a picture of

"Guys say to me, 'You must be a Playmate—what month are you?'"

me topless—but holding myself gracefully. A woman's body is beautiful, but for me to pose nude it has to be the right place and time." Off the market for three years, newly single Gabrielle is looking for love—cautiously. "I'm picky and have a hard time meeting guys I'm attracted to," she admits. "I like intelligent businessmen with an adventurous side, but I think people have preconceptions because of how I look. Guys say to me, 'You must be a Playmate—what month are you?'" At Aqua, a lounge she is opening in Hollywood, Gabrielle hopes to keep the cheesy lines and other club fouls to a minimum. "Aqua is hip and cool, but it's also a place where you can hang out and listen to sexy tunes," she explains. "Clubs are fun once in a while, but I'd rather socialize with my friends than scream over music. New York has neighborhood bars, and Miami has lounges, but L.A. lacks those in-between places."





SKECHERS

the bradbury chronicles

RAY VISION

A SCIENCE FICTION MASTER TAKES STOCK

Bradbury Speaks: Too Soon From the Cave, Too Far From the Stars collects 40 of Ray Bradbury's essays written over a period of 40 years. We sat down with the author of *The Martian Chronicles* and *Fahrenheit 451* for a preview of his new book's ideas, both great and small.

Understanding: We've been out of the caves for only about 5,000 years—we're still ape-men, for Christ's sake—and we're on our way to the stars. We have much to forgive ourselves for because we have a lot to look forward to. The future is immense. Be patient and forgiving.

Exploration: We should never have left the moon. We should have built a permanent base and gone on to Mars. That's the next thing we have to do.

Commitment: Don't stop traveling because of bad weather. My wife and I once were to go to Blenheim Palace, outside London. It's Winston Churchill's birthplace, named for the Battle of Blenheim, which was fought in Germany in 1704. It began to rain, with lightning and thunder, but we went anyway. We were alone. We owned the whole goddamn castle! The lightning and thunder re-created the battle for us—the Battle of Blenheim! That was a great day.

Creativity: Federico Fellini was a good friend. His way of creating is also my



way of creating: not knowing what you're doing. You mustn't think about it; just do it and keep your intellect out of the way. Write with emotion, passion and love, and you can't go wrong.

Perspective: Trains are the only way to see the country. I love to have supper and go to my room with a bottle of champagne and drink it at midnight while I look out at the rolling country and the houses of all the people. I realize, going by in the night, that all the people are good. There are no evil people out there. It's all beautiful.

animal lover

CONSERVATIVES SAY THE DARNEDEST THINGS

Radio host Alan Colmes: You had sex with animals?

Antiabortion activist Neal Horsley: Absolutely. I was a fool. When you grow up on a farm in Georgia, your first girlfriend is a mule.

Colmes: Are you suggesting that everybody who grows up on a farm in Georgia has a mule as a girlfriend?

Horsley: It has historically been the case. You people are so far removed from the reality. Welcome to domestic life on the farm. If it's warm and it's damp and it vibrates, you might in fact have sex with it.

—Fox News Radio, May 2005

one for the road

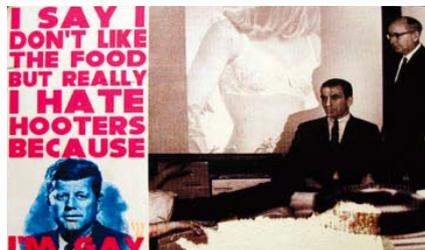
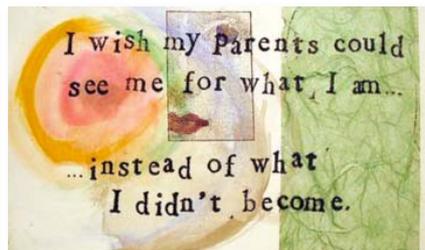


BEER AND LOATHING

In late August Hunter S. Thompson's ashes will be taken to the top of the Gonzo Memorial Fist on his Colorado property and, per his instructions, fired from a cannon. To help raise funds for the 150-foot column, collaborator Ralph Steadman has teamed with Flying Dog Ales to produce Gonzo Imperial Porter. Supplies are very limited. Visit flyingdogales.com.

blind admissions

A few of the provocative anonymous postcards on display at postsecret.blogspot.com.



sex and the city-state

EMPIRE BABYLON

With *Rome* HBO trains its unflinching eye on the Late Republic period of the ancient city. *Spartacus* it ain't. Complete with crucifixions and animal sacrifices, the series shows the legendary metropolis just as everything started going to pot. Executive producer Bruno Heller gives us some background.

Poverty Sucks: Roman society in 52 B.C. was both rich and decadent. It had once been a stoic military culture, but by that point the upper classes were no longer the backbone of the army, and all the hard work was done by slaves. "Rome had an obscenely wealthy nobility with a great unwashed mob," Heller says. "There wasn't much of a middle class to hold the line."

Both Ways: Roman men were equal-opportunity fornicators. "Slave boys, slave girls—one was as good as the other," says Heller. Affection for young boys was imported from Greek culture. Romans considered it a more refined taste, "like drinking wine rather than beer."

Fortunate Sons: It was a crime to seduce free-born Roman boys. "So that made them all the more attractive," explains Heller. "A pretty, noble boy had the same kind of allure as Britney Spears in a schoolgirl outfit."

Wino City: Water was poor, partly because of lead plumbing, so wine was used as a substitute. "They'd have it with breakfast," Heller says. "It was concentrated, like Thunderbird, so they mixed it with water to improve the taste."



Biggus Dickus: A large penis was considered comical and ugly but also an effective talisman for warding off bad luck. "Images of large penises were the good-luck horseshoe of the era, drawn on walls or hung over doorways."

All Together Now: Public toilets were unisex, just an arcade on the side of the road. "They were social centers, like Starbucks," says Heller. "You would plan to meet your friends at the toilets."

Stinking Rich: The nobility favored red or purple garments made with rare, expensive dyes. One pigment, for instance, was extracted from Middle Eastern shellfish. Having a fishy odor was a sign of status, like wearing Chanel No. 5.

coming attraction

SONGS OF INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE

Here's a musical comedy even the average show tune-hating joe can enjoy. In *Dr. Sex*, the story of sex researcher Dr. Alfred Kinsey, premiering off Broadway this month, the wit and wordplay of lyricist Larry Bortniker stay spicy enough to keep everyone's attention. In this excerpt Kinsey realizes his mission in life:

"What people really do when the lights are low,

I need to know.

What people really do when the lights are low,

And plainly so.

Collectively and singly,
What makes people moist and tingly?

This is where my heart says I must go.

From first arousal straight through the afterglow,

What people really do when the lights are low.

Are they rough, or are they tender?

Have they preferences in gender?

Are they likelier to conquer

Or to lie back and surrender?

Do they harden? Do they soften?

(Does it happen very often?)

And is there paraphernalia

In or on their genitalia?

I must be there to follow it, blow by blow,

What people really do when the lights are low."

choo la la



NUDITY FOR A CAUSE

WHEN NAKED CELEBS GO ON THE BLOCK, WHOSE SKIN RAKES IT IN?

Four Inches, the summer's most buzzed-about picture book, features 44 famous women wearing little other than Jimmy Choo shoes or

boots with stiletto heels. Proceeds from sales of the \$65 tome go to AIDS research, as did the money raised when Christie's auctioned off prints. In New York images of Paris Hilton and Elle Macpherson each commanded \$26,000, but Kate Moss's set the high-dollar mark at \$48,000. (Shagadelic Iman, above, was a steal at \$5,500—come on, folks, have a heart!) The London auction proved more lucrative: Moss, also the winner there, fetched nearly \$500,000, and Macpherson pulled in almost \$300,000.

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drink of the month



PIMM DANDY
FRENCH QUARTER,
ENGLISH HOOCH

As the dog days of August ease into the often still sweaty first weeks of September, the thirsty man wants something a little sweet, a little sour and totally chilled. A Pimm's Cup will do the trick. Of the many bevies built on James Pimm's gin-based spirit, our pick is mixed by the barkeeps at the Napoleon House in New Orleans. Here's how they do it:

Fill tall 12 oz. glass with ice

Add 1¼ oz. Pimm's #1 and 3 oz. lemonade

Top off with 7-Up

Garnish with slice of cucumber

Do not under any circumstance omit the cucumber.

half-mile-high club: *n*, variation on the mile high club; membership is gained by practicing self-love on an airplane.

employee of the month

FLY GIRL

TALKING THE SQUAWK WITH BIRD MINDER AUTUMN MONAHAN

PLAYBOY: What do you do?

AUTUMN: I'm a bird keeper at the aviaries of the San Diego Zoo. I do observations on birds, keep track of breeding and feed them—you can't be squeamish about worms.

PLAYBOY: Why birds?

AUTUMN: I click with them. It's great to walk into an aviary and have them all come down because they recognize you.

PLAYBOY: Do you work with any other animals?

AUTUMN: The gorillas. There are two females who hate me, and I hate them. There's this one male who likes me because I give him peanuts. When I come in he always makes this purring noise and purses his lips, and whenever the two females give me a hard time he scolds them. It's good to have a friend on the inside.

PLAYBOY: Do visitors try to pick you up with birdcalls?

AUTUMN: Let's just say that parrots repeat what they hear and now one does a wolf whistle.

PLAYBOY: Do the birds ever get fresh with you?

AUTUMN: They have tried to hump my head.

PLAYBOY: That's an interesting move. What if a guy tried it?

AUTUMN: I would give him the bird.

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



baxter basics

HERE'S TO THE RUNNERS-UP

The Baxter, opening this month, is a romantic comedy about the other guy in romantic comedies, the guy who's the safe option for the female lead and thus fated to lose her. We asked director Michael Showalter to pick his favorite Baxters:

1. Walter (Bill Pullman) in *Sleepless in Seattle*. "He's the ultimate Baxter. With a name like Walter, how could he not be? He seems perfect, but the minute we find out he has allergies, we know he's wrong for her. Allergies are the opposite of romance."

2. Carl Smith (Brian Avery) in *The Graduate*. "He's on the receiving end of filmdom's most celebrated altar dumping. When he proposes to Katharine Ross by saying they'd make 'a pretty good team,' we know he's a goner. She wants love; he wants to make the playoffs."

3. Hamish (Corin Redgrave) in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*. "We know Andie MacDowell should be with Hugh Grant, but

she marries this older man. The first time we meet him we know it can't last. Why? He's wearing a kilt."

4. Mark (Craig Kilborn) in *Old School*. "He's an example of the Asshole Baxter variation (see also Glenn in *The Wedding Singer*). He appears to be nice and safe but is actually a liar and a cheat—an even bigger dog than Luke Wilson."

5. Professor Jennings (Donald Sutherland) in *Animal House*. "When he walks into the kitchen wearing a white fisherman's sweater that reveals his bare ass—pure Baxter. We know a girl like Karen Allen would never stand for that kind of self-satisfaction."



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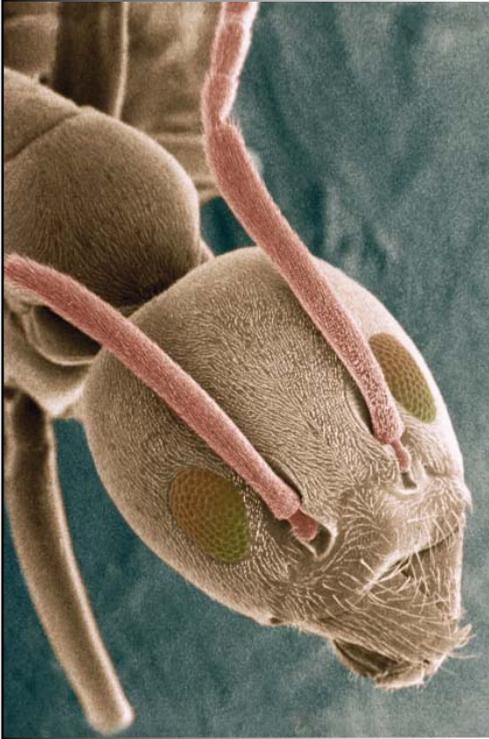
What sort of man wears Playboy?



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R A W D A T A

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS



Bites

Orkin, Inc. reported a **20%** jump in bedbug-related calls in 2004.

Behind the Music

Licensed mariachi street performers in Mexico City: **1,700**
Estimated number of muggers who dress up as mariachis: **800**

Book of Pointless Records

Longest Lecture

88 hours, 4 seconds, set by Errol Muzawazi of Zimbabwe, at Jagellonian University in Krakow, Poland. The lecture was on the subject of democracy and shattered the previous record, which Muzawazi had also set, of 62 hours, 30 minutes.

Price Check

\$50,000

Cost of Kobe and Vanessa Bryant's "recommitment" ceremony.

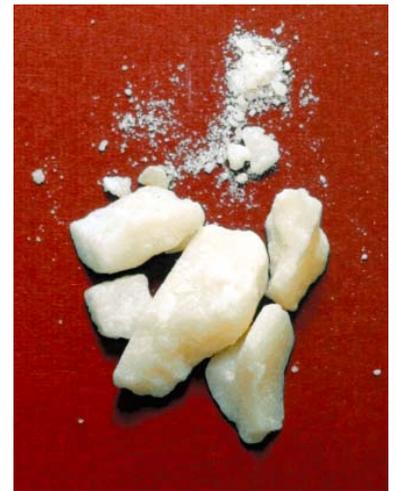
Rich Quick

A study of **5,000** millionaires revealed they spend an average of **6 minutes** a day on their personal finances.



Alias Nation

More than **17,000** people are currently hiding out in the Federal Witness Protection Program.



Caught Red- Stated

The number of methamphetamine labs law enforcement agencies seized in 2004 in Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire: **5**

The number seized in Missouri, Tennessee and Arkansas: **2,546**

Going in Style

Estimated average cost for an 80-year-old American to live out the rest of his days on a luxury cruise ship: **\$230,000**. To hang around in an assisted-living facility: **\$228,000**.



Holy Suds

Following a public mention of its product by Pope Benedict XVI, the Stuttgarter Hofbräu sent the pontiff **185** gallons of beer.



Maximum Wage

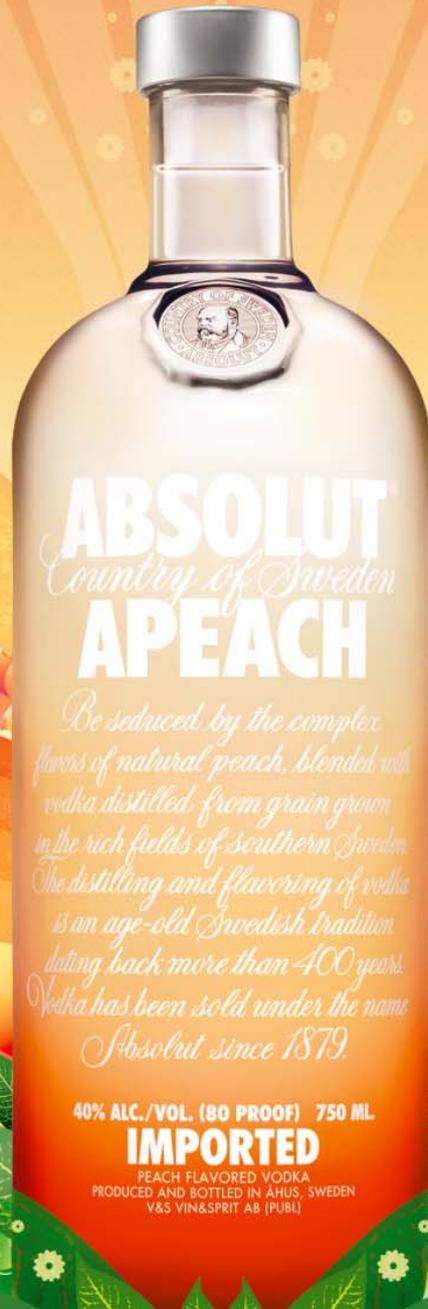
Per-minute fee for having Paris Hilton at your party: **\$9,000**

Per-minute fee paid to Donald Trump for a seminar on real estate: **\$16,000**

In Sink

Playing together at El Paso's Painted Dunes Desert Golf Course, Randy Massey and his stepmother, Terri Massey, both aced the same hole in the same round—the odds against which are **17 million to 1**.

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Ray Smith

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R E V I E W S

m o v i e s



movie of the month

[A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE]

Viggo Mortensen and Maria Bello get revenge

The American dream has seldom looked more broken than it does in director David Cronenberg's *A History of Violence*. Viggo Mortensen plays a Midwestern Joe Six-Pack who unexpectedly commits explosive, vigilante-style mayhem on big-city thugs who menace him and patrons of his diner in an idyllic rural town. Things turn even bloodier and more disturbing when his past is scrutinized by both the law and the bad guys (led by Ed Harris). Says Cronenberg, "With its idea of a homesteader protecting his wife, family and property with a gun, this movie is as close to a modern Western as I'm ever going to get, and it doesn't even take place in the West." What it also has is two controversial sex sequences, one in which Mortensen's wife (Maria Bello) dresses in a cheerleader outfit and another in which the stars grapple aggressively on a flight of stairs. "Those were such hard, wooden stairs," Cronenberg says, "that our stunt coordinator said it was the first time he had to worry about whether the actors should wear stunt pads for a sex scene. Maria got really bruised." Good buzz makes the bruising worth it. Besides, Cronenberg says, "People are prone to violence, and there is a violent component to sexuality. Sex and violence go together like ham and eggs."

"Sex and violence go together like ham and eggs."

—Stephen Rebell

now showing

BUZZ

Syriana

(George Clooney, Matt Damon, Amanda Peet, Chris Cooper, William Hurt, Gina Gershon) Based on CIA terrorist hunter Robert Baer's best-selling memoir, this thriller features Clooney as the drab, overweight veteran spook frazzled by the agency's constant inability to stay ahead of the terrorist threat.

Our call: A timely topic and a killer cast, spearheaded by producer Steven Soderbergh and director Stephen Gaghan (*Trafic's* screenwriter), mark a return to socially relevant flicks.



The 40-Year-Old Virgin

(Steve Carell, Catherine Keener, Paul Rudd) *Anchorman* supporting player Carell plays a guy with a primo action-figure collection, a gig in a high-end electronics store and, not surprisingly, a serious case of arrested sexual development. Meeting Keener awakens his libido, but as luck would have it, she wants a sex-free relationship.

Our call: Flying against the onslaught of assembly-line teen romances, this sweet, tart affair reminds us how messed up and funny romance can be at any age.



Just Like Heaven

(Reese Witherspoon, Mark Ruffalo, Donal Logue, Rosalind Rao) In this supernatural romance, a lonesome architect (Ruffalo) meets a pretty young woman (Witherspoon) who keeps insisting that his new apartment is hers. The duo fall in love—of course—only to learn that their unearthly relationship has a definite time limit.

Our call: Your sixth sense ought to tell you that this San Francisco ghost story (think of it as *Ghost* meets *All of Me*) is heavier on the charm than the shivers.



Romance & Cigarettes

(James Gandolfini, Kate Winslet, Susan Sarandon, Christopher Walken) The comedy is jet-black as Gandolfini plays an ironworker whose hanky-panky with a sexpot (Winslet) unleashes fury in his long-suffering wife (Sarandon). When their emotions hit overload, the characters break out into classic pop songs.

Our call: If you've ever wondered whether *The Sopranos* or *The Honeyymooners* would fly as a musical with Bruce Springsteen and James Brown tunes, you'll finally have your answer.



dvd of the month

[NIP/TUCK: THE COMPLETE SECOND SEASON]

Two plastic-surgeon pals tackle all Miami's vices

Extremely sexy, wickedly sly and just as funny as it is dramatic, the FX cable series *Nip/Tuck* will leave the unprepared viewer slack-jawed and addicted. The setup: Odd-couple med school buddies Sean McNamara (Dylan Walsh) and Christian Troy (Julian McMahon) share a Miami plastic-surgery practice. Year two's arc puts Sean, a worrier with a warping marriage, and Christian, a stud surgeon, through the soapy wringer. We knew Julia (Joely Richardson) was pregnant when Sean married her 17 years ago; now we learn that the baby was Christian's and that he boinked the bride's mom on the wedding day. Don't cry for Sean, though: He bangs a blow-up doll and the porn queen who modeled for it—in a single show! The bloody but fascinating plastic-surgery operations make the season better than Botox. **Extras:** Liposucked scenes and a featurette, *Recurring Pain: Three Women and Their Man*. ★★★½ —Greg Fagan



FEVER PITCH (2005) In this guy-safe romantic comedy from the Farrelly brothers, Jimmy Fallon plays a school-teacher and obsessive Boston Red Sox fan who is forced to choose between his new love, a successful businesswoman played by Drew Barrymore, and his first and forever love, the Red Sox. Is she more important than lifelong season tickets? This is a question so dumb only the Farrelly brothers would see a movie in it. But they pull it off, sans the usual Farrelly fart jokes. **Extras:** Deleted scenes and three featurettes. ★★★½ —Kenny Lull



SAHARA (2005) Matthew McConaughey works his smooth Southern charm as a treasure hunter searching the North African desert for a lost American Civil War battleship loaded with Confederate gold. You can feel the heat between him and Penélope Cruz, who plays a spirited UN doctor, but sidekick Steve Zahn's sly, deadpan performance steals the show. **Extras:** Deleted scenes and three featurettes. ★★★ —Matt Steigbigel



THE ASTAIRE AND ROGERS COLLECTION: VOLUME ONE Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers made 10 musicals together, and half of them debut on DVD here. *Top Hat* (1935), with its art deco sets and showstopping dance numbers, is the one to see. *Follow the Fleet* (1936) has seven Irving Berlin songs. *Swing Time* (1936, pictured) features Astaire's "Bojangles of Harlem"—proof he could make even a blackface routine a touching homage. *Shall We Dance* (1937) contains ballroom dancing on roller skates, and *The Barkleys*

tease frame



We've been ardent fans of slinky, smoldering **Gina Gershon** for some time now, with her curvaceous bod and killer curled lip. On-screen she has tempted many characters, male and female, in films such as *Bound* (1996), *This World, Then the Fireworks* (1997), *Face/Off* (1997) and *Prey for Rock & Roll* (2003). In the fleshy, campy train wreck that was *Showgirls* (1995, pictured), she smartly played the conniving Cristal with a knowing wink—and emerged unscathed. See what erupts later this month when she teams with George Clooney in the political thriller *Syriana*.

of *Broadway* (1949) reteams the duo after 10 years with a crackling script by *Singin' in the Rain* writers Betty Comden and Adolph Green. **Extras:** New featurettes, some with commentary by film historians and/or Astaire's daughter. ★★★ —Buzz McClain



INSIDE DEEP THROAT (2005) This intriguing documentary about *Deep Throat* (1972) features colorful personalities such as Linda Lovelace and Harry Reems and is filled with reflections about the era from dozens of interviewees—including Hugh Hefner. It's an occasionally humorous and ultimately sad exposé of the movie. **Extras:** Featurettes such as *Legends of Erotica*. ★★★ —Thomas Cunha



LOST: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON (2004) Forty-eight castaways stranded on an island isn't exactly a novel setup. But since *Lost* also mixes in intriguing character flashbacks that may reveal pieces to a supernatural puzzle, it emerged as the most surprising new show of the season. As you await season two, comb through the first 24 episodes (including the two-hour season bookends) to look for some secrets. **Extras:** Commentaries, featurettes and deleted scenes. ★★★½ —Brian Thomas



the critical collector

[SOUL CINEMA]

When it comes to blaxploitation, revenge is a dish best served cool

You would think anything that has *exploitation* in its name would be resented, but 1970s black-exploitation films—blaxploitation for short—are continually greeted with a firm soul handshake. “There’s always going to be a large fan base for the genre,” says Steve Housden, chief operating officer of Xenon Pictures, a major distributor of blaxploitation DVDs. “People of all races are constantly discovering how even its lowest-budget films can outdo Hollywood in creativity, excitement and humor.” That’s for sure: Witness Xenon’s all-time best-seller, *Dolemite* (1975), in which Rudy Ray Moore plays an ex-con pimp who exacts revenge on the Mob and the Man with an all-girl kung fu army. It’s inept and amateurish, to be sure, but still compelling. The same goes for Melvin Van Peebles’s oddly revered *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song*. (*Sweetback*, by the way, is slang for “big dick.”) No blaxploitation collection would be complete without the Rocky-goes-to-jail saga *Penitentiary* (1979); *Coffy* (1973), featuring Pam Grier with razor blades hidden in her Afro; *Foxy Brown* (1974, pictured at bottom right), in which Grier replaces the razor blades with a gun; and the 007-inspired *Cleopatra Jones* (1973). Some of the genre’s entries are prized for their soundtracks—Isaac Hayes’s Oscar-nominated score for *Shaft* (1971), Curtis Mayfield’s for *Superfly* (1972)—or for their departures from familiar stories, such as *Blacula* (1972, starring Denise Nicholas and Thalmus Rasulala, pictured at top). But the genre has a few quality films: Stylish *Detroit 9000* (1973), the taut *Godfather* send-up *Black Caesar* (1973) and *Across 110th Street* (1972) nearly escape the exploitation tag altogether. —B.M.



special additions

Get historical about a screen icon, chariot races and a dance craze



The producers of **Marilyn Monroe: The Final Days**, a documentary that aired in 2001 on cable’s AMC network, reconstructed a 37-minute version of *Something’s Got to Give*, the unfinished film Monroe was fired from shortly before her death. The reconstruction is a fascinating part of this 117-minute treasure, as are insights from various witnesses to the final flickering of Monroe’s flame.... **Ben-Hur** (1959), still the gold standard for swords-and-sandals pictures, gets a wonderful new four-disc collector’s edition that adds a chariotload of extras. George Lucas and Ridley Scott share thoughts in *Ben-Hur: The Epic That Changed Cinema*, a new documentary and one of three offered in the set. Best of all: Disc three serves up the restored 1925 silent film adaptation of the General Lew Wallace novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*.... Hip-hop went mainstream in 1984, the year *Breakin’*, *Beat Street* and *Breakin’ 2: Electric Boogaloo* all hit the big screen. The new **Breakin’ Collection** bundles these three films with a bonus disc, which includes interviews with various old-school principals, like Rock Steady Crew’s Ken Swift, who hail the early movement’s emphasis on creative expression and lament the bling-above-all ethos dominating hip-hop today. —G.F.



SCANNER

GILLIGAN’S ISLAND: THE COMPLETE THIRD SEASON (1966) You’d think that after three years of being stranded, one of the single guys would score with Ginger or Mary Ann. But you’d also never think such a lame show would become an enduring cultural icon. ♫

THE WEDDING DATE (2005) Don’t let your girlfriend talk you into this rote romantic comedy in which *Will & Grace*’s Debra Messing hires escort Dermot Mulroney to dupe her ex-fiancee at her sister’s wedding. Sure to be an in-flight entertainment threat. ♫

CARMEN ELECTRA’S NAKED WOMEN WRESTLING LEAGUE: VOLUME ONE (2005) These sexy vixens return wrestling to its Greco-Roman roots—nude and rude. The WWE has nothing on Harriet Bush, Cruella Bleeds and Demonica Disco’s two gold Afros. ♫½

BLANK THE WORLD! (2005) Not only does 25 percent of its proceeds go to Amnesty International, but this collection of worldwide modern-rock and punk videos proves that the middle finger is a universal language. ♫♫

RICK STEVES’ EUROPE: ALL 43 SHOWS (2000–2005) PBS’s peripatetic Steves takes us on an eight-disc, 22-hour tour of every landmark, off-the-beaten-path fountain and *eetcafé* from Ireland to Benelux. ♫½

THE HITCHHIKER’S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY (2005) A good idea in 1979, a terribly timeworn one today. Puppet aliens, depressed robots, inane philosophy and “Don’t panic!” just aren’t funny in 2005. ♫½

THE DEER HUNTER: SPECIAL EDITION (1978) This masterpiece about the devastating impact of the Vietnam war on a few buddies from a small Pennsylvania steel town still haunts. This edition includes deleted and extended scenes. ♫♫♫

PALINDROMES (2004) Todd Solondz’s biting satire showcases eight actors playing 13-year-old Aviva, a loner desperate to have a child and then condemned to suffer society’s consequences. The most poignant Aviva is Jennifer Jason Leigh. ♫½

♫♫♫ Don’t miss ♫ Worth a look
 ♫♫ Good show ♫ Forget it

uptown ranking



[EMBASSY SWEETS]

Diplomats' Jim Jones shines solo on *Harlem*

On his second LP, Diplomats capo Jim Jones shows his growth as an MC on productions perfectly suited to his persona. The first single, "Baby Girl," became a semi-official summertime anthem. On the rest of the record, Jones keeps it gully, with hard street lyrics alongside instructions for the ladies on how to get down with the Dips. Harlem figures prominently in songs such as "Gees Up," "My Diary" and "Harlem," as Jones takes us on a ride through his hood ("We blowin' smoke while we G-ride") and paints pictures of the day-to-day struggle of coming of age uptown. Hustling, partying and smoking up are all part of the lifestyle, and Jones isn't ashamed to admit he's a product of his environment. Along with the Diplomats' veteran stars—Cam'ron and Juelz Santana—Jones also invites new members of the Dip set to showcase their talents on his album. On "Penitentiary Chances" Hell Rell shows why he's the self-proclaimed "hardest out, hands down" among the Diplomats. The first female Diplomat, Jha' Jha, brings the Dirty South crunk sound to "Drunk Hoe" (which also features P. Diddy). And Jones's protégé Max B offers a glimpse of the future. (Koch) **★★★★**
—Dean Gaskin

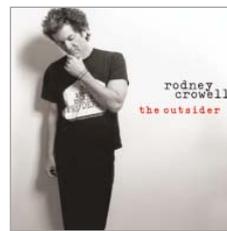
DEEP DISH * *George Is On*

This is everything electronica for home use should be (infectious, head-bobbing) and nothing that it shouldn't (unimaginative, pounding). Despite the great beats, it's largely song-based, with a nice mix of vocalists. Even the two tracks built on classic rock riffs transcend pointless remix status. (Thrive) **★★★★½** —Tim Mohr



RODNEY CROWELL * *The Outsider*

At his day job Crowell writes hit singles for Music Row. At night he crafts delightfully sardonic and literate songs that hark back to the days of Sun Records. With a tight band and relentless energy, Crowell's new music is as good as any in his 30-year career. (Columbia) **★★★★½** —Leopold Froehlich



CHILDREN OF NUGGETS

The original *Nuggets* rescued obscure 1960s garage bands too raw for radio. Now this 100-song collection bridges the gap between "Louie Louie" and "Fell in Love With a Girl." Compiling music created between 1976 and 1996, it shows there was amazing rock even prior to the Hives. (Rhino) **★★★★** —Jason Buhmester



DIAMOND NIGHTS * *Popsicle*

The Nights' "The Girl's Attractive" is a sleaze-rock classic. As deliciously debauched as Louis XIV's "Finding Out True Love Is Blind," it's like vintage Billy Idol minus the cheese. Best of all, there's much more here: A stab at 1980s arena rock, "Destination Diamonds," is just as cool. (Kemado) **★★★★½** —T.M.



daddy yankee blows up

Latino MCs (Kid Frost, Big Pun) have always had a place in the hip-hop scenes on both coasts. But reggaetón, the mix of hip-hop, dancehall reggae and salsa that emerged from the barrios of Puerto Rico in the early 1990s, represents something different. Lately reggaetón has become a full-blown movement, topping the Latin charts and pushing salsa and merengue from America's Latin clubs. "For Latinos reggaetón is what hip-hop is for people in the United States—not just a kind of music but a lifestyle," says Daddy Yankee, 29, the genre's biggest star. He began making reggaetón as a teen in tough San Juan barrios, long before anyone dreamed a song like his "Gasolina" could hit the *Billboard* Hot 100. Judging from the way



many dance to "Gasolina"—the woman bent over or on all fours, the guy grinding his crotch into her caboose—you'd think the crossover hit was about sex. Even the dance's name, *perreo*, translates as "doggie style." Then there's the hook: "Le gusta la gasolina/Dame más gasolina" ("She likes gasoline/Give me more gasoline"). According to Yankee, *Le gusta la gasolina* is Puerto Rican slang for "She likes to hang out and party." "But everybody wants to make it a double entendre," he says. He cringes at the mention of "Macarena," the last Spanish-language song as recognizable to the gringo crowd as "Gasolina." "Reggaetón is not lambada, and it's not the macarena," he says. "It's a movement."



Reggae

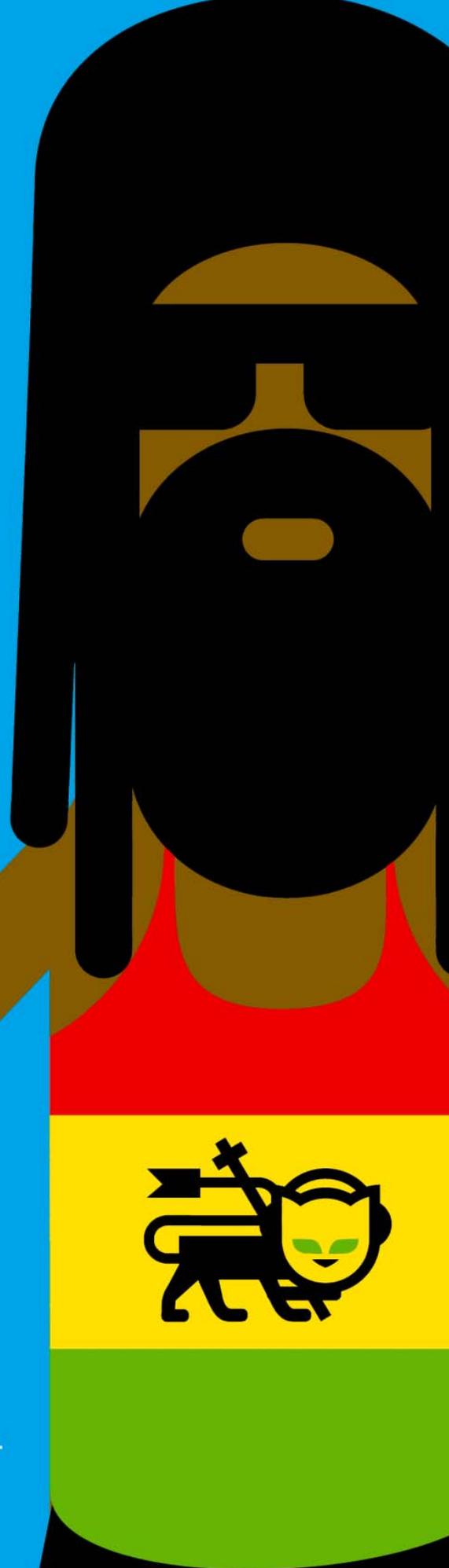
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game of the month

[COWBOYS AND VAMPIRES]

The good, the bad and the undead

The Western is criminally underrepresented in video gaming. (There are more Mary-Kate and Ashley games than decent Westerns.) *Darkwatch* (Capcom, PS2, Xbox), a supernatural Gothic gunslinger, finally gives the genre some new blood—literally. You are Jericho Cross, an 1870s train robber who unwittingly unleashes the undead on a strange, sprawling American Southwest. Infected in the incident, you become a vampire with super-human powers—uncanny strength, the ability to leap impossible distances and “blood vision,” which reveals threats and hidden items. As it turns out, the 19th century West is crawling with reanimated gunfighters, undead snipers and howling dead-girl banshees still in their rotting dance-hall dresses. You’ll fight them through moonlit graveyards and windblown canyons, using a combination of weapons, special vampiric attacks and steam-punk tech such as battle carriages and Gatling guns. Fun as hell. **★★★★½** —Chris Hudak



DUNGEON SIEGE II (Microsoft Game Studios, Windows XP) The sequel to 2001’s excellent hack-and-slash action role-playing game takes you back to the beautiful but deadly land of Aranna, this time with a deeper story, a branching quest system, real-time fighting and seemingly endless upgrade options for appearance, skills, weapons and magic. Plus, using the co-op mode, you can log on and tackle the entire single-player campaign with a friend. **★★★★**
—Marc Saltzman



THE INCREDIBLE HULK: ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION (VU Games, GameCube, PS2, Xbox) Some video games tell epic, nuanced stories, and some simply tell you to bust up the joint. We’re so very grateful this one’s in the latter camp. Marvel’s not-so-lean green fighting machine clobbers his last gaming incarnation (a movie tie-in) by eliminating the Bruce Banner component and focusing on smashing buildings, ripping cars apart and confronting gargantuan bad-dies. **★★★★** —M.S.



FLATOUT (VU Games, PC, PS2, Xbox) Catchy name, dismal game. Borrowing liberally from its noble forebears *Burnout 3*, *Need for Speed Underground* and *Gran Turismo*, this tepid racer doesn’t add much apart from a fixation with sending the driver through the windshield (an action that figures in several morbid minigames). Today’s driving games need more than flashy graphics and realistic car damage, something this monotonous motor-sport sim sadly forgets. **★**
—Adam Rosen



NCAA FOOTBALL '06 (EA Sports, PS2, Xbox) This year EA’s reliable college ball franchise brings enhanced controls for jukes, sidesteps and tackle breaking. Design a varsity protégé, score him scholarships and earn the respect of your frothing peers; they’ll fill your upgradable dorm room with fan mail. Additional highlights include new spring drills, more dynamic blow-by-blow commentary and a focus on pivotal players. Go. Fight. Win. **★★★★½**
—Scott Steinberg



pixel profile

[THE PLAYER]

McNabb knows how to play, both on and off the field

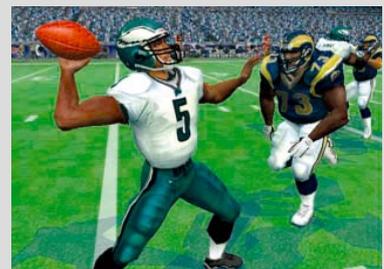
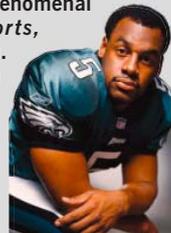
Success hasn’t gone to Philadelphia Eagles Pro Bowl quarterback Donovan McNabb’s head, but it has put that head on the cover of the phenomenal *Madden '06* (EA Sports, GameCube, PS2, Xbox).

PLAYBOY: You’re known as a fairly hard-core gamer. What systems do you use?

MCNABB: Well, I’ve got the PlayStation 2 and Xbox, of course. I’ve got the PSP for my pocket, plus an old PlayStation and an Atari 2600. I’ve even got a Commodore 64. I’ve been playing for a long time.

PLAYBOY: Among your Eagles teammates, who’s the best at *Madden*?

MCNABB: I know you want me to say I am, but I won’t. It’s probably T.O. or Brian Westbrook.



PLAYBOY: This year’s *Madden* lets you run fantasy football leagues. What do you think of fantasy football?

MCNABB: I’m amazed at how big it is. People thank me for doing well for them or tell me how many touchdowns they need out of me that week.

PLAYBOY: What do you do off-season?

MCNABB: I spend time with my family. We play a lot of video games.

—John Gaudiosi

wired

EAR FORCE AXT (\$80, turtlebeach.com) The digital-audio pioneers at Turtle Beach finally turn their attention to game consoles with this set of slamming surround headphones for the Xbox. Four separate speakers in each ear cup deliver crisp, immersive 5.1 surround sound, plus it has a built-in mike for online chatter.



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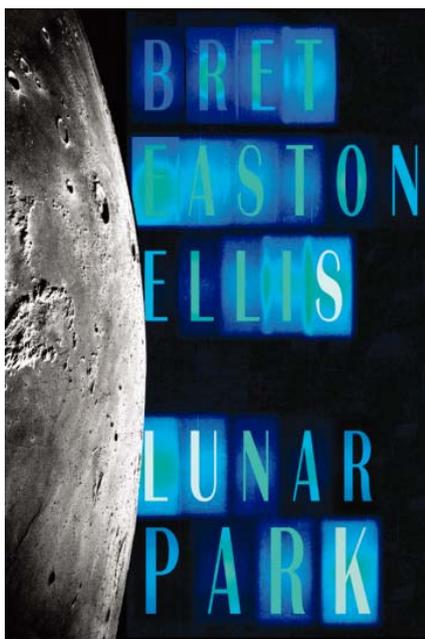


book of the month

[LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON]

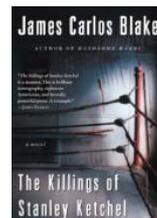
The author of *Less Than Zero* again earns high marks

Post-Reagan America had a powerful reaction to Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*. The National Organization for Women boycotted it, while Norman Mailer praised its "Dostoyevskian themes." Fourteen years later, with the publication of *Lunar Park*, everyone should agree that Ellis is a talented writer capable of describing far more than the art of chainsawing through skulls. This book begins as a faux memoir in which Ellis recounts his years of drug use (a "drug cop" follows him on book tours) and his abusive relationship with his father. But as demons wreak havoc on Ellis's fragile relationship with his wife and son, the book takes a turn toward the Gothic. The horror scenes pale in comparison with those that focus on the book's universal theme—that all men, despite their best efforts, turn into their fathers. Near the book's end, Ellis writes to himself, "*Lunar Park* will be your last novel." Let's hope that's fiction. (Knopf) ★★★½ —Patty Lambert



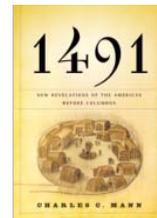
THE KILLINGS OF STANLEY KETCHEL
James Carlos Blake

The author of *Handsome Harry* once again deftly weaves real people and events throughout this novel about champion middleweight boxer Stanley Ketchel, a.k.a. the Michigan Assassin. The real Ketchel, like the fictional one, hoboed across the country and was a fearless fighter. His mistake? He tried to KO heavy-weight champ Jack Johnson but came up short. A notorious ladies' man, Ketchel was shot dead by a jealous boyfriend at the age of 24. These are the facts from which Blake makes an entertaining narrative filled with all the color and reckless excitement of America at the beginning of the 20th century. (William Morrow) ★★★ —Barbara Nellis



1491 * Charles C. Mann

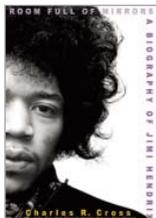
In school we were taught that Europeans arrived on the shores of the New World to find a sparsely inhabited, godforsaken wilderness. As this brilliant survey points out, our teachers were wrong. When Columbus sailed, more people lived in the Americas than in Europe. (The native population was subsequently obliterated by smallpox.) The Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán was larger than any European city. Nor was America a pristine land of primeval forest and enduring species. Native Americans elaborately managed their environments for thousands of years before 1492. Mann provides us with a compelling book that will alter our assumptions about history and place. (Knopf) ★★★ —L.F.



ROOM FULL OF MIRRORS

Charles R. Cross

Jimi Hendrix remains a compelling figure 35 years after his death, if only because no one has equaled his mastery of the guitar. Cross's biography reveals Hendrix's surprisingly brutal childhood and his unusual career. (Hyperion) ★★★ —Leopold Froehlich



TEMPLE STREAM * Bill Roorchach

Searching for the source of a river (the maps are wrong), this PLAYBOY contributor canoes and hikes through his rural town. Along the way he meets back-to-the-land types and the Maine natives who resent them. You'll be homesick for a place you've never visited. (Dial Press) ★★★ —Jessica Riddle



the erotic eye



SEX IS BLUE * Cheyco Leidmann

With his seventh book, the German photographer continues his exploration of a garish hallucinatory world defined by bizarre erotic images. The photos here are the stuff of dreams—enigmatic, lewd and disjunctive. *Sex Is Blue* raises more questions than it answers, which is to be expected. One thing is clear from the 80 color-saturated images: Leidmann's disquieting world is not a place in which we'd want to live, but it's definitely a place we'd like to visit for a week. (teNeues) ★★★ —L.F.



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Divine Inspiration

Heaven, hell and high design come together in a luxury hotel in the Eternal City

THERE IS ALWAYS great drama on the streets of Rome, but it's hard to top the spectacle you'll find inside the Aleph hotel near Via Veneto, in the city's center. Stagger in jet-lagged and you'll think you've wandered into a production of *The Divine Comedy*—because you have. Designer Adam Tihany begins his witty interpretation of Dante's classic journey into the netherworld at the door. You ascend a staircase bathed in red light and enter a scarlet lobby area called Sin. After check-in you'll drop by the Angelo (look for the fallen kind) bar, where the red stools resemble giant bee-stung lips and the cocktail list is as thick as a phone book. The downstairs spa is called Paradise, naturally. And the rooms? High-style 1940s accessories, oversize photos of *la dolce vita* on the walls—we always knew Hades would be happening. Be sure to get one of the suites with a terrace and an alfresco Jacuzzi. The rates: \$490 to \$2,400. Book at boscolohotels.com.



Navigating an Italian Wine List

- You're having pizza with a date at an outdoor cafe in Rome? Try a Chianti, named for the region in Tuscany where it's made from sangiovese grapes. Very versatile.
- The waitress is alluring and flirtatious. She recommends an amarone—a bolder, more tannic (and expensive) red made in Valpolicella, near Verona.
- Your date is staring at the waitress as if she's on the menu. "I want to try something

I've never had," she says. How about a full-bodied brunello, the queen of Tuscan reds, also made from sangiovese grapes?

- That's not what your date had in mind. She's thinking three-some. Might as well go for broke: a Barbaresco or a Barolo from Piedmont, both made from nebbiolo grapes. Dry and velvety, with a long finish.
- The three of you are basking in the afterglow. Top it all off with a slightly fizzy moscato—Italy's finest dessert wine.

About Time

This is the watch Alice would buy her boyfriend at the gift shop in Wonderland. The Gran Data from Italy's Ritmo Mondo (\$1,400, ritmomundo.com) has an oversize stainless-steel-encased face that conveys confidence, attitude and wit. (Arnold wore a Ritmo Mondo when he announced his run for governor on Jay Leno's show, and he got the job.) You're late, you're late, for a very important date? Fashionably so.





Roll Your Own

Show off your raw passion with the ultimate sushi setup

SUSHI IS ONE OF THE SEXIEST MEALS—especially when served at your place. Wooden platters (\$20) and rustic soy sauce bowls (\$16 for four) strike a chord of casual class, while natural cherry-bark chopsticks (\$6), mossy stone chopstick rests (\$3) and a soy sauce dispenser (\$8) keep things civilized. Make tea for two in the Sanguine Moon Tetsubin teapot (\$83), then serve it in kanji-inscribed teacups (\$11). With a sushi stand (\$12), you won't have to play hide the hand roll, at least until dinner is over. A final touch of Zen grace comes from sake cups (\$150 each) and a decanter (\$195) by Japanese artist Tomio Suzuki, each one a unique work of art. After a few quaffs from these beauties, you and your companion might discover some chopstick tricks Mr. Miyagi never imagined. For purchasing info see *Where and How to Buy* on page 147.



Heaven's Sake

THE AMERICAN MARKET is finally waking up to the pleasures of sake. Balance your palate with these exquisite bottles. From top: Ginga Shizuku (“Divine Droplets,” \$60) has a prominent and lively aroma full of Concord grapes and melon, with hints of rice and fruit deep into its long finish. Tentaka Kuni (“Hawk in the Heavens,” \$25) is fairly dry, but an underlying richness animates its melon and citrus accents. Mukune (“Root of Innocence,” \$40) has a mellow feel and an immense breadth that encompasses nuts, fruit and a simple sweetness.

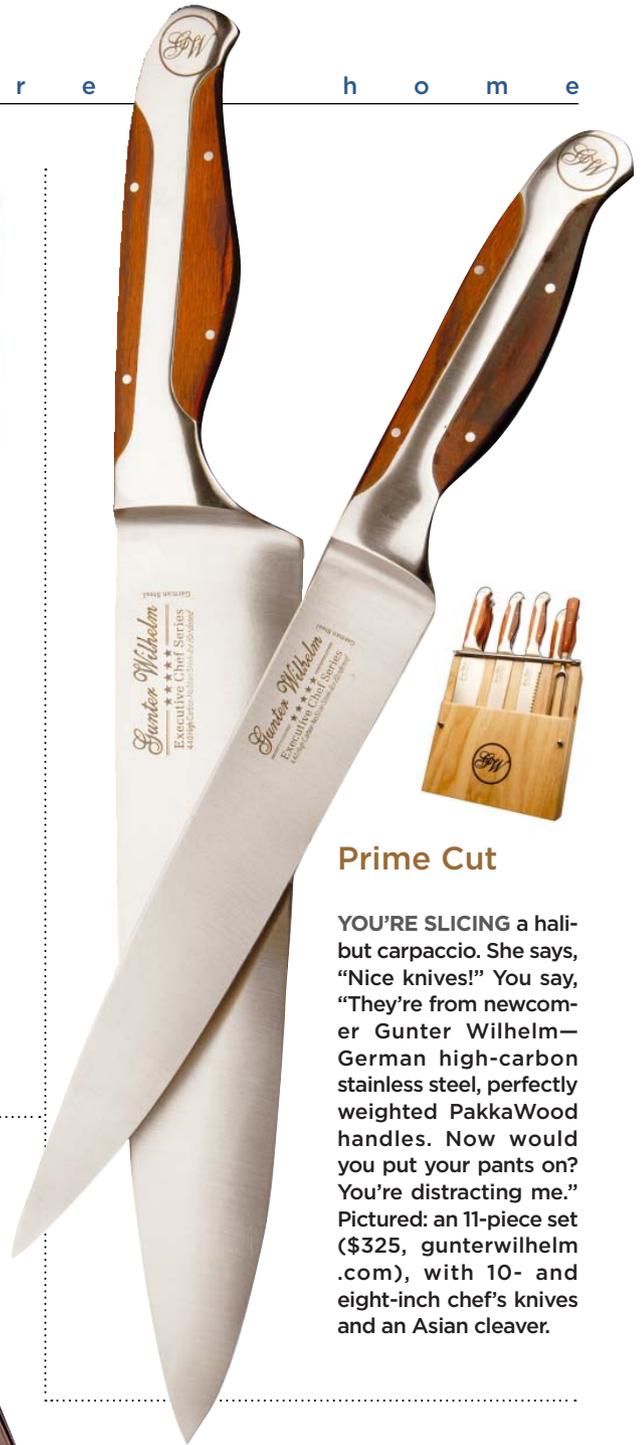
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Play Thing

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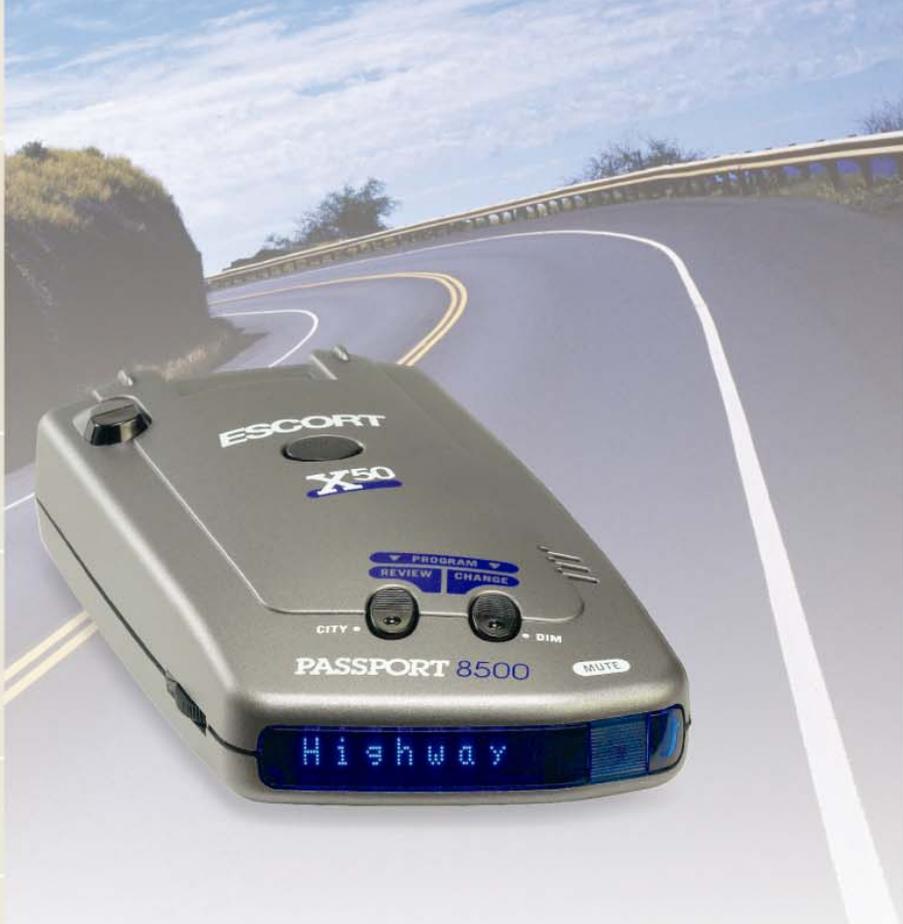
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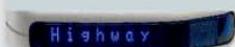
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The Playboy Advisor

Is there any method by which a man can have multiple orgasms without losing his erection?—H.K., Boston, Massachusetts

We have written in the past about a few men who are able to achieve this naturally. In one case, documented by sex researcher Beverly Whipple, a 35-year-old man had six orgasms in 14 minutes without losing his erection. One hypothesis is that he and other men produce little or no prolactin, a hormone that appears to control a man's recovery period after climax. In 2003 scientists at the University of Essen in Germany tested this by giving 10 men either synthetic prolactin or cabergoline, a drug that blocks the production of the hormone. They asked each man to masturbate while watching a porn movie. The men who received cabergoline were hornier, had stronger erections and got hard again more quickly after climaxing. While research continues, there is a natural way to improve your stamina and shorten your refractory period. Whipple, co-author of *The G Spot and Other Discoveries About Human Sexuality*, says the key is your pubococcygeus (PC) muscle, which wraps around your anus and the base of your penis. A standard exercise is to clench as if stopping the flow of urine, hold for three seconds and release. You can do sets at stoplights, during boring meetings or while watching TV; no one will be the wiser unless you grunt. The goal, Whipple says, is to build up to about 150 reps a day. She suggests men track their progress by placing a tissue on their erection and lifting their penis up and down. Eventually you should be able to lift a hand towel, then a bath towel. Women can test their strength by inserting two fingers into their vagina, spreading them into a V and trying to close them by clenching. In studies, people with stronger PC muscles report more control, sensitivity and desire, as well as stronger orgasms. Men also become better at delaying orgasm or even stopping ejaculation, allowing them to have "dry" climaxes and keep going.

I left a case of red wine in my car overnight. The temperature dipped into the mid-20s, and the bottles were cold but not frozen. Is the wine ruined?—I.G., Bethesda, Maryland

It should be fine. The real danger to wine is extreme heat. Even when wine does freeze (which, because of its alcohol content, doesn't typically happen until it drops to about 15 degrees), the more immediate concern is that the cork will be forced out or the bottle will shatter. One critic describes the benefits of putting wine into a "sweet sleep," insisting that it tastes better after being thawed and shaken vigorously to dissolve the solids. To most oenophiles, that doesn't sound like a good way to start a party. "You hear stories about someone discovering a cache of wine in a Scottish castle where it's been stored for 100 years at 33 degrees, which puts the maturation pro-



cess in slow motion," says Willie Glückstern, who owns *Wines for Food* in New York City. "But freezing? Why? I'd think twice about even putting some foods under that stress." The ideal storage temperature is said to be 55 degrees, with a serving temperature for reds about 10 degrees higher. (This can be achieved by placing a room-temperature bottle in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.) Many people store wines close to room temperature out of necessity, which is fine as long as it doesn't exceed 70 degrees and remains consistent. For wines kept at room temperature, it's also best to drink reds within about 10 years and whites within about two.

Two years ago my wife told me she is bisexual. She arranged several threesomes, which I loved. Ten months ago she met our current girlfriend, and the three of us are now planning a commitment ceremony. The problem is, my wife has changed. For 14 years I thought she was straight; now I would say she is 75 percent gay and 25 percent straight. She and our girlfriend are inseparable; they are always holding hands and kissing. I love my wife but have a feeling she would choose our girlfriend over me. Do I have a reason to feel this way, or am I being petty?—A.J., Cincinnati, Ohio

This is a common issue among newly polyamorous couples. Your wife and girlfriend are enjoying the giddiness of a new romance. That will subside. The more important question is, where will the three of you be in five years? It is possible to maintain a triad (or even a quad) for decades, but only if each partner understands that no two are greater than the whole. For that reason you should not expect that you and your wife will be the primary relationship, with your girlfriend orbit-

ing. They should also not expect you to orbit them. It may be too soon, after 10 months of dating, for any of you to commit. Many people in alternative relationships struggle with jealousy; to combat it they rely on the wisdom of those who have gone before. The poly community has support groups in most states and a national magazine called *Loving More* (lovemore.com).

I'm planning a Texas Hold 'Em party, and I'm not sure when and at what rate to raise the blinds. What do you suggest?—P.Z., West Seneca, New York

Hosts typically raise the blinds by some percentage (e.g., 25, 50, 100) every 30 or 60 minutes. Make sure everyone knows the schedule before play begins. How often and how much depends on whether you've invited janitors or lawyers; you want everyone to be comfortable with but challenged by the limits. We all love watching the cowboys check their hands on ESPN2, but have you considered hosting a game that involves actual card play, such as *Omaha Hi-Lo* or *Seven-Card Stud*? They call it *Hold 'Em* for a reason—you spend a lot of time doing nothing.

This girl I like broke up with her boyfriend of nine months. I asked her to the movies and got a maybe. What does that mean?—J.H., Brunswick, Maine

It means maybe not.

I have been dating a girl for two months. Early in the relationship she told me she has HPV-16, one of the types linked to cervical cancer. We haven't had sex, and I don't know if I'm willing to get this virus just to be with her. Am I being an asshole? What are my chances of getting a vaccination?—J.J., Mobile, Alabama

How long can you hold out? Vaccines that prevent specific types of HPV, including HPV-16, could be available as early as next year, although their efficacy in men is still being tested. They're also most effective on virgins; most sexually active adults have already been infected with human papillomavirus but are unaware of it because they've never had warts. Your girlfriend did the right thing by telling you; the virus spreads through skin contact and can be transmitted even if a person doesn't have symptoms. That makes a condom less effective than it is against STDs carried in bodily fluids, although it's still better than nothing. For most people HPV is not cause enough to abandon a relationship—if you want out for other reasons, don't blame the virus. Besides warts, which can be treated or removed, the primary risk is that HPV-16 and about a dozen other strains have been linked to cervical and penile cancer. Both are rare in North America, the latter in part because many men here are circumcised, which reduces the risk to nearly zero. But that's not true of many other places in the

PLAYBOY PICKS

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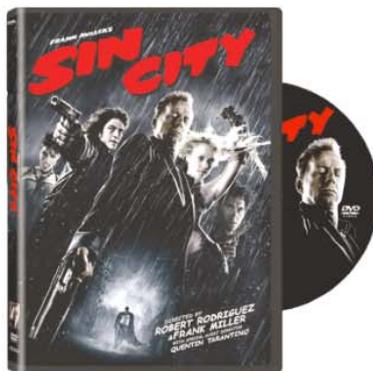
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world, where these cancers are more prevalent. That's why a vaccine is so important. Unbelievably, some conservative religious groups oppose the development of HPV vaccines, saying they will encourage teenagers to have sex before marriage.

My boyfriend woke up in the middle of the night because he was stressed about his job. I listened to him and gave him a massage, and he fell back to sleep. Do you know of any creative ways in which partners of high-profile individuals throughout history have helped their mates deal with stress?—J.J., Austin, Texas
One comes to mind.

In May a reader wrote because he didn't like wearing a wedding band and his wife objected. You suggested he wear a ring as a "small sacrifice" for his marriage. That doesn't sound like much of a compromise to me. When my wife and I got engaged, I let her know that I don't wear jewelry. She insisted only that I wear one for the ceremony. Maybe I just have a cool wife, or maybe that reader's wife needs to unwind a little.—S.T., Austin, Texas

You didn't need to compromise, because your wife agreed. More comments....

The reader should visit a jeweler, as you suggested, but instead of getting a new ring, he should buy a chain and put his band on it, à la Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*. For symbolic reasons, it should not have a clasp. He should also tell his wife, "It's closer to my heart this way." It worked for me. I have never worn jewelry, not even a watch, but I was surprised at how little the chain distracted me after a few days.—T.S., Dayton, Ohio

That's a good compromise as long as your wife doesn't attach a leash. Or, depending on your kink threshold, maybe that works too.

Why not call the situation what it is? The reader's wife, like most wives (and husbands), wants to mark her territory. It may not be the prettiest side of human nature, but it is what it is.—E.Q., Grand Rapids, Michigan

Let's say that's true. Now what?

My husband has never worn his ring. He is an electrician, and we both feel it's safer that he doesn't. If the reader's wife is so uncomfortable with his not wearing a band, maybe he should get a ring tattoo.—A.G., Wakefield, Massachusetts

That certainly makes it more difficult to slip into your pocket. Thanks to all for writing.

For her 10th wedding anniversary my wife's best friend got a "pass" from her husband to do anything or anyone she wanted for a week, as long as it happened far away from home and he didn't learn any details. She immediately booked a beach trip and called my wife to invite her along. That was fine with me. As long as my wife returns with videos and pho-

tos, I will forgive her anything. The idea turned me on even more after my wife mentioned that a 40-year-old woman will do things to a 20-year-old guy that a 20-year-old girl can't imagine. How can two husbands who would allow such adventures be so different? When I mentioned to him that the most erotic thing I had ever seen was my wife having sex with another guy, he looked as if he might cry.—M.E., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

He's making a sacrifice, and you're making an investment. We'd bet this wasn't his idea, which makes us wary of endorsing it. Guys who get off watching their wife get fucked usually have a lot of confidence about whom she'll end up with at the end of the night or the week. You benefit twofold here because both women will want to share details, and you'll be the only one listening.

Should I launder or dry-clean my dress shirts?—C.F., Toronto, Ontario

We prefer to launder with light starch and have the shirts hand-pressed and placed on hangers. It's better at removing ring around the collar and generally helps the shirts last longer. They may last even longer without starch, but that's how we like it done. Dry cleaning results in less shrinkage but leaves the fabric too stiff for our taste.

I've heard that if you buy a BMW you can arrange to pick it up at the factory in Germany and test-drive it on the autobahn before you bring it home. Is that true?—N.M., Denver, Colorado

Yes, although you're setting yourself up for major disappointment when you get the vehicle back to 55 mph land. Five European automakers offer factory packages—BMW (Munich), Mercedes (Sindelfingen) and Porsche (Stuttgart or Leipzig) in Germany, and Volvo (Göteborg) and Saab (Trollhattan) in Sweden. With the exception of Porsche, which charges at least \$1,150 for the privilege, the companies discount seven to nine percent off U.S. sticker prices. At a minimum the packages include duties and shipping costs; some also offer perks such as airline tickets, hotel stays and short-term insurance. You can tour Europe with your purchase for up to six months before a hefty sales tax kicks in (it's 16 percent in Germany). Last year about 6,000 people bought cars this way. Everything is arranged months in advance through stateside dealers because each vehicle must be built to meet U.S. pollution-control and safety standards. That's the catch if you attempt to buy and ship a car on your own. Making it street legal here can cost thousands of dollars. A few models aren't available for pickup; BMW's Z4 and X5, for example, are made in South Carolina.

I have been dating a woman for a few months and am satisfied except for one area of concern. She can reach orgasm only if I leave the room. When I asked her to explain, she said she's embarrassed by her technique. How can I build her confidence so we can share

her orgasms? Do you think she's this way because I don't turn her on?—C.P., Boston, Massachusetts

Doubtful. Do you have any clue how she brings herself to orgasm? Through masturbation she has probably trained herself to climax only in a specific position. For instance, she may have to lie on her stomach with a pillow under her left elbow and her big toes touching. Or perhaps she has trouble reaching climax and worries that you will believe it's your fault. Whatever the situation, your girlfriend has to understand that no man will be satisfied as her fluffer. She needs to let you stay so you can work on this challenge together. If she's insistent that you wait outside, the relationship is also going to make an early exit.

A friend has been giving me a hard time about my new gas grill. He's convinced it's my plebeian attempt to be a grill. To hear him talk of charcoal you'd think he was indulging in foreplay. "The longer, the sweeter," he says. But I grill almost daily, at times for breakfast, lunch and dinner. (Pancakes, eggs and pizza are some of my favorite grilled meals.) I enjoy it as much as he does, but I do it more quickly and more often. In the end I think a juicy, satisfying sirloin is more a matter of technique. What does the Advisor say?—S.P., Kirchentumbach, Germany

The Advisor says, "Will you two shut up and flip our steak?" You each have what you need. Although there is no question that meat grilled over charcoal tastes better, you can't beat the convenience of gas. Don't give up on charcoal; a chimney starter cuts down on the prep time considerably while eliminating the need for lighter fluid. And we prefer hardwood charcoal, which burns faster and with greater intensity. For some reason it's a great comfort to tend that dancing flame.

I had a blind date that went so well, we ended up having sex. But when I went down on her, I was bothered to discover that she had perfumed her pubic area. This woman has many of the qualities I look for in a potential spouse, but the fact that she was ready to go to bed with a stranger has me wondering. Am I being a prude, or do I have a legitimate concern?—R.H., Prunedale, California

We love a woman who is prepared for any circumstance, although who's to say she doesn't perfume herself all the time? Regardless, you were no longer a stranger when she went to bed with you.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereo 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 on these pages each month. Write the Playboy Advisor, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or send e-mail by visiting our website at playboyadvisor.com.



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THE PLAYBOY FORUM

BACK TO THE 1930s?

MAYBE THE LABOR MOVEMENT ISN'T DEAD AFTER ALL

BY ISHMAEL REED

Shortly after I began teaching at San Jose State University, in January, I started to receive e-mails from representatives of the International Union of Hotel Workers. They requested that I cancel a speech I'd been scheduled to make at a California Association of Teachers of English convention. The union was boycotting the Westin Santa Clara, which is owned by Starwood, a multinational corporation. They charged the Westin with forcing its San Francisco and Los Angeles workers to pay more for health care, take on heavier workloads and accept low wages. Starwood hotels in Los Angeles were accused of intimidating and harassing workers.

The e-mails were followed by a visit to my campus office from a diminutive white woman. I told her I was busy and didn't have time to talk.

The following week she came to my class and passed out fliers that encouraged my students to urge me to withdraw from my engagement. "Other keynote speakers have decided to take a stand for justice and not enter the hotel," the flier read. "Why won't Professor Reed do the same?"

I was annoyed. The pressure continued when the woman came to my office accompanied by a female pastor. We had words, which must have startled those within hearing range. I told the two women I didn't like their tactics and felt as though I were being harassed. Finally, when I said I was going to use the honorarium from the speaking engagement to pay some of the female Nigerian writers whose anthology I was going to publish, we agreed on a compromise. I would make a statement in support of the union before making my presentation.

Even though the Hospital Workers Union had helped me get a job in New York that supported my writing when I was young, my view of unions soured during the 1960s when white workers began to drift toward the candidacy of George Wallace.

Still, I remained interested. Four of the books I had chosen for a San Jose State course deal with labor and unions: Chester Himes's *Lone Crusade*, William Kennedy's *Ironweed*, Jack Conroy's *The Disinherited* and Frank Chin's *Donald Duk*, which covers an 1867 strike waged by Chinese railroad work-



ers. Moreover, I was taking the Greyhound bus from Oakland to San Jose each week. To go Greyhound is to be thrust into the America of the 1930s. But instead of Kennedy's white hoboes, Steinbeck's dust bowl refugees or Conroy's coal miners—whose position in society Conroy likened to that of mules—the passengers are Mexican families (who carry their belongings in cardboard boxes) and poor black people (whose meals for the day are obtained from company vending machines). Also on board are representatives of the white underclass.

The day came for me to speak. I planned to spend only a few seconds acknowledging the union's boycott. But I found myself ruminating about what the fate of my parents' generation would have been without unions. The books, the boycott, my observations about Greyhound's America and

my family's history all seemed to come together during remarks that went on longer than I had planned.

My stepfather worked for Chevrolet for 30 years. His widow, my mother, receives a pension and health benefits from General Motors, which paid for three expensive heart surgeries. I'd forgotten my mother was a former hotel worker who, in 1942, led a work slowdown of housekeepers over unfair labor practices. She turned 88 this June and has published her memoirs, which she began at the age of 74. GM is the largest health provider in the country as a result of struggles waged by the United Auto Workers Union, one of the first unions to organize African American workers.

She was spared the fate of Larry Donovan's mother, who had to take in laundry to support her children after the accidental death of her husband. Donovan, the lead character in *The Disinherited*, says, "I never found one of those Western Union canned greetings that fitted my mother—I never saw one that I could send her in remembrance of the nights she sweated over the irons or the days she spent bent over the steaming washtub." In those days there were no survivor benefits, unemployment insurance, welfare or Social Security. The elderly had to work forever. Some committed suicide, their bodies found near the railroad tracks. The women were old at 30. Lacking safety codes on the job, men were frequently maimed in industrial accidents. Lacking

disability insurance, they had to work as best they could with whatever body parts remained. The setting for Conroy's *The Disinherited* is the United States from the period preceding World War I until the Depression. In *Ironweed*, set in 1938, Kennedy's characters live hand to mouth. Both novels show the state of white poverty before the social programs ushered in during the Roosevelt era.

When Conroy lost his power struggle with the New York aesthetes, the era of the worker writer ended. According to writer Douglas Wixson such proletarian writing was replaced by work characterized by "the eternal verities, textual difficulty and personal confession." In Wixson's opinion, that work was "safe from FBI scrutiny."

This is the kind of writing that now dominates college curricula, no matter what right-wing propagandists assert about tenured radicals controlling college life. All one has to do is inspect the courses listed in the catalogs of any 10 American colleges or universities selected at random to discover that Eurocentrism still reigns.

So where would the young men who showed up at a town meeting on February 22 shouting "Social Security must go" find out about the sacrifices made by men and women like Lee Gordon, the union organizer in Himes's *Lonely Crusade*, who in the face of police violence picks up the fallen union banner? Or Kennedy's Francis Phelan, whose life is ruined after he accidentally kills a strikebreaker during an Albany trolley-car strike? They certainly couldn't turn to cable television, which carries a number of business shows but not one devoted to labor. Or to the newspapers, which don't assign reporters to cover the labor beat. How many of our current students have ever heard of Walter Reuther, who as strike leader for the UAW during the 1930s survived two assassination attempts? Indeed, according to professors Philip Taft and Philip Ross, "The United States has had the bloodiest and most violent labor history of any industrial nation in the world." Both Conroy's and Himes's novels were the subjects of hostile, ideologically driven reviews when they were published but have managed to hobble along through small-press reprints.

Conroy might have the last word. The robber barons and the politicians whom they lease seemed shocked by the initial backlash to their efforts to privatize Social Security. That's because they go first-class and not Greyhound. In the introduction to the 1991 edition of *The Disinherited*, in which Conroy compares Ronald Reagan to Herbert Hoover, he asks, "Is it possible that some of those who now lose their pride and stoop low may rise up angrily?"

WILL STRIP FOR BENEFITS

DANCERS FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO BE EMPLOYED

By Rachel Shteir

If ever there were an American city where strippers would rank as honorary Wobblies, it would be San Francisco. It has the only worker-owned peep show in the country (the Lusty Lady), and the local chapter of the Service Employees International Union welcomes sex workers as members. Hundreds of strippers work in the Bay Area, and the industry is respectable enough that the tourism bureau lists adult attractions in one of its pamphlets. Five of the local clubs are topless and 12 offer full nudity, but all are involved in a long-standing dispute about the working status of dancers.

In 1993 about 30 dancers from the Market Street Cinema met to discuss working conditions. When the club ignored their concerns, the women formed the Exotic Dancers Alliance and complained to the city fire department and state agencies such as the Division of Occupational Safety and Health, the Department of Fair Employment and Housing and the Labor Commission. One of their chief gripes was that clubs classified them as independent contractors (which meant the owners could avoid paying salaries, benefits and payroll taxes) but controlled them as if they were employees.

The Labor Commission agreed and began to fine the club owners. But the vagaries of state employment law and a lack of strict enforcement led to a game of cat and mouse. Rather than hire the dancers, most clubs asked the women to sign contracts, then imposed "stage fees" of \$100 to \$500 a night on any woman who wanted to work. Dancers considered this an illegal seizure of their tips. Many of the women also claim that the fees forced them to

prostitute themselves to earn a living and that some clubs encourage this illegal act by installing private booths. "Nothing takes the gentleman out of a gentleman's club like the knowledge that you can get a blow job for \$40," says dancer Datura Larson.

Larson and others believe the battle has dragged on for years because of relations between city hall and club owners. Former mayor Willie Brown and former district attorney Terrence

Hallinan have represented clubs, which all seem to have cash to burn, while state investigators operate on a shoestring. Even before recent budget cuts, the Labor Commission says, its investigation had been stymied by a lack of witnesses (dancers fear being blacklisted if they file complaints) and the labyrinth of shadow partners and shell corporations that often makes it difficult to figure out who should pay the fines.

The women won a small victory last year when Kamala Harris, the city's first female district attorney, refused to prosecute dancers arrested for prostitution in raids.

Instead she said she wanted reforms that would ensure their safety. After hearing testimony from dancers who said customers had sexually harassed or assaulted them, the city's Commission on the Status of Women recommended the city council ban both stage fees and private booths.

Club owners say that the concern is overblown, that the women are well paid and well treated and that prostitution does not occur on their watch. "We have extensive security systems and two-way radios," says Craig, a manager at the Crazy Horse, where the dancers are employees. "There's



not much anyone can do in the booths. Plus, the customers like them. It enables an ordinary guy to connect with a beautiful entertainer, to tell her about his problems.”

Owners also like booths because they are highly profitable in what is estimated to be a \$200 million industry in the San Francisco area. Joe Carouba, president of the management firm that staffs and operates a number of San Francisco clubs for the Dejà Vu chain of Lansing, Michigan, says private dances account for 50 percent of revenue. The dancers he oversees give the club the fees they earn for the first five dances of their shift, then split the remainder 50-50. There are no stage fees, and the women keep all their tips. Brad Shafer, an attorney for Dejà Vu, compares the arrangement to that between a hairdresser and a salon; the worker contributes to the expenses incurred by the business. In this case, he says, those costs include advertising and security.

Some dancers prefer this sort of arrangement because it allows them to be paid in cash. In fact, club owners cite this as a defense. In this view, dancers will earn less if clubs are forced to withhold taxes. But being on salary has practical benefits,

such as unemployment payments and worker’s comp for injuries. Employees must receive regular rest and meal breaks and be paid at least minimum wage and overtime. They can also file antidiscrimination and retaliation complaints with the state.

Dave Manack, associate publisher of the trade magazine *Exotic Dancer*, says that however the women are paid, the owner of a strip club has to be a real dolt not to become a millionaire. The dancers usually do well too. He estimates that a house dancer in San Francisco can make up to \$1,500 a night, which translates to \$312,000 a year, working four nights a week. Nancy Banks, founder of an advocacy group she says represents 100 strippers who prefer not to work as employees, says dancers can earn big money without doing anything illegal. She claims to make \$400,000 a year dancing without prostitution (other dancers scoff at this) and declares that women who take home less than six figures just need to work harder.

“People want to believe strippers are victims,” says Carouba. “It’s just hard for them to believe men give women all that money simply for being gorgeous.”



Backstage at Delilah’s in Philly, one of the nation’s few clubs run by women.

MARGINALIA



FROM A LIST of 57 ministries reported to the IRS by Americans United for Separation of Church and State. IRS rules prohibit nonprofits from endorsing candidates: (1) Pastor of the Church of the Living Water in Olympia, Washington says a GOP candidate for Congress is “a prophet to our nation.” (2) Pastor at United Baptist Missionary Convention in Baltimore writes the governor offering political support in exchange for social-services funding. (3) Churches in seven states distribute Christian Coalition voter guides. (4) Pastor of the Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church in New York says of Al Gore from the pulpit, “I don’t do endorsements, but I will say this man should be the next president.” (5) Pastor of the Third New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit tells congregation not to vote for candidate whose “name rhymes with *hush*.” (6) Foundation for Human Understanding radio show advises listeners that Gore will betray nation to the Chinese. (7) Bishop in Colorado Springs orders Catholics not to vote for pro-choice candidates. (8) Pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Waterford, Michigan endorses his son for school board on church letterhead. (9) Jerry Falwell Ministries sends e-mail endorsing George W. Bush. (10) Pastor of the Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Miami says God ordained John Kerry to run. (11) Pastor of Mount Airy Church of God in Christ in Philadelphia says, “I can’t tell you who to vote for, but my mama told me last week, ‘Stay out of the bushes.’” (12) Bride of Christ Church in Bellwood, Pennsylvania offers to drive voters to polls “in support of President Bush.” (13) Pastor at East Waynesville Baptist Church in North Carolina expels nine parishioners who admit to voting for Kerry. The IRS says it is investigating 30 churches, but Americans United knows of only one that has had its tax-exempt status revoked, for buying a full-page ad in *USA Today* encouraging people not to vote for Bill Clinton.



FROM A LIST of items seized by airport security and auctioned online by the Transportation Security Administration, with winning bids: eight belt-clip screw-driver kits, \$4.95; seven bullet key chains, \$5.24; one sterling silver Tiffany pocket-knife, \$28.01; 50 pounds of utensils, \$42; 40 pounds of nail clippers, \$46.10; 20 padlocks with keys, \$46.97; 50 pounds of cuticle scissors, \$51.59; 50 pounds of steel scissors, \$51.78; 20 pounds of letter openers, \$53; 17 pounds (continued on page 55)



T H E

MYTH:

DEBUNKER

DRUG DOGS DON'T LIE

REALITY: Poorly trained dogs will give false alerts to receive treats, says Lawrence Myers, a professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Auburn University, who has studied detector dogs since 1982. They can also err as often as 40 percent of the time, although handlers may ignore or downplay mistakes. If no illegal narcotics are found, the animals must have detected a lingering odor, they say, or been influenced by the excitement of the moment or an inadvertent leash tug. Regardless of whether the dog actually smells drugs, an alert gives officers legal justification to search without a warrant. That’s especially important after this year’s U.S. Supreme Court ruling that police officers can legally have a dog sniff every vehicle they stop and perhaps even parked cars or those at stoplights. (Private homes and pedestrians

could also be fair game.) Tampa defense attorney Rex Curry describes the way traffic stops work: Police pull over a motorist for a violation. For whatever reason,



they suspect he has drugs. (In the case the Supreme Court heard, police said the well-dressed Hispanic defendant had seemed nervous and had air freshener in his car.) The driver refuses to

allow police to search, which means the officers need probable cause, i.e. more evidence than a hunch, to proceed. Enter the drug dog. If its handler says the animal alerted, officers have the excuse they need. When this happens defense attorneys are quick to note the lack of a testing standard and will challenge the dog’s accuracy. In one of Curry’s cases a federal court threw out a conviction because the dog’s five-week training required only a 70 percent success rate to pass. Although police talk about how dogs love to fight crime, “dogs play the game because they are searching for approval, not drugs,” says Curry. “They’re natural libertarians—without constant retraining they lose interest. Let’s return them to protecting people from violence and theft, which is the only proper purpose of law enforcement anyway.”

READER RESPONSE

ON PAIN OF DEATH

In "The Last Days of Lethal Injection" (June) Dan Zegart says Eddie Harper, who died by lethal injection for murdering his parents to collect \$86,541 in insurance money, may have felt pain when he was killed. That may be true,



The death chamber in Huntsville, Texas.

but I'm sure his parents would have preferred an injection over being shot to death in their bed.

Jeff Boling
Cincinnati, Ohio

Earlier this year we published a study in *The Lancet* that examines this issue from the perspective of medical practitioners. We found four problems to refute the idea that execution by lethal injection is humane. First, states refuse to share technical details of how the procedures are done. Second, their executioners have no training in anesthesia. Third, there is no monitoring of consciousness and sensation, which means states cannot tell if the condemned is aware. Fourth, there is no evaluation after the fact to prevent suffering in future executions. Finally, we found that postmortem blood thiopental levels in 43 of 49 executions were inconsistent with a surgical plane of anesthesia and that 21 were consistent with awareness. These results suggest that current protocols pose a substantial risk of profound pain and suffering, contrary to the constitutional prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.

Dr. Leonidas Koniaris
University of Miami
Miami, Florida

This letter was also signed by Jon Sheldon, Teresa Zimmers and Dr. David Lubarsky.

As an anesthesiologist I find it impossible to believe anyone would remain

conscious after receiving a rapid injection of two grams of sodium thiopental, which is four times the usual dose for a 225-pound man. If you support capital punishment, the solution is to adjust the dose or add another drug. Most of us hope that someday we will die quietly in our sleep. Except for the trial, appeals, last meal, long walk and needle in the arm, that's the death of the condemned receive.

Dr. Dean Berkus
Beverly Hills, California

If you want to start a bleeding-hearts campaign, why not pick a cause worth fighting for, such as AIDS or poverty?

Toby Speechley
Manhattan Beach, California

AN AIRMAN'S CONCERNS

I serve in the U.S. Air Force and have been told by my commanding officer that I must attend a National Prayer Luncheon at my base. Can I or any nonreligious member of the military be compelled to do this? When I expressed my concern my commanding officer said, "Just go. It's a free meal." I plan to attend only because my career will be jeopardized if I don't.

Name and location withheld

Your CO should know better, but he or she may see a difference between requiring attendance (which may be lawful) and requiring participation (which is not).

DNA DRAGNET

Since the publication of your article on police attempts to coerce every adult male in Truro, Massachusetts to give a "voluntary" DNA sample as part of a murder



Police arrested Christopher McCowen, 33.

investigation ("An End to Innocence," June), authorities have charged the victim's trash collector with the killing. He was linked to the crime not by the drag-

net but by a DNA sample collected from all regular visitors to the victim's home. The arrest shows that focused investigations, not indiscriminate DNA sweeps of innocent citizens, remain the basis of effective police work. It also highlights the importance of not overwhelming crime labs with wasteful tests.

Carol Rose
ACLU Foundation of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts

YOUR BRAIN ON PORN

In the March *Forum* you note that anti-porn activists believe sexual images can cause brain damage. I have struggled with an addiction to porn that was in many ways like being addicted to drugs.



Your reward circuitry is now activated.

In fact, a study at Massachusetts General Hospital found that men who are shown photos of attractive women have the same brain response that addicts have to drugs or hungry people have to food. If men have such a powerful response to attractive women, imagine the response they have when viewing these women engaged in explicit acts. Add to that the psychological response of an orgasm (which any man would choose over drugs) and you have the makings of a powerful addiction.

Name withheld
Tampa, Florida

You can believe what you like, but there's no scientific evidence that porn addiction exists. The study you cite, from 2001, found that photos of pretty women activated the same "reward circuitry" of the straight male brain affected by food, drugs and money. It also found that, given the choice, men will look at beautiful female faces longer than average or ugly ones. We're all doomed.

E-mail: forum@playboy.com. **Or write:** 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019.

NEWSFRONT

**Illegal Love**

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA—Police dispatcher Deborah Hobbs (pictured) says her boss, the county sheriff, gave her an ultimatum: Marry her live-in boyfriend, move out, or be fired. It's illegal for unwed couples to cohabit in North Carolina and six other states. Hobbs quit, then asked a state court to invalidate the statute, which dates to 1805. North Carolina may have a tough time playing defense in light of a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned all remaining state bans on consensual sex between adults. That decision prompted the Virginia Supreme Court this year to strike down a law there that criminalized sex between singles. The case involved a woman who sued her ex for \$5 million for allegedly giving her herpes. A judge had dismissed the action, ruling that the woman could not sue for damages from an illegal act.

The Sanctity of Politics

HOUSTON—About the same time religious conservatives were protesting court decisions that allowed Terri Schiavo's husband to end her life, two city hospitals applied a 1999 Texas law that allows them to stop treatment 10 days after notifying the family of their intent. One infant with advanced leukemia died five days before she was to stop receiving care, and the family of a 68-year-old man in a vegetative state found a nursing home that would accept him. A second infant, who suffered from a fatal form of dwarfism, died after officials at Texas Children's Hospital pulled the plug against the wishes of his parents. No congressional subpoenas arrived, no fundamentalists appeared on TV to defend the culture of life, and no protesters chanted outside—perhaps because the law had been signed by then-governor George W. Bush.

Arming Terrorists

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A GAO investigation for Congress found that state and FBI officials could not prevent 35 of 44 weapon purchases by people on the FBI's terrorist watch list during a five-month period in early 2004. The report notes that under current law "membership in a terrorist organization does not prohibit a person from owning a gun" and that the applicants had no felony convictions, visa violations or other factors that would disqualify them.

Teaching the Bible

ODESSA, TEXAS—As supporters prayed and sang hymns outside, the Ector County school board voted 6-0 to add an elective high school course

in which the only textbook is the Bible. A month earlier, a lawyer from a religious-right group, the National Council on Bible Curriculum in Public Schools, had explained to the board how it could add a course called "The Bible in History and Literature" without violating a 1963 Supreme Court decision that bars public schools from preaching to students. The council boasts that 1,100 high schools in 35 states offer its yearlong class, which critics call a thinly veiled attempt at Christian indoctrination. The Protestant, Catholic and Jewish educators at the Bible Literacy Project (bibleliteracy.org) offer a more rigorous and balanced curriculum and this fall will publish a textbook on the subject. English teachers generally agree that students need an academic knowledge of the good book because of the many biblical allusions in U.S. and English literature.

I Know Where You Live

ORLANDO—A woman who wrote a letter to the editor of a local newspaper criticizing police use of Tasers and calling the sheriff fat received an unpleasant surprise in the mail—a letter from the sheriff accusing her of libel. He had used the state driver's license database to track her down. His office insists he did not violate state and federal privacy laws, because he was responding to a concerned citizen. The woman says she wrote in response to a report that, in order to obtain a urine sample, a deputy had zapped a suspect handcuffed to a hospital bed.

MARGINALIA

(continued from page 53)

of tweezers, \$61.02; one purple sombrero, \$67.22; 50 pounds of tools, \$91; 23 pounds of lighters, \$102.50; 50 pounds of corkscrews, \$128.50; 40 pounds of pocketknives, \$218.50. To view current auctions, search eBay for the keyword *NTSA*.

FROM A COLLECTION of 360 government photos released in April that show U.S. casualties being returned from Iraq and Afghanistan. This image, which was censored by the Pentagon, shows an honor guard carrying a casket off a military transport plane:



FROM A LETTER written by an inmate in Oregon to George Bush two weeks after the 9/11 attacks: "President Goerge W Bush you think cause you go over There and Blow Them up that The killing will Stop in you Dream Never mind that this is only the Beging of the Badass war They have more Posion gas Then you know. ha ha. You Will Die too George W Bush real Soon They Promissed That you would Long Live Bin Laden." This past April a federal court overturned his 18-month sentence for threatening the president, calling the letter "political hyperbole" protected by the First Amendment.

FROM THE BOOK *Sex, Men and God: A Godly Man's Road Map to Sexual Success*, by Douglas Weiss: "Here are several exercises to help men stay free from lust. (1) When a person becomes an object of your lust, turn her back into a person by giving her a relational context to God and others in prayer. Here is a sample: 'I pray that her husband or future husband will be a man of God. I pray that her children or future children will serve you all their days. I pray that you would encourage her parents and bless their daughter.' How many women do you think the enemy is going to present if all you do is pray for them? (2) Keep your eyes above her neck. If you still lust gazing into her eyes, avoid her eyes as well. (3) Don't look at a woman longer than three seconds. Living in the computer age, men can scan a woman faster than that. Regardless, keep your gaze short. (4) Each time you lust, put a mark on your 'lust log,' which is simply a piece of paper you carry in your pocket. Check in daily for 100 days with your accountability partner. Some competitive friends make the man with the highest score pay for lunch. You'll be amazed at how quickly you stop lust-ing when there is free food on the line!"



LABOR PAINS

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF BAD BEHAVIOR AT WORK?

SICK AND TIRED

Richard Shick, who worked for the Illinois public aid agency, suffered from hearing loss, poor vision, carpal tunnel syndrome, bad teeth, obesity, sleep apnea and an intestinal disorder. When his supervisor appeared unsympathetic to his needs for daily naps and frequent bathroom breaks, Shick met with federal officials to complain. On his way home he stopped by a convenience store and, using a sawed-off shotgun, robbed it of \$200. Following his arrest, the agency fired him. Shick sued.

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Discrimination, according to a jury, which awarded Shick \$5 million after hearing testimony that he suffered from a “dissociative disorder” caused by his supervisor’s treatment. The judge tacked on \$303,830 for lost wages, but an appeals court ruled that since Shick would be spending the next 10 years in prison, he couldn’t expect that he would have earned that.

ARE YOU GAY?

A postal worker’s colleagues teased him mercilessly for being effeminate. He alleges they taped pictures of Richard Simmons to his station, asked him if he planned to march in a gay parade, asked if he had AIDS and called him a “sword swallower.”

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Discrimination, according to a federal court, which ruled that men can harass other men by holding them to “stereotyped expectations of masculinity.” Many of the 15 percent of sexual harassment cases filed with federal officials by men involve straight guys who are mocked or grabbed by co-workers who perceive them as not manly enough.

SEX-SHOP ANTICS

The supervisor at an adult video store fired a clerk because, she said, he didn’t fit in and didn’t finish his paperwork. The clerk sued, saying the supervisor had forced him to wear a harness at work, spanked him with a riding crop

when he made mistakes and once led him around the store on a leash.

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Discrimination. A jury awarded the clerk \$31,000 in damages.

NAUGHTY TALK

Christopher Lack, a sales associate at Walmart in Beckley, West Virginia, alleged a number of incidents involving his supervisor, James Bragg: (1) When Lack told Bragg he was off the clock, Bragg said, “Good, I am too” and pretended



Steve Carell of *The Office* says something inappropriate.

to unzip his pants. (2) While Lack was helping a customer, Bragg approached and said, “I need a small bag, and not the one between your legs.” (3) Bragg made comments about eating “penis butter and jelly sandwiches” and ended conversations with “Spank you very much.” (4) At a holiday party Bragg grabbed his crotch and said, “Chris, here’s your present!” Lack replied, “You’re stupid.” Bragg said, “If I’m stupid, you can work on Christmas,” which Lack had to do. Bragg admitted only to saying “Squeeze me” and “Spank you very much.”

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Discrimination, according to a jury. It gave Lack \$80,000, although an appeals court rejected the award. Ironically, the fact that female employees also filed complaints about Bragg undermined everyone’s case—it showed he was allegedly crude around everyone, regardless of gender.

NURSE LOVE

During a home visit to a gay couple, one of whom was dying of AIDS, a public health nurse told the men they needed to have faith in Jesus because God “doesn’t like the homosexual lifestyle.” The state reprimanded the nurse, who sued for religious discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Not discrimination. A federal court ruled that state employees have no First Amendment right to talk to clients about their religious beliefs.

WHITE POWER

Christopher Peterson worked for a telemarketing firm. He also served as a minister in a white-power “church.” When the company learned this, it demoted him so he would no longer be supervising three minority employees.

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Discrimination, according to a federal court, which ruled that absent any evidence

that Peterson treated nonwhites differently at work, sincerely held beliefs can be considered a religion even if they are not “acceptable, logical, consistent or comprehensible to others.”

MIND GAMES

Kenneth Tyler told his supervisor that co-workers had threatened to burn down his house and poison him. A psychiatrist diagnosed him as delusional, but Tyler refused to take medication. Instead, he asked to be transferred. After the move he complained that his new co-workers also persecuted him. He demanded to be transferred back and given his own parking spot. The company refused.

DISCRIMINATION
OR NOT DISCRIMINATION?

VERDICT: Not discrimination, according to a federal court. It ruled that companies need not correct conditions that exist only in a worker’s imagination.

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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

A candid conversation with America's most influential columnist about the war in Iraq, the future of the Middle East and why you need to go back to school

A three-time Pulitzer Prize winner, New York Times writer Thomas L. Friedman is arguably America's and possibly the world's most influential columnist. As the National Review's Jay Nordlinger put it, "He is the one to whom everyone's turning. Friedman's opinion is on everyone's lips. I hear this from conservatives, from liberals—from everybody."

Not only do Friedman's opinions occupy a "globally important patch of journalistic real estate," as media critic Howard Kurtz said, but the twice-weekly column is syndicated in more than 700 newspapers around the world. It is frequently (and often furiously) e-mailed and has been quoted in presidential press conferences.

*Besides writing the column, Friedman, 52, has written a series of best-selling books, including *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, an essential text on the Middle East, and *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, which established him as the leading popular commentator on globalization. His current book, *The World Is Flat*, charges that 9/11 distracted America from the most important transformation since the invention of the printing press: the technology revolution that has, in his words, "flattened the world" so that people in India and China can compete on a level playing field with people in the West.*

Everyone who reads Friedman has an opinion about his opinions. Though he is a

liberal on many issues, Harper's has compared him to Newt Gingrich. Though he is a conservative on some issues, the right regularly lambastes him. Friedman has also been criticized for occasionally crossing the line from journalism to politics: In 2002 he wrote a series of columns that became central to the unfolding Middle East peace process. Ted Koppel declared, "Journalistic-fueled diplomacy is highly inappropriate," but New York magazine media critic Michael Wolff cheered him on, describing Friedman as "a Hollywood character—Mr. Smith goes to Riyadh."

Contributing Editor David Sheff, whose interview with CBS chief Leslie Moonves appeared in our April issue, cornered Friedman in Washington, D.C. and New York City. "It was eye-opening to see a print journalist with the kind of celebrity normally reserved for movie stars and TV anchormen," observes Sheff. "Passersby who recognized him wanted to sound off. A lobbyist approached him with a scoop, and a longtime reader turned away from a U.S. district court judge in the middle of a conversation so that he could rush up to Friedman to praise that day's column. One expects Friedman to be knowledgeable and opinionated, but I was surprised by his accessible, easy manner and self-deprecating sense of humor."

PLAYBOY: After years of leaning left, you shocked many of your readers with your

support of the war in Iraq. Are you surprised to find yourself arguing the side of the Bush administration?

FRIEDMAN: I did what I thought and still think was right. I checked my politics at the door when I decided to support this war, but I resent that Bush and his people didn't check theirs.

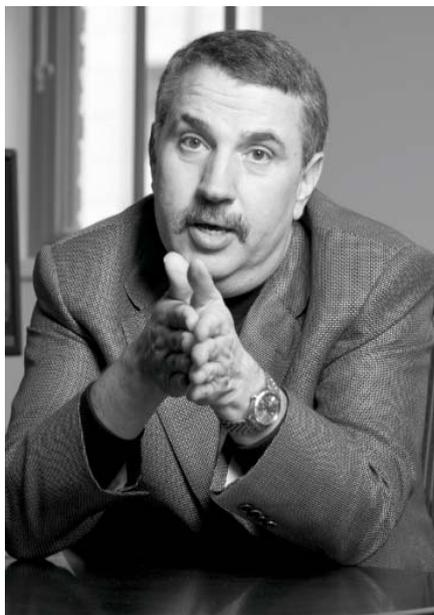
PLAYBOY: Meaning?

FRIEDMAN: Meaning they have used the war to push their agenda and to instill fear. They have made enormous mistakes and never acknowledged them. Donald Rumsfeld has performed so incompetently for so long, and the president hasn't fired him. It's shameful after Abu Ghraib and the deaths of Iraqi POWs. It is a travesty. You can't win the war of ideas in a Muslim world when you are utterly indifferent to the murder of prisoners. The Republicans went on about the right to life of Terri Schiavo, and yet they couldn't care less about our moral responsibility for the deaths of prisoners of war. It's as if 9/11 were a shot of novocaine into our nation's moral nerves. It was such a shock that we still haven't gotten over it. It has made people indifferent to things that we should be outraged about.

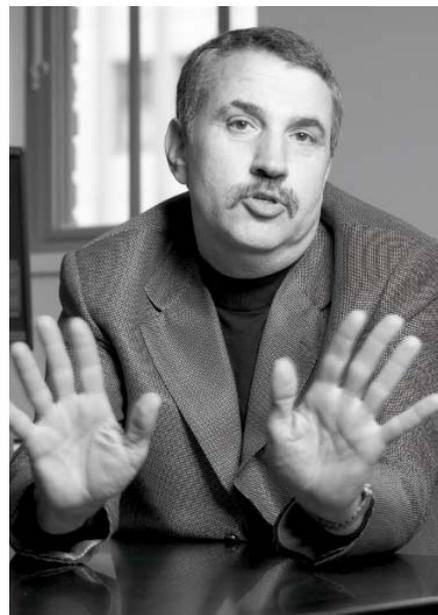
PLAYBOY: After all that, why do you continue to support the war, well after the



"People who like themselves—who see opportunity—don't wrap themselves in dynamite and blow themselves up. Young Taiwanese and young Koreans don't like us very much, but they aren't blowing themselves up."



"Arafat was a real obstacle to peace. He wasn't the only one, but he was an obstacle. I saw a wonderful cartoon of Arafat at the gates of hell and the devil saying, 'Wow, our first Nobel Prize winner.'"



"Courage, arrogance—call it what you want, but you can't say George Bush is a political coward. He bet the farm. So where is his leadership on the issues that really matter? I'd like to see him use that political courage."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SAM KITTNER

definitive conclusion that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

FRIEDMAN: For me the war was never about weapons of mass destruction. I never believed that argument. Even if there were WMDs, the amount was piddling and easily deterrable. For me the reason to go to war was not WMDs but PMDs—people of mass destruction. The boys of 9/11 were produced by a political climate in the Arab world that was deeply toxic. For 50 years we treated the Arab world as if it were a collection of gas stations. All we cared about were three things: that they kept the pumps open and the prices low and were nice to the Jews. Basically we said, “Other than that you can do whatever you want out back.” They could treat their women however they wanted, educate their children in whatever intolerance they liked and describe us as the force of evil. They could be as corrupt as they wanted. On 9/11 we were hit with the distilled essence of everything going on out back. I wasn’t going to play that game anymore. George Bush wasn’t either, and he made the right decision. If we didn’t find a way to begin to change the context in the Arab world, we were inviting another 9/11.

There were four reasons for the war: the right reason, the stated reason, the moral reason and the real reason. The stated reason was WMDs. It was an excuse the president used. The moral reason was the genocidal regime responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of its own people. The right reason was regime change, to try to build a democratic context in the heart of the Arab world. But the real reason was to send the following message: “Ladies and gentlemen of the Arab world, we mean you no ill, but we noticed something on 9/11. Many Arabs and Muslims applauded it. So listen when I tell you the following: You are now going to see American boys and girls go from Basra to Baghdad. Which part of this don’t you understand? We will not sit here idly while you come over to our country, kill 3,000 of our brothers and sisters and then bake a cake—which some people in Saudi Arabia did—to celebrate. Try it again and we are going to come into the heart of your world and there will be vast and unpredictable consequences.”

PLAYBOY: But Iraq didn’t attack us on September 11. Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda did.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, but in my view terrorism is 98 percent about what governments let happen—the charities they allow to raise and funnel money, the lies they

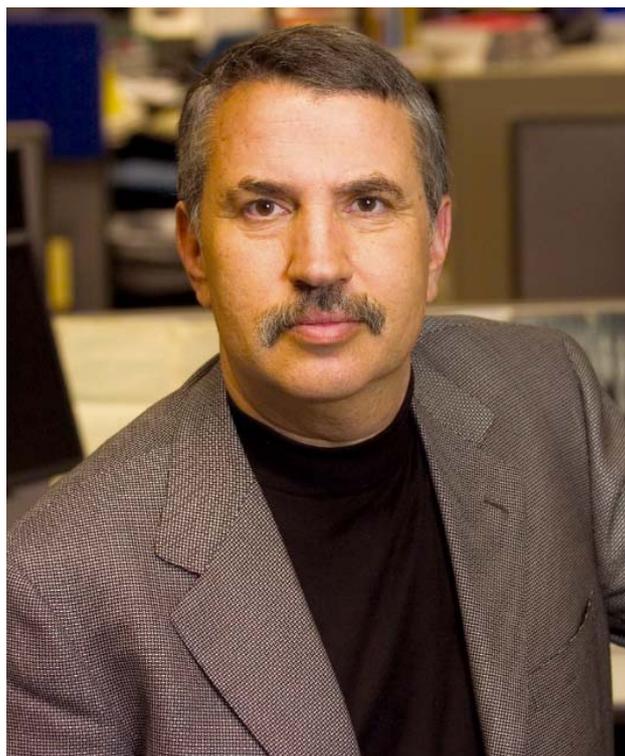
allow to be told about us in their press and the terrible intolerance they allow to be preached.

PLAYBOY: Then why didn’t we attack Pakistan, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia?

FRIEDMAN: We went to Iraq for one reason: We could.

PLAYBOY: But if the real reason was to send a message and deter future attacks, how do you respond to the experts who say the war will create more, not fewer, terrorists because of increased resentment of and even hatred for the United States throughout the Arab world?

FRIEDMAN: I don’t believe it. I’m ready for somebody to prove it to me if it’s true. What the left has totally missed is how many people are quietly rooting for us



All we cared about was that they kept the pumps open and the prices low and were nice to the Jews.

to succeed. Look at Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine.

PLAYBOY: Are you suggesting that people in those countries are our new fans?

FRIEDMAN: Do they like George Bush or even America? No. But we have unlocked something very important.

PLAYBOY: Unlocked what, aside from increased anti-Americanism?

FRIEDMAN: We have unlocked a democracy movement in that region that has the potential to transform it. And that is how we will win the war on terrorism. Some things are true even if George Bush believes them. The only way to win against terrorism is to win the war of ideas, which can be fought only by Arabs and Muslims. American public

diplomacy can’t do it. First of all, I don’t want them to like us. I’m not too fond of some of them some days, frankly. I’m not too fond of how they treat their women. I’m not too fond of how some of them preach intolerance. But I want them to like themselves. People who like themselves—who see hope and opportunity—don’t tend to wrap themselves in dynamite and blow themselves up. Young Taiwanese and young Koreans don’t like us very much either, but they aren’t strapping on dynamite and blowing themselves up. The war on terrorism is a war of ideas, so the question becomes, How do you create the context in which young people can fulfill their aspirations and potential and have a voice in their

future? We have helped change the context in Iraq so that the people there may be able to.

PLAYBOY: But the news from postwar Iraq doesn’t include much about people with hope and opportunity.

FRIEDMAN: We have taken the first step and are a million miles from the end point. However, the first Arab government has been formed as a result of a horizontal conversation between Arab people. There is a Kurdish president—the first Arab government with a leader from a political minority. There is a government that has a chance to fight the war of ideas inside its own country in its own language, inside its own religion and among its own people. That is a result of the war. We have helped create the context for this to happen. We have empowered progressive forces to fight the war of ideas from the inside. The second-largest Muslim country in the world is not Iran, not Saudi Arabia, not Pakistan. It is India. Here is an interesting statistic from 9/11: There are no Indian Muslims in Al Qaeda, as far as we know. There are no Indian Muslims in Guantánamo Bay. We know

that Al Qaeda is a Noah’s ark of Muslims from all over the world, but none of them are from India.

PLAYBOY: We don’t necessarily know if there are Al Qaeda cells in India.

FRIEDMAN: Maybe there are, but none have manifested themselves. Why is that? Could it be because the richest man in India is a Muslim software entrepreneur, Azim Premji, the chairman of Wipro, the biggest outsourcing firm in the world? Could it be because the president of India is a Muslim? Could it be because an Indian Muslim woman is on the Indian supreme court and Muslims have been governors of Indian states?

PLAYBOY: How does this fight terrorism?

FRIEDMAN: Give me a context in which

young people see that they have a chance to have an entrepreneurial idea and start one of the biggest companies in their world and become one of the 10 richest people on *Forbes's* list. Give me a context in which anyone can aspire to the highest offices. Give me a context in which people who have a legal dispute can get it resolved in court—and not have to bribe the judge with a goat. And guess what—they don't want to blow up the world; they want to be part of it. When I was in India after we invaded Afghanistan, there was a debate on Indian television between the leading Muslim cleric of New Delhi and the country's leading female movie star. The cleric called on all Indian Muslims to rise up and join the jihad in Afghanistan against America. The leading Indian movie star basically told him to shove it, live on Indian national TV. Why did she do that? Because she could. She lives in a context that empowers her and protects her as an Indian Muslim woman to do that—to fight that war of ideas. She didn't do it because she read American propaganda. It sprang from her own soul. That is what changes the world. Things will change if we have little Indias in every one of the Arab countries. And this is what motivated me to support the Bush administration, even with its flawed actors and flawed approach.

PLAYBOY: But is a little India a possible outcome in Palestine?

FRIEDMAN: It's our best hope. If Israel gets out of Gaza—and I think it will—for the first time we're going to have a situation in which the Palestinians have their own place in the sun. It's a miserable place—densely populated, underdeveloped, chopped up because of the settlements and security fences and roads—but it's going to be their place in the sun. Next, if the Palestinians turn Gaza into something more like Dubai and less like Mogadishu, it will make a Palestinian state on the West Bank inevitable. In my view it's incumbent on Israel for its own interest to help Palestinians make sure the state is more like Dubai and less like Mogadishu. It's incumbent on the U.S. to help, and Lord knows it's incumbent on the Arab states.

PLAYBOY: What is the impact of the death of Yasir Arafat on the prospect of peace in the Middle East?

FRIEDMAN: Arafat was a real obstacle to peace. He wasn't the only one, but he was an obstacle. He has gone to his maker, or maybe not. I saw a wonderful cartoon of Arafat at the gates of hell and the devil saying, "Wow, our first Nobel Prize winner." [laughs] But wherever he is, he's gone, and I think the Palestinians have a much better chance at a decent future as a result of that.

PLAYBOY: Post-Arafat, what is the most likely scenario?

FRIEDMAN: One thing I learned about the Middle East is you get big changes when

Reverse Angle

Prominent Jordanian columnist Salama Na'mat explains us to them

Call him a Thomas L. Friedman for the Middle East. Salama Na'mat is the Washington bureau chief for the pan-Arab daily newspaper Al-Hayat and a sought-after commentator on Arabic TV. Followed—and quoted—by Friedman and other Middle East watchers here, his contrarian takes on U.S. policy are must-reads for Arabs looking to understand America.

PLAYBOY: Is it difficult to explain the U.S. to Arab readers?

NA'MAT: When someone like me explains to them what is going on—not justifying American policies but explaining them—people in the region have a tendency to want to shoot the messenger.

PLAYBOY: What is making them so mad that they want to shoot the messenger?

NA'MAT: Most people in the Arab world don't buy U.S. rhetoric. They like to think

this administration just wants to go and take the oil. For the past half century America has been backing the enemies of the people: the dictators, the corrupt families that have been ruling these countries—families with flags, in other words. The U.S. was interested only in securing the flow of oil. Now all of a sudden the U.S. says it wants to change that. On the one hand we have to give the president credit for saying, "Our policies were mistaken for the past 60 years. We backed dictatorships for the sake of short-term stability." On the other hand he still receives these dictators in the White House, calling them his friends. His words are not matched by his deeds.

PLAYBOY: What could change people's minds about U.S. intentions?

NA'MAT: The U.S. continues to extend military and economic aid to countries that are not advancing toward democracy. If the administration wants democracy, what about the people being arrested in Syria and Iran or the reformers arrested in Saudi Arabia—why aren't you saying a word about these people? The question is, Will George Bush back down now, or is he going to say, "What's happening is not enough. We're going to put more pressure on these countries that are not advancing toward reform, punish these countries, cut off aid to these countries"? As yet, we haven't seen any concrete steps to indicate that the administration will start isolating and exposing these regimes. It needs to act if anyone is to believe it.

PLAYBOY: Does the U.S. deserve any credit for recent elections and reforms?

NA'MAT: In Palestine it's not true that the Bush doctrine is responsible for elections.

We've had elections in Palestine in the past. Actually Arafat was elected in 1994, freely elected. The Israelis did not allow elections until Arafat's death because they knew that if elections took place he would win again. In Lebanon mistakes made by the Syrians, coupled with the assassination of the prime minister, led to the independence uprising, which ousted the Syrians. I'm not saying the U.S. did not back these moves. I'm saying the U.S. did not initiate these moves.

PLAYBOY: And what about the constitutional reforms undertaken in Egypt?

NA'MAT: The Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, manipulated the process, kept it under the control of his ruling party and basically made fools of the Americans.

The opposition boycotted the referendum because the reforms were a fraud. As a

result Bush said something about "urging" President Mubarak—you can "urge" these regimes forever. These people do not want to give up power.

PLAYBOY: Is globalization, as in Friedman's flat-earth theory, affecting the Middle East?

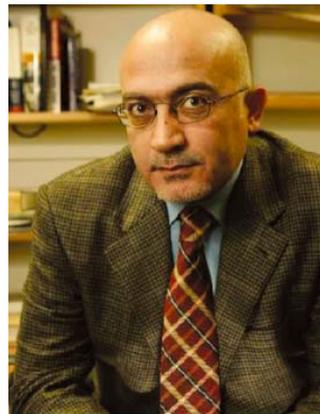
NA'MAT: I disagree with Friedman's oversimplification of the situation. This applies to societies that are connected to globalization by trade, the Internet, communications. In the Middle East about two percent of people have

access to the Internet. A huge number of people are not connected to communications. We have an average illiteracy rate of 40 to 50 percent. What he's talking about is true only for the elites, who are connected. But their interests are linked with the dictatorships and autocracies; these people have no interest in change.

PLAYBOY: Is the American media telling us what we need to know about the Arab world?

NA'MAT: I don't want to single out Friedman, but he and others like him go to the Middle East and want to have access to the top leaders. To do that, they have to be on good terms with them. If Friedman were to write about what is really happening in Egypt, he wouldn't be allowed into Egypt again. This is dangerous because the public is being misled. The public is being kept in the dark. You can't just ignore problems somewhere else, because these problems could come and haunt you at home, as happened on 9/11. When the U.S. focuses all its foreign policy on that part of the world, you would imagine the media would get more interested. But four years after 9/11 the U.S. media are not doing any better.

—Tim Mohr



Bush's words are not matched by his deeds.



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the big players do the right thing for the wrong reasons. If you wait for everyone to do the right things for the right reasons, you wait forever in that neighborhood. Israel is not getting out of Gaza because Ariel Sharon woke up and Arafat was gone and he said, "Whoa, now I get Palestinian nationalism!" Israel is getting out of Gaza because it faced a threat of an apartheid situation there.

PLAYBOY: How was it becoming an apartheid situation?

FRIEDMAN: There will be more Palestinians than Jews between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River if Israel doesn't relinquish the Gaza Strip.

PLAYBOY: Would Israel necessarily care if there were more Palestinians than Jews?

FRIEDMAN: Israel is a society that is swayed by that kind of moral pressure. They are getting out of Gaza ultimately to preserve the Jewish state. And on the other side, the Palestinians aren't cooperating with this passively because they've suddenly adopted a new view of Ariel Sharon. So lo and behold, both sides are doing the right thing for the wrong reasons. But it's a big deal.

PLAYBOY: The next hot spot in the Middle East is likely to be Iran. Is the Bush administration taking the correct approach there?

FRIEDMAN: Iran is vexing, but I believe in engagement. The best argument for it is our Cuba policy. How many presidents has Castro survived now? At what point do we say that the Cuba lab test has proved that the isolation policy is a failure? In Iran I believe in the Dr. Kevorkian solution of assisted suicide. More than anything else, the mullahs fear an American embassy back in Tehran. There should be one. I want to fill the veins of Iranians with Coca-Cola and Big Macs. I want to fill them with Microsoft Windows and Google. In the long run it's the best way to bring about a peaceful transition inside Iran—one driven by Iranians from the inside.

PLAYBOY: Fine, but the mullahs aren't going to relinquish control if they don't have to, and nuclear weapons, if they develop them, might be a persuasive argument.

FRIEDMAN: It's a complicated situation, but generally we will get more and faster internally driven transformation in Iran by opening an American embassy and through trade and engagement than we will through a policy of isolation. Ultimately we'll have more to say about even their nuclear program, if they decide to have one. It's not a slam dunk. There are Iranians inside the country who say that isolation is better: "Don't embrace these guys." I take their view seriously, but we have to find a way to separate the bad guys at the top from the vast majority of Iranians who want to embrace modernity and the West—who want engagement. There are precedents throughout the

Middle East to show what can happen. Throughout the region—in Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt—some of the things are in place. That's the challenge for Condoleezza Rice, the challenge for this administration. They're only halfway home. Do not go on a victory lap yet.

PLAYBOY: Are you optimistic about the parliamentary election and the withdrawal of Syria's military from Lebanon?

FRIEDMAN: It's enormously exciting. To some degree in Lebanon they saw what happened in Ukraine and Georgia, and they certainly see what happened in Iraq. These events are coming to their TVs via satellite and into their neighborhoods by e-mail and the web. It emboldens them, and they ask, "Why can't we have it here?"

PLAYBOY: Is the situation in Egypt similar?

FRIEDMAN: Yes. An Egyptian delegation was visiting Washington this week, and a guy came up to me at a reception and said, "Mr. Friedman, I run the biggest call center in Egypt for Microsoft." It's where democracy starts now that the world has flattened.

PLAYBOY: Explain your concept of the flattened world.

FRIEDMAN: I became the foreign affairs columnist for *The New York Times* in 1995 and covered international economics until September 11, 2001. After 9/11 I dropped the globalization stuff like a stone and went off and covered the 9/11 wars for three years. In the meantime I began doing a series of documentaries for the Discovery Channel. We planned one on how people abroad look at America, which was a big issue then. While we were costing it out, a certain Democratic presidential candidate named John Kerry came out with his blast against "Benedict Arnold executives" who were outsourcing. It elevated the issue, and we decided to do a show called *The Other Side of Outsourcing*, looking at it from the place that has benefited from much of the outsourcing, India, to get the perspective from that country. I dropped the 9/11 story, and we went to the Indian Silicon Valley and did about 60 hours of interviews. I got sicker and sicker.

PLAYBOY: What made you sick?

FRIEDMAN: Because somewhere between the Indian entrepreneur who wanted to do my taxes from Bangalore and the one who wanted to write my software from Bangalore and the one who wanted to read my X-rays from Bangalore and the one who wanted to trace my lost luggage from Bangalore, I realized that while I was sleeping, something really big had happened. The world had changed and I'd missed it.

PLAYBOY: What exactly had you missed?

FRIEDMAN: The flattening. We were so busy with 9/11 that we all missed it in this country—the administration did. We shifted resources, we shifted attention,

and we shifted our energy. The idea crystallized during my last interview in India with Nandan Nilekani, an old friend who is the CEO of Infosys. Infosys is like the IBM of India, one of the gems of the Indian IT industry. He said to me, "Tom, I've got to tell you, the playing field is being leveled, and you Americans are not ready." He explained how technology has leveled the playing field so that India can participate in the world economy as easily as the United States does. So can China. And now Egypt has a call center for Microsoft. Nandan said that this change is the great achievement of the 21st century. I didn't completely understand it, but I knew that I had missed something and my framework badly needed updating. Back at my hotel I called my wife and told her, "Honey, I'm going to write a book called *The World Is Flat*." I took three months off from my column before the election to do so.

PLAYBOY: For 10 years, since Netscape went public and use of the Internet began to increase, we have been hearing that IT is going to change the world by leveling the playing field. Why is this different?

FRIEDMAN: A difference of degree becomes a difference of kind. Carly Fiorina, formerly of Hewlett-Packard, nailed it. She said that the IT revolution of the past 20 years was "the end of the beginning." That is, everything we called the IT revolution—sorry, friends—was just the warm-up act. It was about the sharpening and distribution of the tools of collaboration so that people and companies could seamlessly collaborate across the globe. It's why they can do my taxes or trace my luggage in India. Now we are going to see the real IT revolution. The Internet boom brought in huge investment. All that money was used to quickly build the global high-bandwidth Internet. Then after the bust, people's capital shrank, and they had to look for cheaper and more efficient ways to innovate. Because the world is flat, they could go to India and China and other places to do whatever needed to be done cheaply and efficiently. So globalization was turbocharged. The bust also caused the big companies to pull back, opening the door for small companies around the world to take advantage of the high-bandwidth pipelines. An Indian start-up could compete with an American giant.

PLAYBOY: Why did we miss that?

FRIEDMAN: Our heads were in the sand because of a perfect storm. We were focusing on the war on terrorism and nothing else. And let's be honest, it was a good political gig for the Bush administration. Number two, Enron made CEOs guilty until proven innocent. As a result, none of them wanted to talk out loud about what

was going on. None of them wanted to ask for anything they needed to compete and collaborate effectively in this flat world. Believe it or not, after Enron, the Bush administration, which to all of us seemed slavishly pro-business, didn't want to be seen with the CEOs of the most important companies. Then came the dot-com bust, and people assumed it was all over. As a result of the perfect storm, exactly at the inflection point, it was like when Gutenberg gave us the printing press. We were off fighting some medieval war with the knights in shining armor. **PLAYBOY:** With what implications? Isn't America still well ahead of other countries in terms of technology and access to information?

FRIEDMAN: While our heads were in the sand, other countries caught up. It's the reason our jobs have gone to India. They can do the same work for cheaper. One of my daughters is a sophomore in college and the other is in 11th grade. When I was growing up my parents used to say to me, "Tom, finish your dinner. People in China and India are starving." Now I tell my girls, "Girls, go finish your homework. People in China and India are starving for your jobs." The good news is that the top tech CEOs in the country—people like Bill Gates, Michael Dell, Marc Andreessen, Craig Barrett and John Doerr—know what is going on. They are outsourcing, insourcing, offshoring—everything required to compete in the flat world. The bad news is that nobody has told the kids. That is, the country doesn't know what's going on. The national debate is not revolving around what we need to do as a country to strengthen our abilities—individuals' abilities and the abilities of our companies—to thrive in this new flat world. Instead of talking about preparing America, during the last election we had the Democrats debating whether NAFTA was a good idea and the Republicans putting duct tape over the mouth of chief White House economist N. Gregory Mankiw when he said that outsourcing makes a lot of sense. They stashed him in Dick Cheney's basement. There was a kind of conspiracy of silence. Now we are in this totally nuts situation with a president with a mandate whose great legacy project is unraveling the New Deal by trying to privatize Social Security.

PLAYBOY: Do you disagree that the system will be bankrupt?

FRIEDMAN: We need to fix Social Security, but that's a math problem. What we need is a new New Deal between companies, government and citizens.

PLAYBOY: What would this new New Deal look like?

FRIEDMAN: It would include a package of policies to empower and strengthen Americans to compete in a flat world. When was the last time you heard

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George Bush talk about competitiveness? Instead he's talking about keeping the first-round intellectual draft choices of the world out because their name is Mohammed or they may once have changed flights in Riyadh. We are talking about Band-Aids for education, ignoring the catastrophe of our educational system. Last year the Republican Congress and this administration cut the National Science Foundation budget by \$100 million. I'm convinced there is a Chinese spy in the White House who whispered in the president's ear, "Why don't you cut the National Science Foundation budget by \$100 million?" and he happily agreed. Why not really retard yourself, stop innovation? We are not doing the right things, and we are actively doing the wrong things. The issue of expensing stock options is a perfect example. They are trying to hamper companies so that it will be far more expensive to give stock options to their employees. As a result, entrepreneurs won't be able to attract talent from India and China or even keep our own talent in the U.S. China is not expensing stock options. On the contrary, it is telling its companies to lavish them on people—to use them to get its best and brightest to come home from America back to China.

PLAYBOY: Though some people in China and India are thriving, hundreds of millions of them aren't. They remain impoverished.

FRIEDMAN: It has to start somewhere. Thirty-five years ago if you had the choice of being born a B-plus student in the Bronx or a genius in Bangalore, you would choose B-plus student in the Bronx because your life opportunities were so much greater. You couldn't plug and play as a genius in Bangalore unless you got a visa, in which case you had to give up your culture, your native dress, your sari, your curry and your extended family and move. Now, when the world is flat, if you are a genius in Bangalore, your life chances are amazing.

PLAYBOY: What do you say to a person whose job has been outsourced and who may not be as enthusiastic about the flat world as you are?

FRIEDMAN: Welcome to my world. I just wrote a 488-page book in 11 months. I'll be the first to tell you I didn't know a single thing in that book a year ago. I had to retool myself. In order to do my job, I had to go back to school. Everyone is going to have to do it. There is no choice. If I can't explain the world to you in a way that makes sense, one day my editors at *The New York Times* are going to tap me on the shoulder and say, "Tom, maybe you want to move on," because I won't be relevant.

PLAYBOY: But many American workers don't have the opportunity to go back to school. They want their government to protect their jobs.

FRIEDMAN: The government is failing them but not by not protecting their jobs. That's why we need a different presidency. So to someone who has lost his job because it has been outsourced I say, "The world is flat. I didn't flatten it. I didn't start it. I can't stop it." As a nation maybe we could stop it at the cost of impoverishing everybody—of radically reducing our standard of living. But that is a loser model. The least globalized countries are the ones that put up walls: North Korea, Cuba, Sudan. They're not doing well for their folks. Instead we can seize the challenge and opportunity. We must use the profits that we make to take care of the left-behinds. If someone has lost a job because it has been outsourced, we need options for him so he can improve his knowledge skills and move vertically into this world. It's the only way forward. Anyone who argues differently is doing great harm to this country and to their children and to our future. Whining about the Indians who are taking our jobs doesn't help the Americans who are losing jobs.

*We have had too many
leaders who are making us
stupid and afraid. Rather
than explaining the opportu-
nities of the world, they are
making us afraid of it.*

What is the better alternative? Socialism is a wonderful system for making people equally poor. Capitalism makes people unequally rich but gives more people at the bottom a chance to become rich. Always remember: Poor people don't resent rich people anywhere near as much as the left thinks. What they resent is having no chance to get rich themselves. Is capitalism brutal? You bet it is. It's the most brutal, mean, nasty economic system in the world—except for all the others. So we need a different kind of political leadership. We have had too many leaders who are making us stupid and afraid. Rather than explaining the opportunities of the world, they are making us afraid of it. We have CNN running a business show that goes out of its way to make us more afraid—to hype all the downsides of the flat world.

PLAYBOY: Are you referring to Lou Dobbs's show?

FRIEDMAN: You might say that. I have no problem with a TV show or an author pointing out the downsides of globalization, but not when you suggest

that globalization is bad only after a 20-year period when more people have been lifted out of poverty in India and China into the middle class and lower-middle class faster than at any time in the history of the planet. Not when you suggest that it's all bad at a time when America has been part of so many incredible innovations and, excuse me, our standard of living has also steadily risen. Our unemployment rate is still only 5.2 percent. When you use your TV show as a forum for that dangerous perspective, it is irresponsible. I expect better from CNN. I don't expect it to be slavishly pro-business—some might say that's what that show was like during the dot-com bubble—but I expect a balanced perspective.

PLAYBOY: Exactly what would you have President Bush telling Americans?

FRIEDMAN: I think he needs to explain the enormous challenges and opportunities of the flat world, that it poses as comprehensive and serious a challenge to us as communism did. The job of government is to prepare our people, but not for lifetime employment. I wish we could still have that world, but we don't. What the government should be about is thinking through the policies that would make more and more Americans employable for life.

PLAYBOY: Besides education, what policies are you thinking of?

FRIEDMAN: Portable health care for all Americans so they can move from job to job as new industries are born and others are destroyed. Portable pensions. I never want to see people having to stay at a dying company because their pension is locked there. I believe we need wage insurance. And in the new deal for the flat world, the government needs to guarantee every American tertiary education. It has to be not compulsory but available to every single American through subsidies, tax breaks and grants. My mantra is, Not a man on Mars—what a loopy idea! We need to get every man and woman onto a college campus in America. That's the new New Deal.

PLAYBOY: What would you have people trained to do? It's no longer enough to be trained in information-technology jobs, since many of them are precisely the ones being outsourced to India, China and other countries.

FRIEDMAN: To me the galvanizing idea—the moon shot of our generation that could inspire and motivate young people to go into science and engineering in ways they haven't been for almost two decades now—is energy independence. First of all, it would make us the moral leader of the world in ways that we can only dream of now. It would make us a shining example of reducing energy use and reducing climate change. It would make us independent of having to support some of the worst governments in the world. We never tell the truth to

governments that we're dependent on for oil just as addicts never tell the truth to their pushers. This new deal would be great for the dollar. It would be great for the budget deficit. As a friend says, it wouldn't be win-win but win-win-win-win. That is the moon shot to galvanize our generation. It's crying out for this president to pick it up, and if he doesn't, then I hope the next one will.

PLAYBOY: Meanwhile billions of people in the world—not only in India and China but in Africa and the Middle East—are unlikely to be reeducated anytime soon. They have little education in the first place. They don't even have food, clean water or health care.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, and it's a big problem. I'm convinced that 9/11 was about humiliation, not economics. When do people get enraged? Not when they don't have enough money. It is when they feel deeply degraded and humiliated. A big part of the world feels humiliated from being left behind. The flat world is intensifying humiliation. You get your humiliation fiber-optically in the flat world. You get it at 56K. In the flat world you can see where the caravan is and how far behind you are. The humiliation that comes with that is what drives the rage that fueled not only 9/11 but the millions of Muslims who cheered it. They thought, We gave them a punch in the nose. God, that felt good, even though it was a futile exercise. Yes, much of the world is too sick and too poor; some countries have broken governments, and many have no access to the flattening world. The world isn't flat for them. With all the progress in India, 700 million people are living in despair. So in India and Africa and other places like them, it's an enormous problem. But in 1991, India—a country of a billion people—had about \$100 million in the bank. It was going bankrupt after four decades of compassionate, warm, soft, caring socialist economics. In 1991 Manmohan Singh, now prime minister, then finance minister, oversaw the globalizing of the Indian economy. Today India has somewhere close to \$120 billion in reserves, reserves it can now use to do exactly the retraining, infrastructure building, school building and more that is needed to lift people out of poverty and give them the tools to succeed in the modern world.

PLAYBOY: Your theory sounds a lot like a global version of Reagan's trickle-down economics. But throughout history we have seen that wealth doesn't necessarily trickle down.

FRIEDMAN: It can trickle down if we do the right things. The national and global priorities should all be the same: Improve infrastructure—in some cases that means drinking water—and education. The rest follows. As I said, we're millions of miles from where we need to be. These are the areas where we need leadership and

political courage. Iraq was such a radical shake of the dice, against the wishes of a lot of President Bush's most trusted advisors, that I know at some level he must have great political courage. I'd like to see him use that political courage.

PLAYBOY: Rather than seeing it as political courage, some view Iraq as an example of Bush's arrogance.

FRIEDMAN: Courage, arrogance—call it what you want, but you can't say the guy is a political coward. He bet the farm. So where is his leadership on the issues that really matter? People always say that Karl Rove is a genius. There are so many questions to look at that relate to people's future—making them employable in the future, providing a positive future for their children—but Rove got them to vote on whether gays can marry. That is a kind of genius. Instead of offering America a politics of opportunity and aspiration, it's a politics based on fear.

PLAYBOY: You're a journalist who often sounds like a politician. Is your goal to affect public policy?

FRIEDMAN: I don't mean to sound sappy, but the goal is to make the world a better place. I'm a sappy patriot. I am a big believer that we have the greatest country in the world and the greatest opportunities in the world, and I want to take care of this thing and pass it on—not just for my kids but because you take America out of the world and the world's a very different place. What do you think would be going on between Japan and China right now if not for America's influence on Asia? Do you think Germany and France would be in a common currency if America had not been in the picture? Would Israel exist without America? We are the straw that stirs the drink. When we do it well, the drink comes out well; when we do it maladroitly—and we do that sometimes—the drink suffers.

PLAYBOY: Do you enjoy the power you have through your column?

FRIEDMAN: I do not wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, flex my muscles and say, "Wow, are you powerful." It's the opposite. The morning after a column, I agonize. Did I get it right? It starts even before anyone outside the house reads it. My wife reads almost every column, and I literally hold my breath for the white or dark smoke. If she says a column doesn't work, which she is wont to do on occasion, I have to go upstairs, rip it up and start over.

PLAYBOY: Do you ever dig in your heels?

FRIEDMAN: The best fights we have are over my column, but when she tells me it doesn't work, I don't say, "Tough, I'm going with it." I go with my tail between my legs back up to my office and rework it. If you're sitting around thinking how powerful you are—"I'm Zeus on Mount Olympus; I'm going to toss down a few thunderbolts"—you stop reporting. Why should you? Zeus doesn't need to report. He is sending thunderbolts

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down from the mountain. He can say whatever he wants. If I were to do that, it would be all over.

PLAYBOY: Do you look back at any of your columns and cringe? When were you completely wrong?

FRIEDMAN: I was roundly criticized by people I respect for a column in which I wrote that I didn't care two cents about what happened in Bosnia. I was not actually writing about the massacre or the genocide. What I was writing about was that we needed to go in and help our British and French allies. I was making a point that what mattered was our alliances with Britain and France, not whether Bosnia is an independent country. Unfortunately I expressed it in a very poor way. It was just dumb. I take that one back.

PLAYBOY: You have also taken heat for your Golden Arches theory—that two countries with McDonald's restaurants would never get into a war with each other. The theory collapsed with Belgrade.

FRIEDMAN: When I wrote that, I specifically excluded civil wars. I said civil wars don't count, because McDonald's served both sides in the Russian, El Salvadoran and Nicaraguan civil wars. Then immediately after the book in which I wrote that came out, we bombed Belgrade, and Belgrade had 10 or 11 McDonald's. Of course every international relations professor wrote saying, "Nah-nah-nah-naah-nah. Belgrade has McDonald's." My view of Belgrade is that it is a civil war in which we intervened, but let's leave that aside. Let's say there is one exception to the rule. That means the rule holds up 99 out of 100 times. For social science, that ain't too bad, okay? I wasn't doing quantum mechanics. It doesn't disprove the point I was trying to make that the more countries are integrated into the global economy, the more they develop a middle class that can sustain a network of McDonald's, the less incentive there is to go to war and the higher the cost.

PLAYBOY: You received criticism not for reporting but for making the news when in 2002 you floated Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's plan for an Israeli-Palestinian peace. Do you agree that you crossed the line?

FRIEDMAN: It all started at the Davos World Economic Summit that was held in New York City in the year after 9/11. I was talking to a Moroccan friend, bemoaning the state of the peace process. An Arab summit was coming up, and I said, "Why don't the Arabs just make a simple statement to the Israelis: full peace—that is, total normalization of trade and diplomatic recognition—for full withdrawal?" He liked that and encouraged me to put it out there. I happened to bump into Amir Moussa, the head of the Arab League, who was also there. I tried it out on him, and he said, "You know, why don't you put that out there?" Occasionally I do these letters from the president to Arab leaders as columns. I decided to write a letter from Bush to the

Arab League, laying it all out. By coincidence I went to Saudi Arabia a couple of weeks later and interviewed Crown Prince Abdullah. I asked him about this proposal. He completely shocked me by saying, "Well, you've broken into my drawer, because that's my idea. That has been the peace plan I've been thinking of proposing." We were speaking off the record in his house in Riyadh, and I asked him to put it on the record. He was uncomfortable doing that. I tried to convince him until two in the morning. Finally he said, "I want to sleep on it." It took awhile, but he decided to put it on the record. Abdullah stuck by it, and it took off. At the time, everything was frozen in the peace process, so it was a big deal.

PLAYBOY: Might Abdullah have been using you?

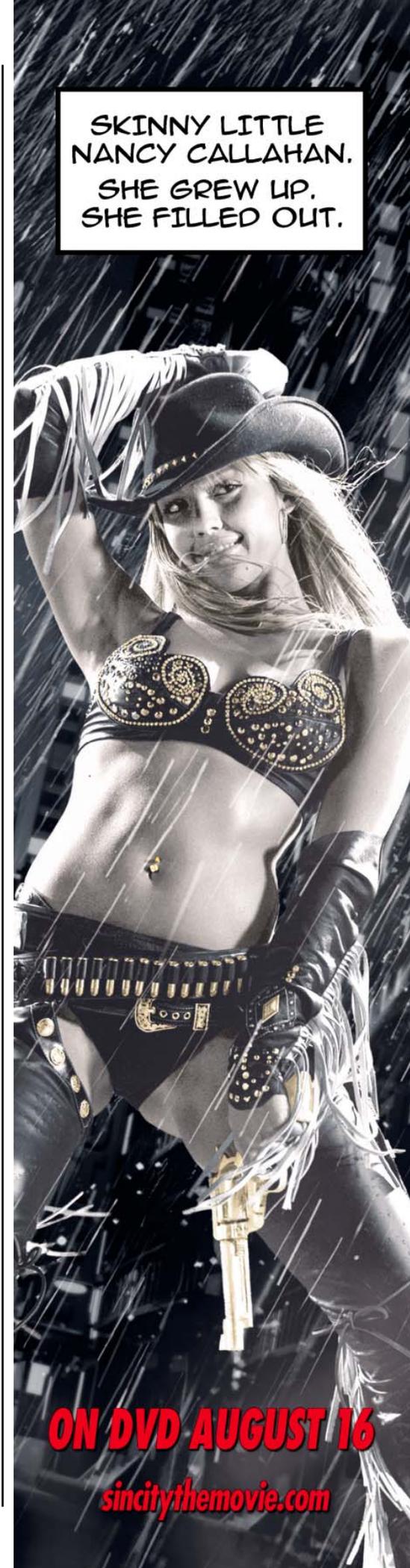
FRIEDMAN: For what? Was some of this an effort to burnish the Saudi image after 9/11? Absolutely. But if an Arab leader wants to use me to present a breakthrough peace proposal that might break the logjam in Middle East peace, well, here's my number. Call anytime. Abdullah eventually took it to the Arab League. It remains on the table as the only consensus Arab peace initiative.

PLAYBOY: Ted Koppel criticized you. He said, "Journalistic-fueled diplomacy is highly inappropriate."

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I did a terrible thing. I'm going to confess it now in *PLAYBOY*. I went to Saudi Arabia. I interviewed the crown prince. I asked him what he thought of this peace proposal. I opened my notebook. I wrote down what he said. I told the world. The fact that it had diplomatic ramifications was totally out of my control. And by the way, I'm not on the news desk. I'm the one who wrote the thing. I made it up. It all came out of my head to begin with. The *Columbia Journalism Review* may have some issue with this, but as we all know, the journalism business is not without its jealousy factor. So some of that, I'm sure, is at play as well.

PLAYBOY: Does criticism, whether from Ted Koppel or *Harper's*, which compared you to Newt Gingrich, bother you?

FRIEDMAN: I missed that in *Harper's*. It's hard to keep track of them all. But look, I'm no more thin-skinned or thick-skinned than anybody else. People tell you, "It's water off a duck's back." I haven't yet met the person for whom that is true—whether it's the president of the United States, the secretary of state or journalists. Nobody likes to be written about in a way that's mocking or sneering. You'd prefer to have people support your ideas and approve of them. But I've certainly reached a stage in my life in which I understand they'll come after you only if they think you count. I take it as a compliment that I'm in there stirring the pot. If you're dishing it out—and I am dishing it out—you've got to be able to take it. That's my attitude. Just keep it clean and take a number. We'll get to everybody.



SKINNY LITTLE
NANCY CALLAHAN.
SHE GREW UP.
SHE FILLED OUT.

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PLAYBOY: Does your role change depending on the administration in the White House? Was your role during the Clinton years different from what it is now?

FRIEDMAN: I was Clinton's biggest critic on NATO expansion. I was a complete pain in the butt for him. Now I'm Bush's biggest critic on energy. I was Clinton's biggest supporter on NAFTA, and I have probably been one of the people who have given the Democratic rationale for the war in Iraq. I am now a harsh critic of the current administration for its failure to prepare us for the flat world.

PLAYBOY: We haven't yet discussed the impact of the flattening of the world on sex. What will be different?

FRIEDMAN: Pornography and gambling have been two huge killer apps in terms of driving bandwidth around the world; anyone who traces the history of the development of the Internet knows that gambling and pornography played a huge role. Those, file swapping, and music and video downloads are probably the biggest. The overall point is that the flattening of the world is a friend of Infosys and of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is an open-source global supply chain, only a suicide supply chain. It is a friend of pornography and e-banking. It is a friend of trafficking in women and trafficking in AIDS drugs. The bad guys are always early adopters, whether it's Al Qaeda or people who traffic in women or put up gambling sites from the Cayman Islands. The flattening of the world goes both ways. These technologies do only one thing: They enable you to reach farther faster. What you reach farther faster to do, whether it's to alleviate poverty or promote prostitution, depends on your imagination.

PLAYBOY: Given the dangers, do you advocate more or less regulation of technology?

FRIEDMAN: Regulation is important. Some solutions are technological, some are regulatory, and they are all evolving. People thought regulating music was impossible after Napster. Lo and behold, we found a solution to the problem, and everyone—or almost everyone, I think—is happy. Now we have a way to provide entertainment for people at a reasonable price and at the same time remunerate artists so they will go out and write songs and remunerate record companies so they will produce those songs in a way that we can all enjoy them. As a result we have iTunes and the iPod.

PLAYBOY: Do you use them?

FRIEDMAN: I do.

PLAYBOY: What's on your iPod?

FRIEDMAN: My iPod has things like Simon and Garfunkel, Shania Twain, the Dixie Chicks, Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers. Oh God, you're really going to date me with these.

PLAYBOY: It dates you to a childhood in the 1960s. Were you raised in a family that was engaged in politics?

FRIEDMAN: Politics and current events

were discussed. My parents subscribed to *Time* magazine and the morning and afternoon newspapers. For whatever reason, I devoured them. I used to read the columnists.

PLAYBOY: What did your parents do for a living?

FRIEDMAN: My father was the vice president of a ball-bearing company, and my mother was a part-time bookkeeper for a delicatessen. I grew up in a small suburb of Minneapolis called St. Louis Park. I grew up in a conservative Jewish family.

PLAYBOY: When did you decide to become a journalist?

FRIEDMAN: In 10th grade I took journalism. The teacher was the opposite of cool, but we hung around her classroom like it was the malt shop and she was Wolfman Jack. She had a huge impact on me. I was on my high school paper, too, though not on my college paper. But while I was in London for college, I wrote and submitted a column to the op-ed page of *The Des Moines Register*. They paid me \$50. I was hooked ever after. Throughout college I wrote several more op-ed pieces. Then I got a job at UPI even though I

In my view, the India-Pakistan cease-fire was brought to you not by General Powell but by General Electric. You know, "We bring good things to life."

had never covered a fire or a city hall meeting. But I had these 10 or 12 op-ed columns. So I actually started journalism as a columnist out of London.

PLAYBOY: How did your beat become the Middle East?

FRIEDMAN: The number two man at the UPI bureau in Beirut got nipped in the ear by a piece of flying glass or something when a man was robbing a jewelry store. He basically said, "I want out of here." I was asked if I wanted to go to Beirut. I was always interested in the Middle East, and here was an opportunity of a lifetime.

PLAYBOY: Back to your Golden Arches theory: Are you waiting for the time when we will see McDonald's restaurants throughout the Middle East—in the new Palestinian state, in Baghdad?

FRIEDMAN: Believe me, it will be a wonderful sign. However, undeterred by the critics, in the new book I have evolved the Golden Arches theory into the Dell theory of conflict prevention. It says that two countries that are part of the same global supply chain will never fight a war.

PLAYBOY: Yet pairs of Asian countries,

including China and Taiwan and China and Japan, are part of the same global supply chain. Though unlikely, it's conceivable that they could wind up in a war.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, China may invade Japan, if you're listening to the rhetoric. China may invade Taiwan. But if they were to go to war, they'd have to weigh the price. If they lose their part of the supply chain—if the supply chain moves away from them because companies have decided they are no longer a reliable link—it would be like pouring cement down an oil well.

I'm trying to make a larger point about how foreign policy is written. I'm thinking about the conversations that must go on in these countries. Chinese leaders might be saying, "I think those Taiwanese are getting awfully uppity. Let's invade them." Maybe the generals come in and say, "We need to invade them. Yes, they are tearing the motherland asunder." Others are saying, "Yeah, let's invade them." But the general goes out the door and the leaders start talking: "You know, my son's a partner with a Taiwanese in a wafer factory." Somebody else at the table says, "You know, my son is a partner in a semiconductor plant in Taiwan." Suddenly after reflection they say, "You know, why don't we give the Taiwanese another chance?"

In my view, the India-Pakistan cease-fire after their nuclear crisis was brought to you not by General Powell but by General Electric. You know, "We bring good things to life."

There is this idiotic view of geopolitics that the only conversation going on is one about armies. It says that these other issues—the supply chain, deficit-to-GDP ratio, currency values and how we're going to get the next generation of technology in order to thrive in the modern world—isn't part of the conversation. Well, that's nuts. It's a very impoverished view of foreign affairs, and at the end of the day it can't explain the world.

PLAYBOY: Given that view's prevalence, are you pessimistic?

FRIEDMAN: There is good news, too. No society on the planet is better positioned to keep its people upgrading their education and making good collaborators in this pluralistic society than the United States. We have the best research universities in the world, the most rule of law and the most efficient capital markets in the world by a factor of God knows how many. But we are not playing to our strengths. We are riding on a lot of inertia. It's not too late—yet. I figured this out only in the past year or two. I was a complete ignoramus about the deep impact of technology. I retooled myself so that I could stay relevant, just as we all have to do. My framework needed updating. My 2.0 version needed to be updated to 3.0. Because if I didn't update it, I was going to write something very stupid in *The New York Times*.



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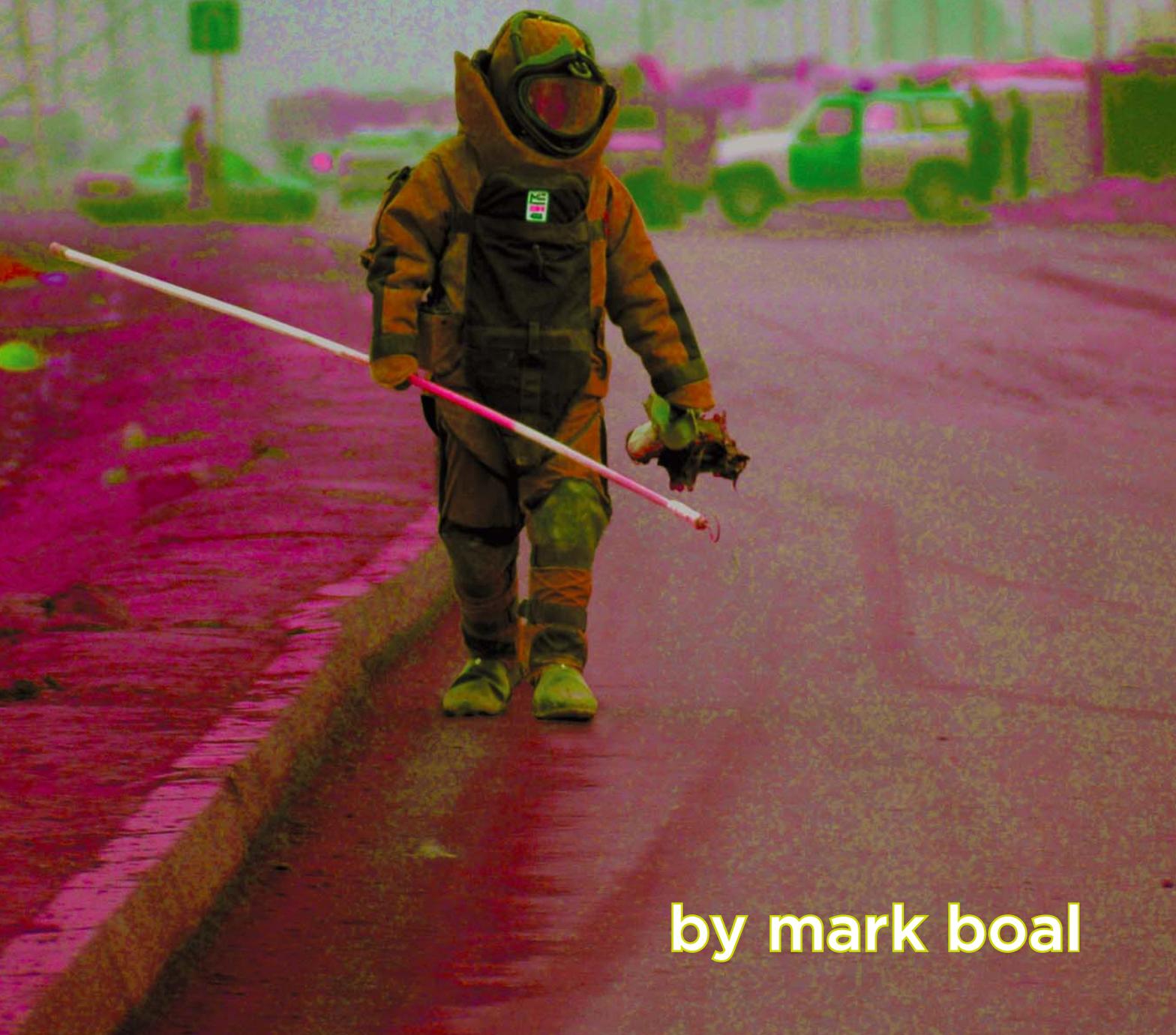
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DIMENSION
HOME VIDEO

For Staff Sergeant Jeffrey Sarver of the U.S. Army's 788th Ordnance Company, the war in Iraq couldn't get any more personal. What it's like to be **THE MAN IN THE...**



by mark boal

BOOM MEMBER SUIT

It's 4:30 P.M., early December 2004, and a caravan of Humvees rumbles out of Camp Victory carrying Staff Sergeant Jeffrey S. Sarver and his team of bomb-squad technicians from the U.S. Army's 788th Ordnance Company. As Sarver's team bounces down Victory's rutted roads, the convoy passes a helipad where Chinooks, Black

Hawks and Apaches thump in and out, some of them armed with laser-guided missiles and 30-millimeter cannons that fire fist-size shells. Sarver sees the Bradley and Abrams tanks sitting in neat rows, like cars at a dealership, their depleted-uranium bumpers aligned with precision. All that lethal hardware is parked, more or less useless



Sarver (above) takes the long, lonely walk downrange to defuse an improvised explosive device, known in this war as an IED, while an Army Ranger watches his back. Right, from top: Sarver, Williams and Millward, part of the Badass Baghdad Bomb Squad (their words). During their six-month tour, which ended in January 2005, these three soldiers are believed to have “rendered safe” more IEDs than any other explosive-ordnance-disposal team since combat operations in Iraq began. They may have saved hundreds of lives.

against the Iraqi insurgency’s main weapon in this phase of the war: improvised explosive devices made from artillery shells, nine-volt batteries and electrical tape—what the troops call IEDs.

As they leave the front gate, Sarver is in high spirits. He grabs the radio and sings out in his West Virginia twang, “Hey, ah, do you want to be the dirty old man or the cute young boy?”

It is a job so dangerous that bomb techs are five times more likely to die in Iraq than all other soldiers in the theater.

“I’ll be the boy,” comes the response with a laugh. It’s Sarver’s junior team member, Specialist Jonathan Williams.

“Okay, cute boy. This is dirty old man, over.”

“Roger, ol’ man. We’re en route to the *ah-ee-dee*.”

decades of war—and the caravan blasts down its highways, jumping curbs on the side streets, pushing through traffic like VIPs. The lead Humvee driver leans on the horn, and his gunner in the .50-caliber machine gun turret shouts, “*Imshee, imshee, imshee!* Go away, go away, go away!” his finger ready on the trigger if any car violates the cushion of space between them and anything Iraqi.

At last they arrive at an intersection where everything is still. Here the city has stopped dead, pressing itself against roadblocks set up by a Ranger team, and traffic is backing up on both sides of the busy crossroads. This is what the war in Iraq looks like on most days: a traffic jam and a roadside bomb. The war has stopped to wait for Sarver and his fellow techs,

the 100- to 150-man counterforce in this theater, who are specifically trained to handle the homemade bombs that now account for more than half of American hostile deaths.

Sarver is out of his seat and moving fast, darting up to a cluster of Ranger officers. A little guy, just five-foot-eight in combat boots, Sarver is a head shorter than the Rangers. His helmet bobs at the level of their shoulders as he steps up and slaps one of them on the back, saying, “What’s goin’ on boys? What have we got here? Where’s the *ah-ee-dee* at?”

The Rangers point to a white plastic bag fluttering in the breeze on the side of a dusty median, 300 meters downrange.

Sarver, 33, in wraparound shooting shades that make his baby face look even younger, takes a second to consider the possibilities: Is it real or a decoy to lure him into the kill zone of a second bomb? Is it a hoax designed only to pull him into the shooting range of a sniper? Is it wired to a mine or daisy-chained to a series of IEDs? Is it wired at all or remote-controlled? Is it on a mechanical timer ticking down? Wired in a collapsible circuit that will trigger the explosion when he cuts it? He runs back to his truck, a few inches of belly fat moving under his uniform. He keeps his time on the ground to a minimum because it is impossible to tell whether that Iraqi in the dark suit with the cell phone is calling his wife or transmitting Sarver’s position to a sniper team. This is a job so dangerous that bomb techs in Iraq are five times more likely to die than all other soldiers in the theater.

He tells Specialist Williams and Sergeant Chris Millward to break out the \$150,000 Talon robot, which has articulating plier grips and tanklike treads. The bot moves out under the remote control of a military-grade laptop that Sergeant Millward operates on the hood of the Humvee. It zips down to the bag

and pulls it apart. Then it separates the shell from the electronics, or at least it appears to. Army protocol insists the area is not safe until a human explosive-ordnance-disposal tech goes downrange and sees the device with his own eyes. Sarver's team kneels in the dirt, working on his armor like squires attending a knight. Soon he is strapped into an 80-pound bomb-protection envelope that will save his life if the blast is caused by five pounds or less of explosives. As the men secure the straps, Sarver looks down, impatient.

"Come on, man, let's go," Sarver says. "Let's go."

Williams seals Sarver in by inserting a clear visor over the helmet. He taps his boss on the shoulder, and Sarver is off, each step bringing him closer to a personal encounter with a lethal machine. His world changes as he gets closer to the bomb. At 10 feet out, the point of no return, he encounters what he calls the Morbid Thrill. He feels a methlike surge of adrenaline. In the helmet's amplified speakers he hears his heart thump and his breath rasp, and then he sees it up close, the IED, an ancient artillery round wired to a blasting cap, half hidden in the white plastic bag.

He grabs the cap and heads back toward the safety zone, barely noticing a second white bag nearly out of his sight line in a roadside gully. There is a moment now when he doesn't breathe. He can run for his life and hope to beat this secondary bomb, which an insurgent placed specifically to kill him as he worked on the first one, or he can dive on it and take his chances. He pitches himself into the dirt and reaches for the blasting cap's wire with shaky hands, the menu of possible outcomes running through his mind. He decides he has to act now; there is no time for deliberation. He pulls it apart, pink wire by pink wire, since all of Baghdad's bombs seem to be wired with discolored old Soviet detonation cord. Then he breathes.

When he removes his helmet he stands sweating, pale, his body shaking from the rush. Williams and Millward run to help their boss out of the suit. Sarver is giddy, asking for a beer, cracking crude jokes about how close he came this time. "Can you smell the poop? Can you see the stain? I think I shit my pants."

Clear now, the area is reopened to traffic, and Team One turns toward the base, speeding down Route Irish while mosques broadcast the call to evening prayer. Soon it will be dark, curfew time, and the bomb makers will be at home. Sarver often wonders about these men. Would they shout "Allah akbar" ("God is great") if he were splattered on their streets? Are they political or just ex-soldiers in it for the \$25,000 bounty the insurgency has reputedly placed on the heads of EOD techs—money to feed their kids, nothing personal? Back in Michigan his own son will turn eight in March. Another child is on the way, brother or sister to Jared. He'll see them both when his tour ends—just 30 more days of a six-month deployment that began that summer. That wasn't so bad. Thirty days not to get shot or blown into bits of DNA.

Then it comes to him again, the pep talk he gives himself in the downtime between missions. As the Humvee rocks and rattles down the road, Sarver stares out the window at the Iraqi dusk gorgeously transformed by all the pollution into a blazing sunset, and he plays it over again in his mind: *This is great. I love this place. If I keep going, I will have racked up more IEDs and disarmed more bombs than any man in the history of this war.*

Five months earlier, only weeks after he bagged his last buck in the forests north of Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, Sarver arrived in Iraq. He was excited to be there. During his nine years as an EOD tech he'd been to Egypt, Bosnia and Korea, but those were merely peacetime jobs, whereas this was, as he says, a "full-on combat operation" that had the entire United States military behind it. He had all the high-tech equipment he could use: electronics to jam the insurgents' cell phones, which they use to detonate IEDs, the suit, the bot. It was a long way from World War II, when bomb-disposal teams

were first created. Starting in 1942, when Germany blitzed London with time-delayed bombs, specially trained U.S. soldiers joined British officers who diagrammed the devices using pencil sketches before they attempted to defuse them with common tools. Many of these men died. During the Vietnam war the job grew even more dangerous. Bomb techs learned to unravel trip wires in the jungle, and they were called upon to work in hospital operating rooms, helping surgeons remove unexploded ordnance embedded in the bodies of wounded GIs. Not until the war in Iraq did IEDs become "the enemy's weapon of choice," in the words of Major General Martin Dempsey, commander of the 1st Armored Division. Bomb techs suddenly became indispensable.

For Sarver, Baghdad was a proving ground, a place where a bomb expert's specialized skills would be crucial to the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. "That's all the Army does all day, is go out on patrols looking for IEDs," says Sarver. "They got guys just sitting out there for hours in tanks and Humvees, just waiting to get hit by an IED. This whole war is about IEDs."

In July 2004 orders came down that Sarver should put together a team and head to An Najaf, a town 100 miles south of Baghdad. As his partner, Sarver picked Williams, 26, a promising young tech just months out of training. Williams had been among the 40 percent of enrollees to complete the EOD school at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. He wears round steel-framed glasses, which give him a slightly bookish appearance, and he comports himself with an easygoing manner, quick to smile and laugh. "Hey, Williams, how would you like to go down with me to Najaf, where we can drink some beers and relax?" Sarver said one afternoon by the horseshoe pit. "It'll be cool."

When they arrived in August, the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit was fighting some 2,000 insurgents under the command of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in the Wadi Al Salam cemetery. It is one of the holiest places in Shiite Islam, for it adjoins the shrine of Imam Ali, son-in-law of the prophet Muhammad, and is one of the world's largest burial grounds, with an estimated 5 million bodies interred in a vast network of tombs and underground crypts three miles long and 1.8 miles wide. The insurgents fired on the advancing marines from positions behind the gravestones and tombs, many of which were adorned with life-size photographs of the deceased. Several times while working, Sarver and the other men fighting



The insurgents' weapon of choice, circa 2004: a classic Baghdad IED, constructed with a South African 155-millimeter artillery round wired to a cordless phone, a nine-volt battery and a timer from a washing machine.



Anatomy of an explosion: The forced detonation of a Russian rocket-propelled grenade by an EOD team at Camp Victory, Baghdad, December 2004. The rocket was packed with C-4 explosives to control the detonation, creating a typical military explosion. Unlike HMEs (what EOD guys call Hollywood movie explosions), with a fireball billowing gorgeous red flames into the sky, the conventional military explosion is ugly and dirty. The most dangerous part of these explosions is overpressure, supercompressed gases that rush out from the blast at 13,000 miles an hour.

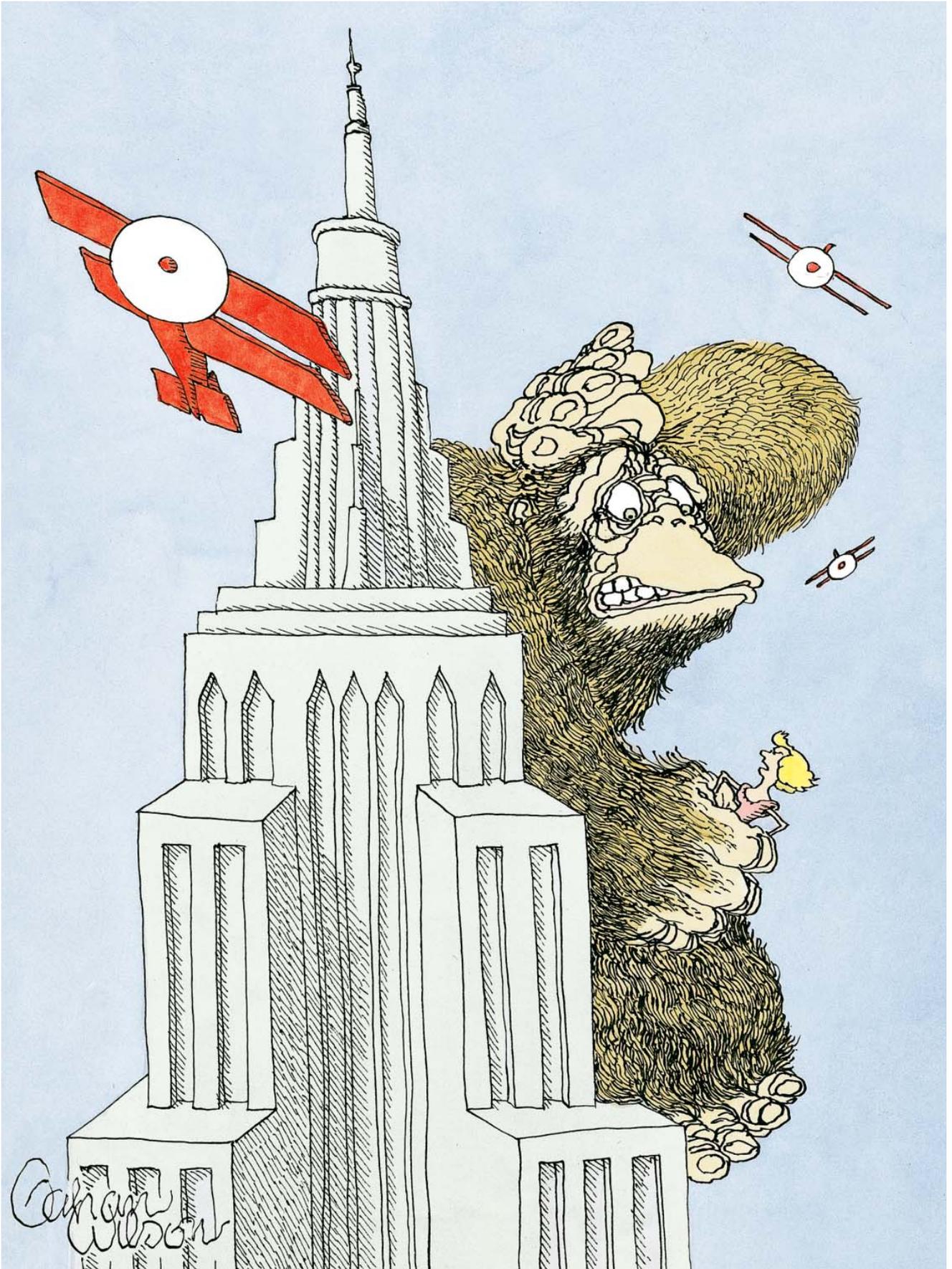
squeezed off shots only to discover later that their bullets had hit pictures of dead men. Little by little, American airpower drove back al-Sadr's militia, but as it retreated it left behind a group of suicide fighters to defend the cemetery, which had been booby-trapped with mines and rockets and IEDs.

While the main fighting force hung back a few hundred yards, Sarver and Williams went in first with Marine EOD techs. In three weeks of some of the heaviest action ever experienced by bomb techs, they fought and worked amid the tombs in 120-degree heat, sweating off pounds of body weight every day. Each morning, Sarver and Williams returned to an area of the cemetery that was particularly dense with IEDs. They gained 10, 15 feet of ground at a time, as in some World War I trench warfare, except they were disarming bombs as mortars crashed down around them. Sarver worked freestyle in An Najaf, off the book. There were no protocols to explain how to disarm a ground-to-air missile that had been lashed to the top of a palm tree while people were shooting at you. Often they would get pinned down. The marines encouraged them to press on, shouting, "Come on, man, run, run. They can't hit shit." That wasn't always the case. Sarver saw a private hit and killed instantly by an 80-millimeter mortar that severed his torso and blew it 20 feet away from his legs. "The poor guy died because he'd been ordered to run into a wrecked-out Humvee to retrieve a helmet," Sarver says.

At the peak of the fighting, two black-robed militiamen armed with AK-47s darted between the graves, taking potshots at Sarver's team as they were bent over trying to dig out an IED buried in the ground. Sarver crawled to a rise that looked down on the militiamen, and when they stood Sarver shot one of them. When he wasn't being shot at, Sarver worried about the frag from the mortars exploding around him, scraps of metal

traveling at 2,700 feet per second, which would cut through flesh and bone, searing the tissue in its flight path as it broke through and came popping out the other side of what used to be you. Even more than the frag, he feared overpressure, the wave of supercompressed gases that expands from the center of a blast. (All chemical explosions are solids turning into gases at a very fast rate.) This compressed air comes at an unlucky bomb tech at a force equal to 700 tons per square inch, traveling at a speed of 13,000 miles an hour, a destructive storm that rips through the suit, crushes the lungs and liquefies the brain; the fire that follows will roar upward through the ventilation cracks in his helmet and cook him inside. It's possible to survive a blast of overpressure if you're far enough away from the detonation, and this has given rise to a strange debate in the EOD community: Is it better to have your lungs full or empty if you're hit by overpressure from a distance? Each has its merits; a full lung is less likely to rattle against the rib cage and be punctured, but it is also more likely to burst on impact. At an even greater distance overpressure merely freezes your skin.

At night Bradleys fired their 25-millimeter cannons until first light, and the *boom-boom-boom* made the tents billow and flap. Next door in the medical tent, the moans of wounded marines joined the sound of coalition artillery. "You couldn't sleep when the tanks were firing," Sarver recalls, "and then you'd see the Maverick missiles coming in from Harrier jets miles away. They'd be rumbling overhead—*grrrrrr*—and at night the afterburners would have flames spitting out, and you could see these bombs—they're 500 pounds each—bounce as they hit the ground before they went *boooooom!* Oh man, these bombs were huge." The bombs destroyed the old tombs and whoever might still be hiding in there with the dead. Mortuary Affairs hadn't been *(continued on page 148)*



"This is positively your worst vacation idea ever!"





SWEDISH BLONDES

We searched high and low,
and now it's official: The world's most
beautiful blondes live in Sweden

Gentlemen, as Anita Loos told us years ago, prefer blondes. But she wasn't thinking about some nouveau Jazz Age development. Our jones for blondes is in our DNA, something that got hardwired in the species on that day eons ago when some simple-celled ancestor crawled out of the primordial ooze onto some chilly beach, beheld the sun, the great blazing orb, and sensed that with all that light and heat a rich, multicelled life would be possible. It's the same with us. We see those halos of golden hair and we are warmed.

Pictured on these pages is evidence that, of all the world's brilliant blondes, the Swedish blonde is the beluga caviar, the Havana Cohiba, the Bobby Hull slap shot, the Boston baked bean—in short, the gold standard for the golden haired. Now, if you're a Danish blonde, a Norwegian blonde, a Finnish blonde, even a marigold-yellow Bronx blonde, you may wonder if your charms aren't being given short shrift. Well, maybe they are. We'll make a note to investigate. But for now just give us a moment to appreciate these corn silk-haired Swedes.

Sweden has given the world many gifts, but some are a little heavy on the push-back. For example, a Swede, Alfred Nobel, invented TNT. Thanks, Al—very helpful. Vikings: a great nickname for a football team but not exactly PC on the pillage issue. Ikea furniture: looks fab in the catalog but daunting spread out in pieces on the floor. ABBA: sold a lot of records but not to anybody who'll admit it. The guitar stylings of Yngwie J. Malmsteen.... See a pattern?

But the blondes just keep giving. With their blue eyes, the milky radiance of their skin and their shining corona of hair, a light exudes from them that does not dim. Men love blondes and always have. In Sweden, one of the lands of the midnight sun, the skies may blacken in winter, but the nights are never truly dark.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ARNY FREYTAG



To create this pictorial we dispatched a photographic team to search Sweden from Svappavaara in the north to Trelleborg in the south. They scoured the countryside, interviewed scores of milkmaids and mermaids and tirelessly stayed up all night in Sweden's many bars and discos, all in an effort to bring our dear readers the most beautiful pictures of the most beautiful blondes in the world. Among their discoveries were the lovely Jessica Oakley (above), who is studying business in Stockholm (that's the capital), and the beautiful Alexandra Andersson (opposite page), whose image reminds us to tell you that Svensk Mjök is the name of the Swedish Dairy Association.





The Swedish diet—which is a rich *smörgåsbord* of *köttbullar* (Swedish meatballs), *surströmming* (fermented Baltic herring), *kåldolmar* (cabbage rolls), *kroppkakor* (potato dumplings filled with pork), *fläsk och bruna bönor* (pork rinds and brown beans) and *pyttipanna* (hacked and fried meat, onions and preboiled potatoes)—might sit a bit heavily on some folks, but it certainly doesn't seem to be weighing down Göteborg's lovely Lisa Mårtensson, a singer (above); the sensuous Simone Cronstrand (right); and the alluring Elita Lofblad (opposite page), shown here with a tiny Smart car painted in the blue-and-yellow colors of the Swedish flag. We know what you're thinking: What car?





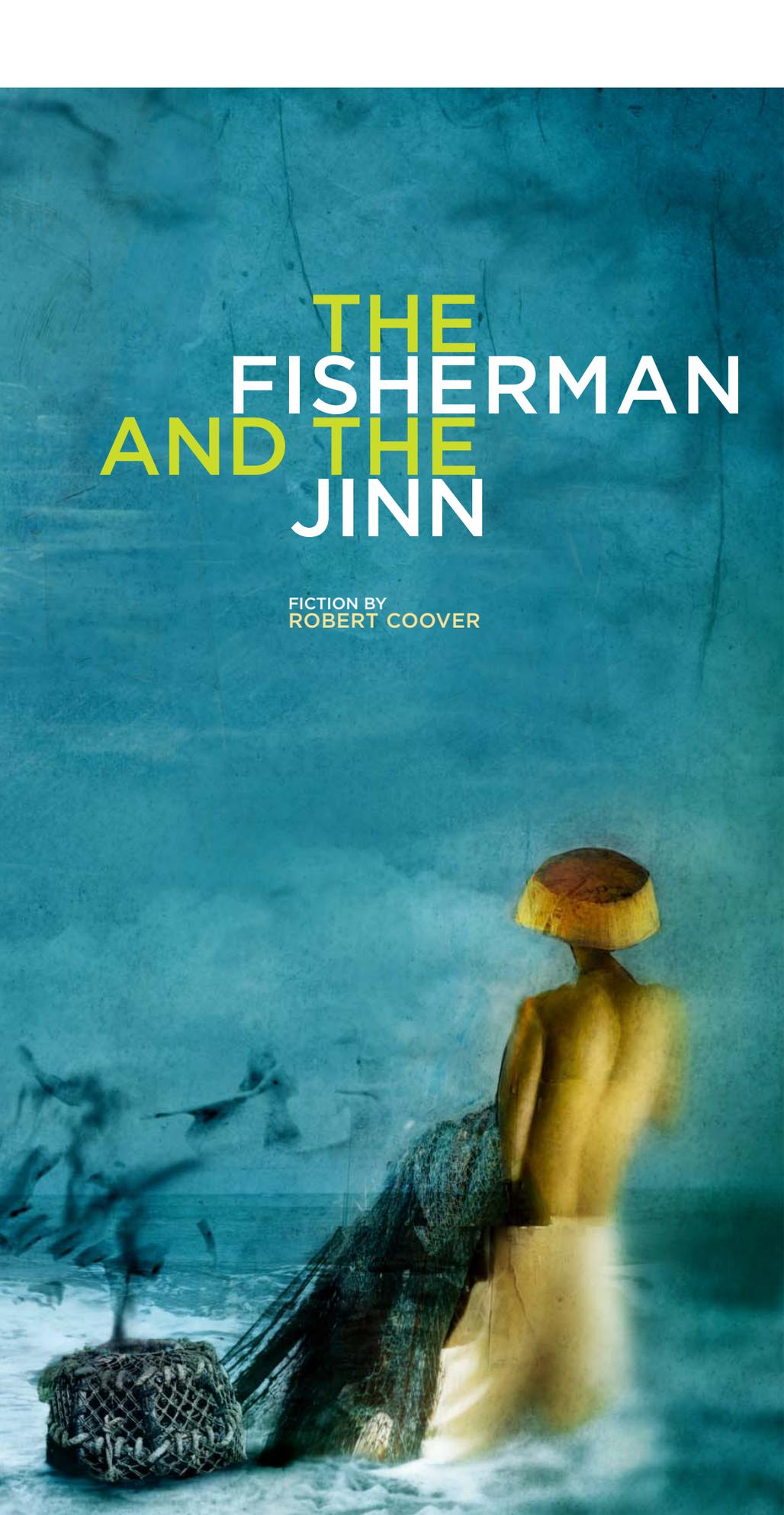


Swedes can be thought of as a people of extremes. They have 24 hours of sun every day for two months in the summer and 24 hours of darkness every day in the winter. They did their rampaging thing with the Vikings and haven't fought a war since 1814. They'll run Pippi Longstocking at you, and when you've had enough they'll bring on Ingmar Bergman. This makes us wonder to what extremes a relationship might go if it were with the extremely sophisticated Cindy Paulsson (top left, with fashionable Swedish furniture) or the extremely steamy Louise Henziger (bottom left, in a Swedish sauna) or the extremely romantic Rebekah Johansson (above, with delicate Swedish flowers) or the extremely beguiling Emma Johnsson (opposite and opening pages, showing why she should captain Sweden's Extreme Flirting team).



See more Swedish blondes at cyber.playboy.com.





THE FISHERMAN AND THE JINN

FICTION BY
ROBERT COOVER

CASTING A NET INTO THE SEA IS
MUCH EASIER THAN DECIDING
WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE

The old fisherman has had another shitty day, hauling up the dead detritus of the sea. He's already cast his net three times; four's his limit. Why? He doesn't remember, but that's it, one to go. He tucks up his shirttails, wades in waist-deep, casts again for the thousand-thousandth time, give or take a throw or two. He waits for the net to sink. He can feel fish swimming between his legs, tickling his cods. Praise God, the bountiful sea. But this time his net snags on the bottom. It's not fair. He works his scrawny old ass to the bone, and what does he have to show for it? Wet rags and an empty belly. Even if he caught a fish, what would he do with it? He'd sell it to a rich man, go hungry and cast his net again. His existence is a ceaseless punishment. He throws off his clothes and dives under. The net's about all he's got in the world; he has to rescue it.

This time it has caught a brass jar with a lead stopper. Looks old, maybe he can sell it in the copper market. It's heavy, not easy to drag it out of there; he nearly drowns trying, and the net gets shredded. Maybe there's a jinn inside, he thinks. If he doesn't kill me, maybe I can wish for enough money to be free from these

Come on, think, think! The end of all disease? World peace? No, fuck the world! It's his turn! How about healthy and alert and virile for 200 years: Is that one wish or several?

stupid labors, eat other people's fish. Or get my youth back, the old dangler functioning again. New teeth. The apple of Samarqand to cure my crotch itch. A young, beautiful wife who talks less. A rich princess maybe. Rule a kingdom. Ride horses. Kill a few people. Sure enough, the lead seal has been stamped with an ancient seal ring. For once in his life he's in luck. He gets out his knife but then has second thoughts. If there's a jinn bottled up inside, squashed in there for centuries, he could be in a pretty explosive mood. Life's shit, sure, but does he really want to end it and no doubt in some horrible way only jinns can imagine? But what other way does it ever end? Even now he can feel things in his bones that suggest bad times coming. Best to take a chance. He scrapes away at the lead stopper until he pries it loose.

What comes out might be smoke, it might be dust, smells like death. Maybe just somebody's ashes. But the muck continues to curl out of the neck of the jar, slowly rising into the sky over him and spreading out over the sea, more and more of it, until that's all he can see. The sun's blotted out, the sea's brighter than the sky, it's as if the world is turning upside down. Then the dark mist gathers and takes shape, and suddenly, with a great clap of thunder that sets his knees knocking, there's a monstrous jinn standing there, feet planted in the shallow waters at the shore, head in the clouds, eyes blazing like there's a fire in its head, its teeth big as gravestones, gnashing. Sparks fly. If the old fisherman had any boots, he'd be quaking in them. As it is, naked still from his dive, he's trembling all over like a thin, pale jellyfish. The jinn, in a pent-up rage, kicks the brass jar far out to sea. There goes his ticket to the copper market. The jinn might be talking to him, but he can't hear a thing. He's pissing himself with terror, his ears are popping, his tongue is dry, his jaws are locked as if hammered together. "What? What?" he croaks at last. "I said," says the jinn, his voice like the wind on a violent day, "make a wish, Master! Choose carefully, for I've time for only one!"

Master? Ah, it's true then, the old stories, it's really happening. He's just been making a list; he can't remember it. Wealth, yes, heaps of it. But of what use is wealth if he dies before he can spend it? Likewise bedding down with princesses. Marrying a princess without youth would be like fishing with a torn net. But wishing for youth without a princess would be like casting his net on the desert. Can he wish for more wishes?

"You cannot, Master, as I will not be here to fulfill them! Make haste while there's time!"

"Oh, I don't know! I can't think! I wasn't ready for this!"

The jinn is bigger and scarier than ever. He has long snaky hair and claws where his fingernails should be. But he's harder to see. It's as if his edges are dissolving. There's less of him even as there's more of him. Come on, think, think! The end of all disease? World peace? No, fuck the world! It's his turn! How about healthy and alert and virile for at least 200 years: Is that one wish or several? And what would happen when the 200 years were up, how could he face that? What about simply a long life, get it going, what the hell, see what happens? He knows what happens. Just prolonging the misery. Some sort of toy? A flying carpet? An invisible cloak? A bottomless beer jug?

"Hurry, Master! Before it's too late!"

"I'm too old to hurry, damn it!"

The jinn is huge now. Almost as big as the cloud from which he was formed. But you can see the sun shining through him, and the fire in his eyes has dimmed to a flicker. His voice has become thin and echoey, his face is losing its features, his extensions are growing vague, bits and pieces blowing away when the wind blows. Which may be only his own heavy breathing.

"I know! Power! I want power! No! I want endless joy!"

"What...?"

"Endless joy! I want—!"

"I can't *he-ea-ar you-u-u...*!"

"Wait! Stay where you are! Joy! Just make me happy!"

Nothing left of the jinn now but a few bearded wisps floating in the breeze, and then they too fade away.

"Please! Come back, damn it!" he cries. "At least mend my net!"

But the jinn is gone. Not a trace. It's too late. Praise God, fucked again. The old fisherman hauls on his shirt with its wet tails, rolls up the rotten shreds of his net. On the sand, he spies part of the stamped lead seal. Ah. So he got something out of the encounter after all. A story. You see this lead seal? Let me tell you what happened. Trouble is, he's told too many stories like it before, none of them true, so no one will believe him now. Why would they? He wouldn't believe himself. They might even put him away. Lock him up as an old loony. He *is* an old loony; he wouldn't have an argument. And even if they did believe him, they'd want to know what he did with the jar. They'd think he stole it and would cut off his hands for thieving. Fuck that. He pitches the lead seal into the sea. He'll repair his net and have another go tomorrow. Maybe he'll catch a mermaid.





"Mom loves English gardens, but she's always had Italian gardeners."

S P O R T

Fast times in the Shelby Cobra, the Ferrari Spyder California

BY KEN GROSS



Behind closed doors in PLAYBOY's fantasy garage, you'll discover five seductive roadsters that turn heads like a Vermeer at an arts-and-crafts fair. Take a close look. You won't see their like again.

The roadster is the ultimate sports car, an open-air auto built for speed with a cockpit for two, and the models designed during the 1950s and 1960s set high-water marks for style and performance. The cars we've photographed here are the finest postwar two-seaters. (Disagree? Write us, please, and include photos.) These aren't just trophy cars; they're masterpieces you want to command on the pavement. Today intrusive electronics have excised most of the skill and fun out of motoring. Not so with these. The gas pedal is directly linked to the carburetors. When you shift the gears, you can hear them connect, and you must shift them well. Skilled input is rewarded with animated response.

The value of these cars in dollars (and yen and euros) has appreciated over time, but for us that's not the point. The glittering wheels, the throaty growl of a powerful engine, the perfection of a hood line, the ability to attack a twisty road with an exhaust note booming off the hillsides—that's what we love about these roadsters. If only there were more of them to go around.

S T A R S

and more of the most coveted roadsters the world has ever seen



• 1957 MERCEDES-BENZ 300 SL

Mercedes-Benz built its first SLs (for *sport and light*) after World War II to compete in Europe's most illustrious races, such as Italy's 1,000-mile Mille Miglia and France's 24 Hours of Le Mans. These coupes topped out at 155 miles an hour. An all-encompassing network of frame tubing dictated skyward-lifting gullwing doors that are now legendary. What you see here is the production roadster. Only 1,858 were built, all between 1957 and 1963. Under the hood: a 250 bhp, three-liter 45-degree-slant six-cylinder engine with a single overhead camshaft and fuel injection (a first in a production car). Drive a 300 SL today and you'll be amazed at the power and handling. About \$250,000 will buy a mint-condition model, if you can find an owner willing to part with one.

• 1957 BMW 507



Styled by German count Albrecht Goertz (who later designed the Datsun 240Z), BMW's 507 packs a 150 bhp, twin-carb V8 into a shortened sedan chassis. Rakish wheel cutouts frame tall tires, and the cockpit is cozier than a double bed. Only 253 were built. At a then-lofty \$9,000, a 507 was more expensive than a gullwing Benz—and still BMW lost money on each one. Today market prices top \$300,000. We hammered a 507 on Alpine back roads from Verona to Lake Como, and it solved the Italian hairpins with the aplomb of a new M6.

• 1964 FORD SHELBY COBRA 289



Racing legend Carroll Shelby designed the Cobra in 1962 as a competition model. Inspired by Britain's AC Ace, a lightweight, tubular-frame demon with disc brakes and agile road manners, the Cobra quickly became Ford's answer to the Corvette—a car powered by an American-made engine that could take checkered flags in races all over the States and Europe. The original Cobra had a 260-cubic-inch V8, but Shelby soon upgraded to the bigger 289-cubic-inch engine that's inside the roadster pictured here. The top drivers in the 1960s—Phil Hill,

• 1967 CHEVROLET CORVETTE 427/435 STING RAY



In 1967 Corvette cognoscenti special-ordered the L71, a 435 bhp, 427-cubic-inch big-block engine with aluminum heads, side exhausts, a close-ratio gearbox and aluminum wheels. The all-American racer could do sub-five-second zero-to-60 sprints and run to 160 mph, and all bragging rights were included. The top-line Vette's sticker was around \$6,000, an incredible performance bargain. Today a Sting Ray like this with desirable options is a \$150,000-plus car. It rides like a coal cart, with StairMaster clutch effort. Put your legs to work and hang on.



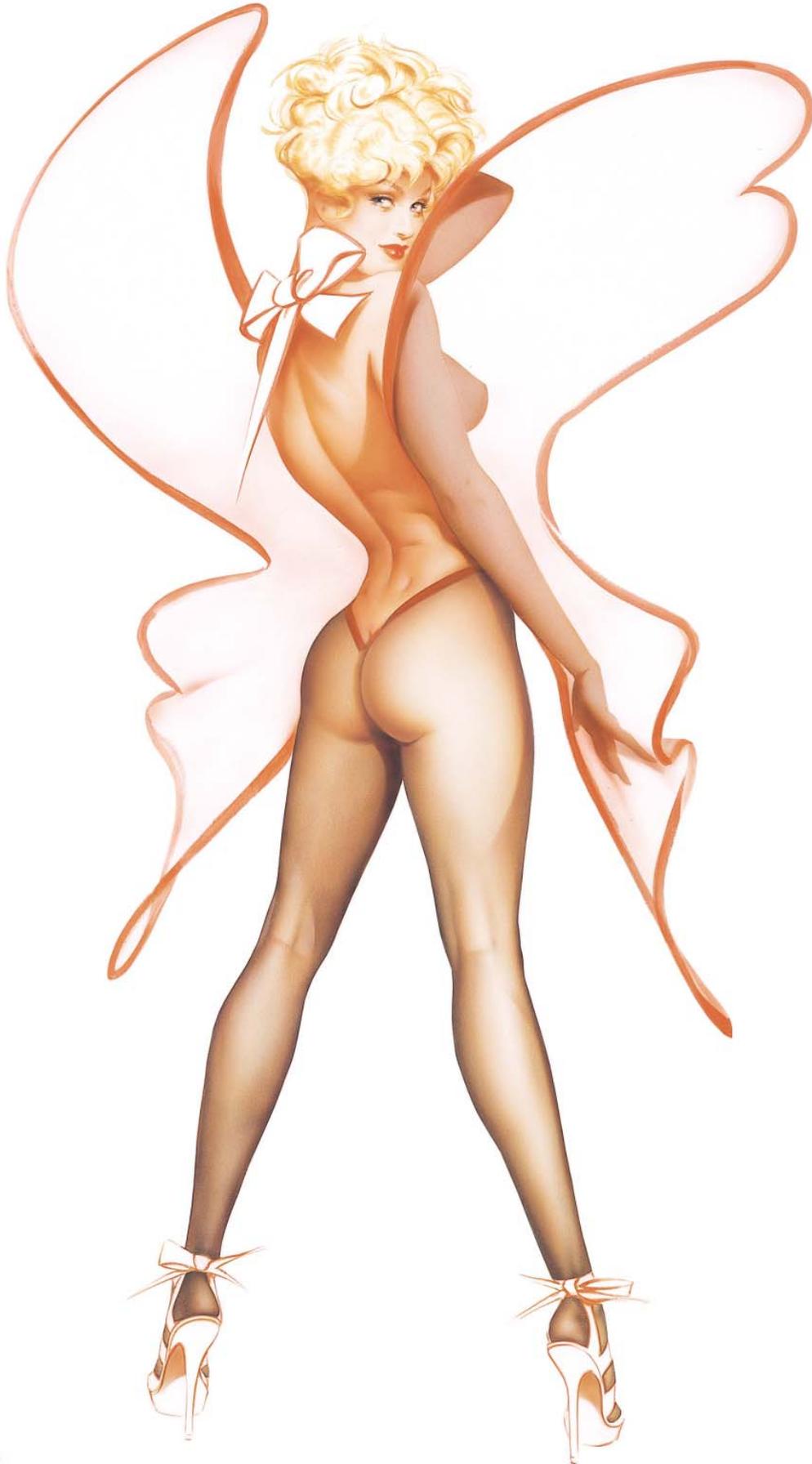
Dan Gurney, Ken Miles and Bob Bondurant—flocked to a car they knew could dominate the competition. Shelby later shoehorned Ford's 500 bhp, 427-cubic-inch V8 under the hood. (Although the car had the aerodynamics of a barn door, its sheer power was overwhelming.) The smaller, more nimble 289 is the most coveted model today. Perhaps no other American-made car inspires as much awe among gear-heads. Can't handle the \$400,000 tag? Stay tuned for the brand-new Shelby Cobra that Ford will release in 2007.

• 1960 FERRARI 250GT
SPYDER CALIFORNIA (SWB)



Ferrari rolled out a mere 54 short-wheel-base Spyder Californias from its Maranello, Italy factory between 1960 and 1963, so the \$2.5 million price tag on a vintage model today is shocking but understandable. This is the holy grail for collectors, a car that gets prettier and more elegant the longer you stare at it. Powered by Ferrari's 280 bhp, three-liter V12 with a trio of Weber carburetors linked to a four-speed, close-ratio gearbox, a competition model could dash from zero to 60 in little more than six seconds and hit 155 mph. The SWB's shifter is precise, its steering is crisp, the power is immediate, and the pitch of its V12 is operatic. Driven expertly, it still shows many sports cars the fast way home.





Olivia

"I'm just a butterfly...!"

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

HOW I SURVIVED 18 BUBBLES AND LEARNED TO LOVE STOCKS

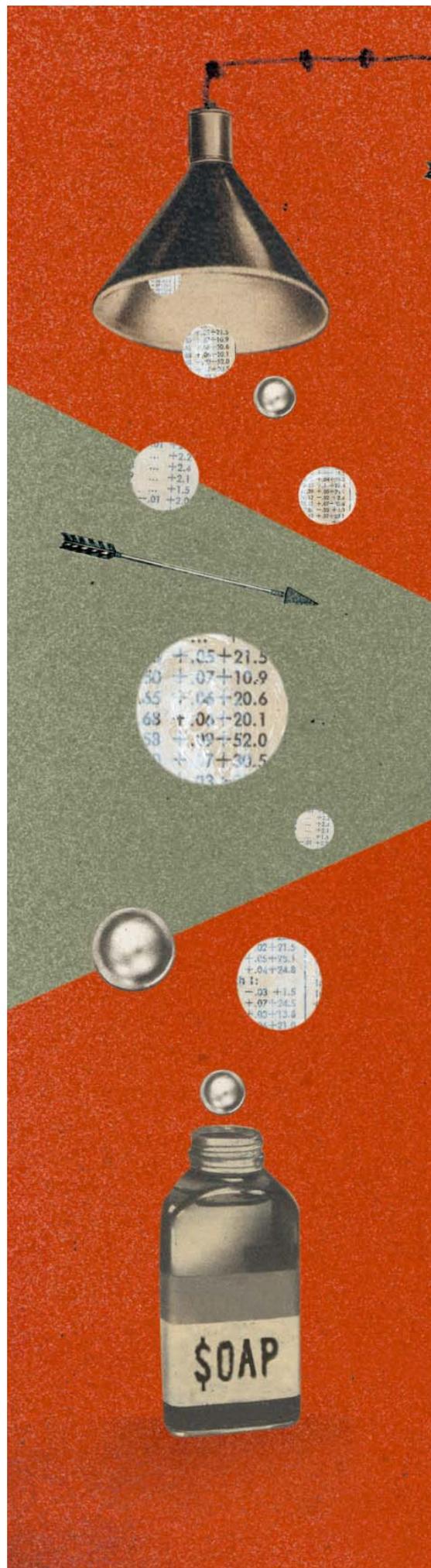
BY RAYMOND F. DEVOE JR.

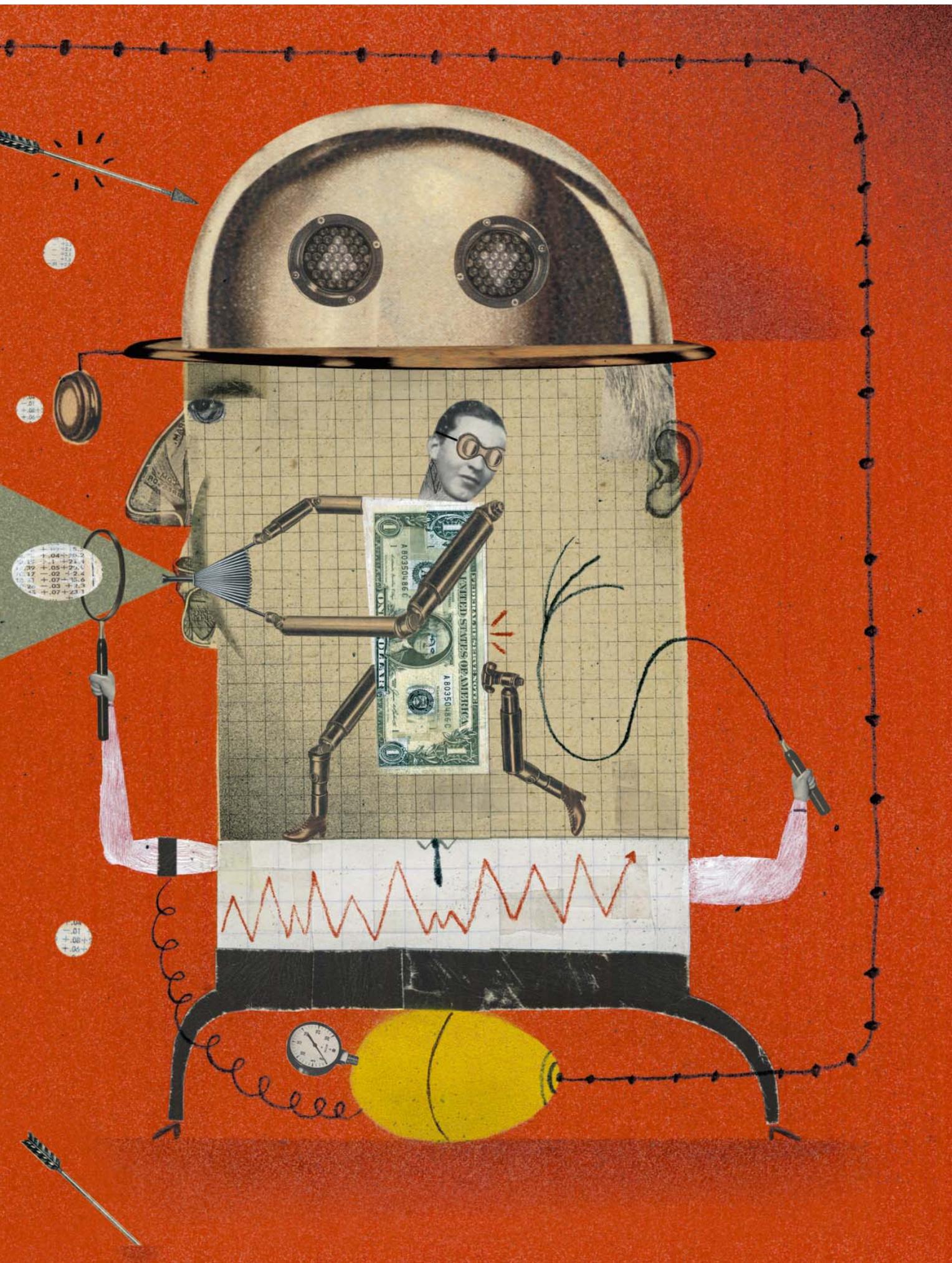
January 14, 2005 marked an anniversary not celebrated on Wall Street: Five years earlier the Dow Jones Industrial Average, an index of well-known, predominantly blue-chip industrial stocks, hit its all-time high of 11,722.98. For most of the first half of 2005 the Dow Jones hovered around 10,500, or 10.4 percent below that high. The Standard & Poor's 500, another index used to measure the stock market's performance, had fallen 8.9 percent from its March 24, 2000 peak of 1,527.46. But the real damage investors and shareholders had suffered in the past five years could be seen on the NASDAQ Composite Index of more than 4,000 mostly high-tech stocks, which remained more than 40 percent below its high of March 10, 2000. Those were the days of unlimited optimism about stock prices, matched only by overenthusiastic projections from the managements of that era's highfliers.

When asked when bear markets start, Sir John Templeton, founder of the Templeton Funds, has a standard answer: "Bear markets start at the point of maximum bullishness, and bull markets begin at the point of maximum bearishness." That sounds prophetic in retrospect, since those three indexes peaked within two and a half months of one another. I had turned

extremely bearish more than a year before that two-month period, feeling that the superspeculative mania had reached its high point. I was premature, which in the stock market translates as "I was wrong." It got even wilder, approaching insanity, and went on longer than I could have imagined. I have been through many speculative manias during my 50-year career on Wall Street, but they are typically confined to a single sector, such as technology, energy or airlines. This one was much more widespread and not limited to technology and Internet stocks, although they led the way with outrageous valuations based on overly optimistic management projections and the near panic among customers to obtain the newest equipment before their competitors did.

Any Wall Street veteran who has been through a speculative mania knows how it will end: badly and with tears. The only question is when. In early 2000, when mutual-fund investors were surveyed about their expectations for annual returns over the next decade, their answer was 18.2 percent, which was close to the S&P 500's average annual return during the previous decade. Financial behaviorists label this kind of thinking "anchoring," projecting the recent past into the future. Retirement





+1.00
+0.50
+0.25

+0.50
+0.25
+0.10

1.00	+0.04	+0.00
1.10	+1.1	+2.4
1.20	+0.5	+2.0
1.30	-0.2	-2.4
1.40	+0.7	+5.6
1.50	-0.3	+2.3
1.60	+0.7	+2.3

-0.01
+0.00
+0.04

BUBBLES AND MANIAS

There are many ways to lose your money, but the easiest is to let suspicion sleep. In my 50 years analyzing the stock market, I have seen a fool's parade of manias, bubbles and speculation—not to mention junk bonds, derivatives, conglomerates, leveraged buyouts and outright fraud. The chronology below should provide a cautionary tale. Remember, bubbles always end badly.

ATOMIC STOCKS: The Atomic Energy Commission artificially created the uranium market in the 1950s to meet its bomb-building needs. As the only legal buyer, it offered huge incentives to would-be prospectors. Once the AEC had enough, however, it effectively killed the market in 1960.

BOWLING FOR DOLLARS: Based on a technological breakthrough—the automatic pin spotter—a grubby business was transformed into a middle-class phenomenon. Even beer stocks took off during the bowling boom.

SPACE-SCIENCE-TECH BOOM: When running for president, Senator John Kennedy promised to put a man on the moon if elected, and as president he called for huge spending to close the “science gap” with the Soviet Union. The boom of 1960 to 1962 followed.

AIRLINES: Pan American Airways introduced Boeing's 707 in 1957, and other airlines quickly followed. The cost savings were phenomenal, and airline stocks soared in the early 1960s.

COLOR TV: Radio Corporation of America, the cutting-edge-technology company of the late 1920s, took off again in the late 1960s. In 1968 it finally surpassed its 1928 precrash peak.

MAINFRAME MANIA: About the same time RCA took flight, IBM and Digital Equipment emerged as market leaders, selling at well more than 50 times earnings.

THE GREAT GARBAGE MARKET OF 1968: This was the rent-a-kid era, when firms would hire 20-somethings unencumbered by memory to pick stocks. Wall Streeters said, “Hold your nose and buy.” Four years after the peak I tracked 30 of the institutional favorites. They were down an average of 98.2 percent.

THREE, TWO, ONE, CONTACTS! In the early 1970s the call to arms during the contact lens craze was the market in China—everyone there needed glasses. And then one calculated how much companies would make if they achieved market penetration of 10 percent, 20 percent or even more. Biotech figured in here too.

THE NIFTY 50: From 1970 to 1972 the Favored 50 growth stocks became institutional playthings. Companies such as Polaroid and Eastman Kodak were also called one-decision stocks, since the only decision was to buy them, or desert-island stocks, since a buyer could be shipwrecked for three to four years and come back to find his company's earnings still growing. The Nifty 50 sold at close to 50 times earnings, while the entire market was valued at close to 10 times earnings. One by one they were cracked. (concluded on page 158)

planning was simple with those returns; all you had to do was buy and hold.

An 18 percent annual gain means almost doubling your wealth every four years. Thus, if you had 20 years before retirement, your wealth would double five times, resulting in an end value 32 times your starting investment. Though it may seem naive now, that passed as retirement planning for many at the time. It was also one of the reasons for the precipitous drop in the savings rate. Why bother to cut back consumption to save for retirement when the stock market would save for you?

Now the baby boomers are five years closer to retirement, and their 401(k)s are in disarray. This may be one reason for the recent bubble in the housing market; many disappointed stock investors are attempting to make up for lost time and money. Bubbles form when investors develop the attitude that this is a new era or that this time it's different. Investors' attitudes toward stocks five years ago were the same as those in today's housing frenzy. There is one significant difference, though: The leverage now used is much greater, another indication of complacency.

The British had a saying about the late, great bull market: “Even a blindfolded monkey with a pin should find it easy to make money.” But it did not start out that way. It began in the early 1980s, when inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index, was around 13 percent, the 30-year Treasury bond provided a yield of more than 15 percent, and the Dow Industrials sold at less than eight times earnings and yielded more than six percent. Bonds and stocks were on every investor's hate list. Bonds were considered certificates of confiscation because of high inflation, and most investors were terrified of stocks. The bear market of 1973 and 1974, the worst since the Depression, was still fresh in investors' minds; the Dow Industrials had then fallen 41.5 percent, and many stocks were down a lot more than that. Stocks were last on any investor's list of retirement investments, if they were included at all. Bank time deposits provided double-digit yields, but after taxes and inflation the investor was losing purchasing power. The nest eggs of the time were so-called collectibles, anything to protect against inflation. Those collectibles included gold (at more than \$800 an ounce), art and monogrammed plates—almost anything except financial assets. It was a classic time of maximum bearishness toward stocks, when bull markets begin.

The great bull market began in fear but gained strength from a confluence

of extremely favorable factors. Those included falling inflation, the longest-ever bull market in bonds (a 22-year run that brought the yield on 30-year Treasuries down from 15 percent to 4.17 percent and culminated in yields hitting a 46-year low in 2003), a robust economy with rising corporate profits and, finally, starting with the Mexican crisis of 1995, the Federal Reserve responding to every perceived crisis by cutting interest rates and flooding the banking system with liquidity.

The last factor meant that real interest rates were low and occasionally negative. This “free money” led to overexpansion in many sectors of the economy and sloshed over into the stock market, particularly into NASDAQ stocks. I mark the beginning of the technology bubble with the Netscape initial public offering in August 1995. (In 1998 Netscape was bought by America Online, which merged with Time Warner in 2000.) This coincided with the Mexican economic crisis and the beginning of the Fed's “cut and flood” policy. Offered at \$28 a share, Netscape stock hit \$170 a share four months later, and the Internet and its stocks were labeled the new American frontier. Underwriters, astonished to find that the public demand for Internet stocks was almost insatiable, ignored companies' short time in business (about 18 months for Netscape) and lack of profitability. And so was born the dot-com boom, which spread to anything technological, innovative or new.

GOLDILOCKS TO GULLIVER

Perhaps the most overused term to describe the economy behind the stock bubble was *Goldilocks*, meaning not too hot, not too cold, but just right. When the business fixed-investment bubble blew up in March 2001, a year after the NASDAQ peak, all sorts of monetary and fiscal stimuli were implemented to combat the resulting recession—13 interest rate cuts by the Fed, two major tax cuts and budget deficits approaching \$400 billion. The soaring trade deficit allowed foreign central banks to recycle dollars into U.S. Treasuries, bringing them to near half-century lows. Mortgage refinancing companies adopted an innovative tactic: cash-outs, by which homeowners could get lower mortgage rates while removing some of the equity in their home. The Fed estimated homeowners took out \$300 billion in equity in 2001 and 2002, half of which was spent shortly afterward. Consumer homes became automated teller machines from which equity could be systematically withdrawn. (continued on page 154)



"...and it removes stains instantly!"



Miss September's
future is ripe with possibilities

VINTAGE VANESSA

When the lights go out in Georgia, Vanessa Hoelscher is there to make sure you don't grow thirsty. The 23-year-old special-events coordinator is often out on the town in her home of Atlanta, promoting her company's wines and spirits. "If there's anything going on in Georgia with our liquor brands—whether it's Usher's birthday party or whatever—I'm kind of the go-to person," she says. It's not hard to understand why she gravitated to this line of work. Vanessa is direct and approachable as well as beautiful, an intoxicating Southern belle who—here's a shockeroo—lacks a Southern accent. "My family comes from Ohio, which is probably why I didn't pick up the accent," she explains. The Buckeye descendant remains tight with her family. "I have three brothers, and one of them is my twin. You'd think I would have been a tomboy, but I've always been feminine and girlie. I did get a thicker skin from having all those boys in the house. I'm not easily offended. I'm the first one to laugh at myself."

Miss September didn't have much modeling experience before sending her pictures to PLAYBOY, but she did pose for a shock jock's billboard in Atlanta. "The ad was a satire that read MORNING DOMINATION," she says with more than a flash of naughtiness in her eye. "I wore a black leather dress and had a whip. I wasn't dealing with professional photographers, so I had to walk wrapped in a station banner past all these sales reps to do the shoot in a conference room." That didn't make her feel self-conscious, nor does posing nude. Indeed, Vanessa is accustomed to being looked at. "I cannot go into a Wal-Mart without getting hit on," she says. "I'll look so bad—yoga pants, no makeup, straight from the gym—and guys will follow me around and try to talk to me." Vanessa doesn't think this is an altogether bad thing. "I'm definitely not a first-move kind of

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA





Since her father has been developing wine brands for 30 years, Vanessa predicts a *Sideways* career move into his company. "I've always had an interest," she says. "I love sauvignon blanc, cabernet and those tender reds that make you hurt really bad the next day. My company represents Sicilian wines that are very good—similar to pinot noir. I'm not a wine geek, but I have the basic knowledge. There's always so much to learn."











girl. I like it when a guy has the nerve to ask a girl out on a date instead of dropping a cheesy line. Still, the Wal-Mart thing weirds me out.” So what is her type? “I like rugged guys. I don’t like dating men prettier than I am or men who take longer to get ready than I do. I dated this football player who was metro and loved shoes and shopping—there’s something going on there. My friends tease me and say, ‘You just like these macho, meathead guys.’ Every time some big guy walks by, they say, ‘There’s your new boyfriend, Vanessa.’ I can’t help it.”

Since her job requires her to be an enthusiastic socializer, Vanessa cherishes low-key nights at home with her roommate, two cats and the latest biography. And while she’s game for exciting opportunities that may come her way, she won’t soon be leaving on that midnight train from Georgia. “I like Atlanta and would not drop everything to move to L.A.,” she says with a smile. “I’m not going to roll the dice and just move somewhere to see what happens.”



See more of Miss September at cyber.playboy.com.





MISS SEPTEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





Vanessa Holshoe

PLAYBOY
Havana
1999
The Fear of the Playboy
BOTTLE
BARRICADE
MOLASSES
RUM
EN BOUTE



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Vanessa Hoelscher

BUST: 36D WAIST: 25 HIPS: 36

HEIGHT: 5'6" WEIGHT: 120

BIRTH DATE: Jan. 19, 1982 BIRTHPLACE: Atlanta, GA

AMBITIONS: I want to model & promote for Playboy, further my career in wines & spirits and live a substantial life driven by purpose.

TURN-ONS: Athletic men, confidence (NOT cockiness!), humility, Southern gentlemen & guys who can fix things around the house.

TURNOFFS: Selfishness, negativity, cell phones, unpatriotic Americans and people who complain about their lives but do nothing to change them.

MY CHARITY WORK FOR ANIMALS: Is very important to me.

OLD SOUL OR YOUNG AT HEART: I have a very old soul.

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: Going to football games (Go, Falcons!), going to the lake, hanging out poolside with the girls.

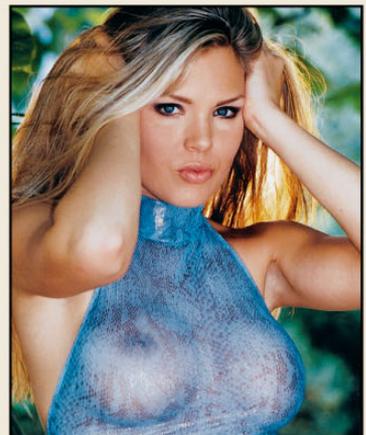
THE MOST ROMANTIC CITIES: If you are with the right person, anywhere can be romantic. But Portofino, Italy and Tahiti seem pretty romantic to me.



School Picture-9yrs.
Makes me Laugh!



8th Grade.



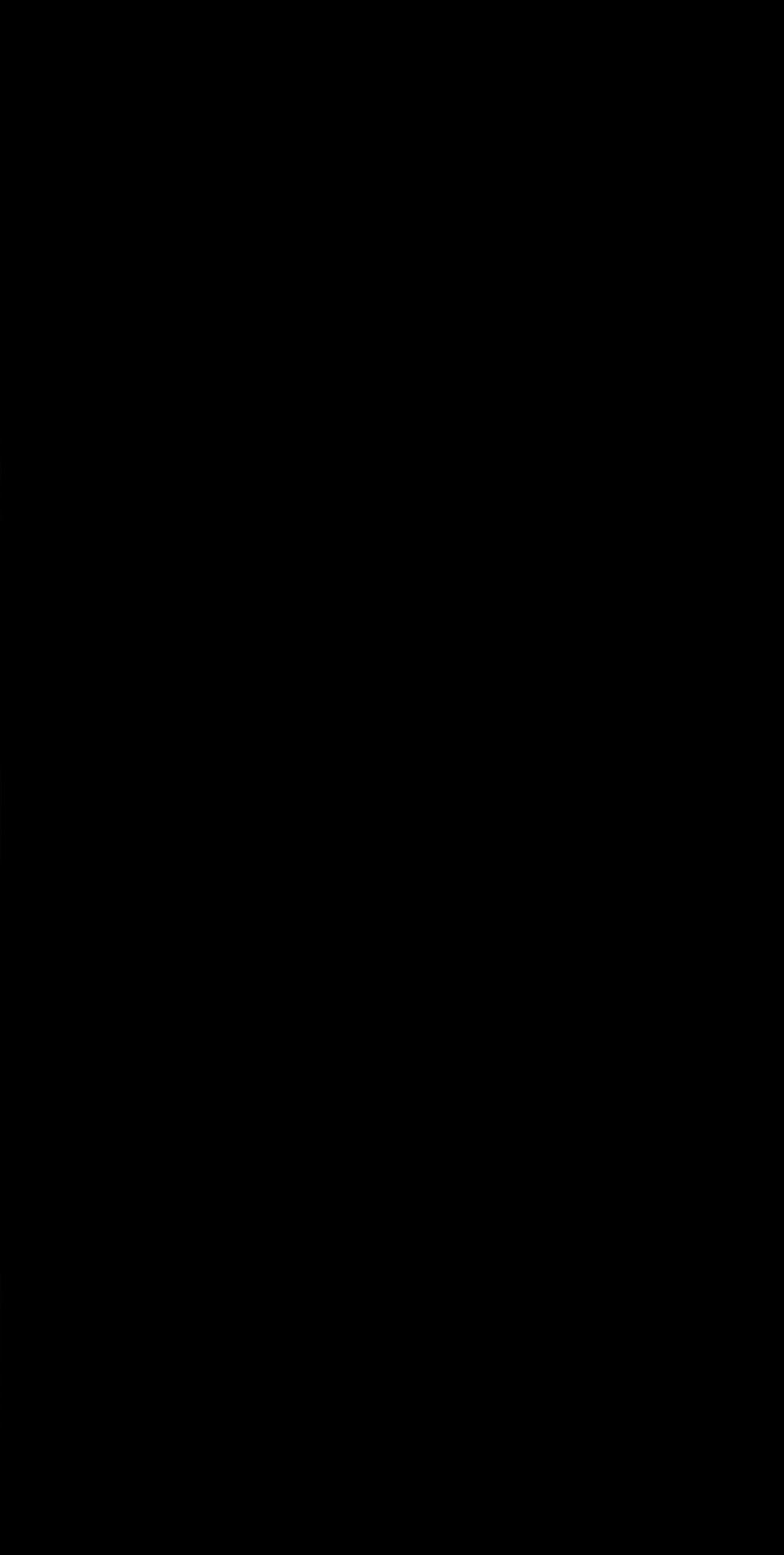
Amateur modeling
Shot-22 yrs.

MISS SEPTEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Vanessa Holscher



PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

A wife told her lawyer, "I want a divorce. My husband is getting a little queer to sleep with."

"What do you mean?" the attorney asked. "Does he force you to indulge in unusual sex practices?"

"No, he doesn't," the woman replied. "And neither does the little queer."

A woman walked into a drugstore and asked the pharmacist if he sold extra-large-size condoms. He replied, "Yes, we do. Would you like to buy some?"

"No," she said, "but do you mind if I wait around here until someone does?"



As an elderly Russian man lay in his hospital bed dying, he became delusional. He asked his nurse to help him fulfill his last wish. "I was good friends with Nikita Khrushchev," he said. "I'd do anything to kiss him good-bye."

"Khrushchev?" the nurse said. "He's been dead a long time."

"I don't care," the man said. "I want to kiss him good-bye."

Remembering Khrushchev was bald, the nurse pulled her breasts out from her bra and offered the left one to him. "He is kneeling before you," the nurse said. "His head is near your lips."

The man grabbed her breast and said, "Nikita, my old friend! Good to see you again."

He kissed the breast, which the nurse enjoyed greatly. She then asked, "How about kissing Dick Cheney's head?"

"Is he here too?" the man asked.

"Of course," she replied, offering her right breast.

"Dick, delighted to meet you," the man said, kissing and stroking the breast.

The nurse felt herself getting moist and asked, "Have you met Fidel Castro?"

A sexually promiscuous woman was taking her driver's license test. She had a little trouble parallel parking, however, winding up a couple of feet away from the curb. "Could you get a little closer?" the examiner asked.

She unbuckled her seat belt, slid over toward the examiner and asked, "Now what?"

BLONGE JOKE OF THE MONTH: What do a peroxide blonde and a Boeing 747 have in common?

They both have black boxes.

Two middle-aged Jewish men got to talking. One said to the other, "You know, last weekend I had a good Sabbath."

His friend replied, "Oh yeah? What did you do?"

"Well," the man said. "My whole family woke up early. We put on our finest clothes and went to temple. It was a beautiful, moving service. Then we came back to the house, had bagels and lox and shared family stories. Then I rented the movie *The Ten Commandments*, and we sat down as a family and watched it. Then my wife cooked a great dinner. It was a good Sabbath."

"That's funny," the other man said, "because I had a good Sabbath too."

"You don't say?" the first man said. "What did you do?"

"Well," he said, "around noon I woke up. I met my friend at a bar, and we got rip-roaring drunk. Then we picked up two hookers. We took them to a cheap motel, and I screwed one while he screwed the other. Then we switched girls. Then I went home and screwed my wife and fell asleep. It was a good Sabbath."

"How can you call that a good Sabbath?" the first man said in disbelief. "That's a great Sabbath."

A woman went before a judge to explain why she wanted to divorce her husband. She said, "I can't stand his hobosexuality."

The judge replied, "I think you mean homosexuality."

"No," she said, "I mean hobosexuality. He's a bum fuck."



Shelby Neiman

PLAYBOY CLASSIC: Two old men were sitting on a park bench. A blonde woman walked by. One old man asked the other, "Ever sleep with a blonde?"

The other old man replied, "Many a time. Many a time."

A brunette walked by. The old man asked, "Ever sleep with a brunette?"

The other old man said, "Many a time. Many a time."

A redhead walked by, and the old man asked the other, "Ever sleep with a redhead?"

He replied, "Not a wink."

Send your jokes to Party Jokes Editor, PLAYBOY, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or by e-mail through our website at jokes.playboy.com. PLAYBOY will pay \$100 to the contributor whose submission is selected.



"...Sorry, gents—no jackets, no admittance...."



'05 PLAYBOY'S COLLEGE PIGSKIN PREVIEW

BY GARY COLE

TOP 25 TEAMS FOR 2005

RANKINGS

ALL AMERICAS

Q&A WITH COACH

SCHOLAR/ATHLETE

STATS

PREDICTIONS

UNDERDOGS

It's Tuesday, and Matt Leinart—the quarterback who led USC to an undefeated season and a second straight national championship last year—is headed to Togo's to have lunch with his dad, Bob. “Nothing fancy, but it's become a ritual,” says the six-foot-five lefty, who looks more than a little like Super Bowl hero Tom Brady. “The last time I missed our Tuesday lunch we lost to Cal.” That was back in September 2003. “We're not going to miss another one.”

Nor did Leinart miss dinner with his brother Ryan the night before. Nor did he fail to visit his parents' house on Sunday so that his mom, Linda, could do his laundry. “That's something I'm going to have to start doing myself one of these days,” Leinart says.

After sandwiches and small talk with Dad, Leinart heads back to the USC football office to watch game film. He already spent two hours there with quarterbacks coach Steve Sarkisian this morning. “I'm watching a lot more film this year,” he says. “I want to be better prepared.” And why not? All his hard work has paid off big so far. He has a Heisman Trophy sitting on the family mantel, and when he throws his next touchdown pass—perhaps as soon as the season opener against Hawaii in Honolulu on September 3—he'll tie the USC record of 72, set by Carson Palmer.

After last season USC fans expected Leinart to give up his final year of college eligibility to play in the NFL. He might have been the number one pick in the draft and certainly would be a multimillionaire today. But he was having too much fun to leave school early. “My favorite day of the week is game day,” he says. “I'm not nervous, just excited. It's the greatest feeling in the world.”

Tuesday is his toughest day of the week. After studying film, he practices from 4:15 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and then heads to class. He needs only two more units to earn a degree, so he signed up for an elective two nights a week. When asked what he's taking, he smiles. “Dance,” he says. What kind of dance? “Ballroom dancing.” Note to USC opponents: Matt Leinart will be more graceful in the pocket this season.

Thanks to Leinart's return, we're picking USC to win yet another national championship. Predicting that a team will win a second consecutive title, as we did last year, is a rarity. Tabbing one to win for a third straight time (call it two and a half, since USC and LSU split the national title in 2003) is unheard of. The ball isn't round and doesn't bounce predictably. Too many things can go wrong. But we can't go against the Trojans and Leinart—not as long as he and his father keep having lunch on Tuesdays.



1. USC Last year: A 13–0 season capped by a 55–19 rout of Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl, which earned the Trojans a second consecutive national title.

1. USC
2. Texas
3. LSU
4. Tennessee
5. Virginia Tech
6. Iowa
7. Oklahoma
8. Auburn
9. Georgia
10. Michigan
11. Miami
12. Florida
13. Ohio State
14. Louisville
15. Florida State
16. Fresno State
17. Boise State
18. Texas Tech
19. Arizona State
20. Boston College
21. California
22. Iowa State
23. Georgia Tech
24. Notre Dame
25. Wyoming



PLAYBOY'S 2005 ALL AMERICA TEAM



OFFENSE

Top row, from left: **Andrew Whitworth** (76), lineman, LSU; 6'7", 325-pound senior; two-time Playboy All America. **Jonathan Scott** (73), lineman, Texas; 6'7", 305-pound senior; first-team All-Big 12. **Eric Winston** (74), lineman, Miami; 6'7", 310-pound senior; best Hurricanes offensive lineman in 2003. (He was injured last year.) Middle row, from left: **Greg Eslinger** (61), center, Minnesota; 6'3", 285-pound senior; finalist for Rimington Trophy last season. **Derek Hagan** (80), receiver, Arizona State; 6'2", 197-pound senior; 83 catches for 1,248 yards last season. **Pete Carroll**, USC; Playboy Coach of the Year. **Matt Leinart** (11), quarterback, USC; 6'5", 225-pound senior; reigning Heisman Trophy winner. **Jeff Backes** (28), secondary, Northwestern; 5'9", 190-pound senior; Anson Mount Scholar/Athlete winner. Bottom row, from left: **Santonio Holmes** (4), receiver, Ohio State; 5'11", 190-pound junior; led Buckeyes in receptions with 55 last season. **DeAngelo Williams** (20), running back, Memphis; 5'10", 217-pound junior; led nation with 22 rushing touchdowns in 2004. **Devin Hester** (4), kick returner, Miami; 5'11", 185-pound junior; has returned five kicks for touchdowns. **Mason Crosby** (16), placekicker, Colorado; 6'2", 210-pound junior; made five field goals of 50 yards or longer last season. Not pictured: **Reggie Bush**, running back, USC; 6', 200-pound junior; has 3,661 career all-purpose yards and 23 touchdowns in only 26 games. **Adrian Peterson**, running back, Oklahoma; 6'2", 210-pound sophomore; set OU single-season rushing record with 1,925 yards in 2004 and finished second in Heisman Trophy voting. **D'Brickashaw Ferguson**, lineman, Virginia; 6'5", 295-pound senior, All-ACC last season and has started all 39 games in his career.



DEFENSE

Top row, from left: **Rodrique Wright** (90), lineman, Texas; 6'5", 305-pound senior; has 181 career tackles, 13 sacks and 28 tackles for losses. **Mathias Kwanuka** (94), lineman, Boston College; 6'7", 261-pound senior; Big East Defensive Player of the Year, with 11.5 sacks and 19 tackles for losses last season. **Jimmy Williams** (2), defensive back, Virginia Tech; 6'3", 219-pound senior; led ACC with five interceptions in 2004 and had 60 tackles. **Gabe Watson** (78), lineman, Michigan; 6'4", 331-pound senior; All-Big 10 coaches selection. Middle row, from left: **Jesse Mahelona** (55), lineman, Tennessee; 6'2", 300-pound junior; led team in tackles for losses with 18.5 last year. **A.J. Hawk** (47), linebacker, Ohio State; 6'1", 240-pound senior; returning first-team consensus All-American. **Jason Allen** (18), defensive back, Tennessee; 6'2", 202-pound senior; led the SEC in tackles with 123 last season. **Antonio Cromartie** (13), defensive back, Florida State; 6'3", 197-pound junior; first-team All-ACC, had four interceptions last season. **Chad Greenway** (18), linebacker, Iowa; 6'4", 244-pound senior; had 113 tackles and three interceptions in 2004. Bottom row, from left: **Ted Ginn Jr.** (7), all-purpose, Ohio State; 6', 175-pound sophomore; scored eight touchdowns last season on only 59 touches and averaged 25.6 yards a punt return, setting an OSU record. **Tom Malone** (14), punter, USC; 6', 190-pound senior; his 44.5-yard career punting average is best in school history. **Roman Harper** (41), linebacker, Alabama; 6'1", 197-pound senior; had 77 tackles and three interceptions last season. Not pictured: **Ahmad Brooks**, linebacker, Virginia; 6'4", 249-pound junior; set school record for tackles by a freshman in 2003 with 117.

What they have: Quarterback Matt Leinart, the reigning Heisman Trophy winner, who surprised nearly everyone when he elected to stay in school for his senior year. Seven other starters return from an offense that riddled Oklahoma's vaunted defense. Reggie Bush, who finished in the top five in the Heisman voting, is back for his junior season after totaling 2,330 all-purpose yards in 2004. The receiving corps is deep, as is the offensive line, which is bolstered by the return of tackle Winston Justice, who sat out last year because of a student-conduct violation.

What they lack: Pete Carroll took hard hits to his coaching staff, with four assistants leveraging USC's success to land other jobs. The biggest loss was offensive coordinator Norm Chow, who took the same job with the Tennessee Titans. Carroll has filled the holes with internal promotions and outside hires, mostly from the NFL's assistant-coaching ranks. The defense lost four All-Americans from last year's squad, which might prove significant. But USC brings in one top-five recruiting class after another, so a major falloff in talent is unlikely.

Outlook: No school in modern NCAA history has won three straight football titles, but anything less will be a disappointment for Carroll's team. The USC faithful are already chanting "Three Pete."
Prediction: 12-0



2. TEXAS Last year: 11-1, including a narrow 38-37 win over Michigan in the Rose Bowl.

What they have: Vince Young at quarterback. Young looked like a reincarnation of Michael Vick in last year's Rose Bowl. For the season he threw for 1,849 yards and 12 touchdowns and became the first player in UT history to both run and throw for more than 1,000 yards in a season. The Longhorns also have an experienced offensive line, an explosive tight end in David Thomas and nine starters returning from a defense that ranked among the nation's best in 2004.

What they lack: Cedric Benson at running back. Benson rushed for more than 1,000 yards in each of his four years in Austin. Selvin Young, no relation to Vince, is Benson's heir apparent, but he was sidelined this spring with an ankle injury. The Texas defense will miss the ferocity of two-time Playboy All America linebacker Derrick Johnson, an NFL first-round draft pick.

Outlook: Mack Brown has won at least nine games in each of the past nine seasons—two with North Carolina and seven with Texas. This team will continue the streak, and if Texas can finally beat Oklahoma, a return trip to the Rose Bowl might be in order. This time it would be for the national championship.
Prediction: 10-1



3. LSU Last year: 9-3. The Tigers lost to Iowa (30-25) in the Capital One Bowl.

What they have: Twenty starters back from a team loaded with talent. Running backs Alley Broussard and Joseph Addai both averaged more than six

yards a carry last year, and each has a shot at a 1,000-yard season. The offensive line, led by Playboy All America Andrew Whitworth, averages more than 300 pounds apiece, and the defensive front, led by tackles Claude Wroten and Kyle Williams, is like a brick wall.

What they lack: Coach Nick Saban, who left Baton Rouge for the Miami Dolphins. In just a few seasons Saban reestablished LSU as one of the nation's premier college football powers. Les Miles, most recently head coach at Oklahoma State, is in the tough position of trying to keep the Tigers at the top. Though he has talent on the roster, Miles won't have quarterback Marcus Randall or defensive stalwarts Corey Webster and Marcus Spears.

Outlook: LSU is nearly impossible to beat in Baton Rouge, and the Tigers face their toughest opponents (Tennessee, Florida, Auburn, Arkansas) at home. Look for JaMarcus Russell to step up big at quarterback and for the Tigers to win the SEC West.
Prediction: 10-1



4. TENNESSEE Last year: 10-3, finishing with an SEC Eastern Division title and a 38-7 win over Texas A&M in the Cotton Bowl.

What they have: A full cupboard on defense. Eight starters are back, including Playboy All Americas Jesse Mahelona, on the line, and Jason Allen, in the secondary. The Volunteers' linebacking corps should be improved with the return of Kevin Simon, healthy again after sitting out (continued on page 140)

EXTRA POINT

Coach Pete Carroll discusses whether his rock-ribbed Trojans can protect USC's title



Under the leadership of Pete Carroll, the USC Trojans are riding a 22-game winning streak. They aim to capture a third consecutive national title this season, a feat unprecedented in modern NCAA history. We spoke with Playboy's Coach of the Year late in the spring.

PLAYBOY: Were you surprised that quarterback Matt Leinart decided to stay in school for another season rather than head to the NFL?

CARROLL: A lot of other people were surprised, but I can't say I was. Matt said all along he wanted to stay in school. I knew his situation here was a good one. And knowing how supportive his parents were about his decision, I wasn't surprised at all.

PLAYBOY: What's the status of running back LenDale White, and do any other players have eligibility questions heading into the season?

CARROLL: The NCAA has raised its academic standards, and that's something we communicated to our players in the off-season. If you want to succeed on this team, you've got to get the job done in the classroom. LenDale did what he needed to do this summer, and he'll be ready for the first game this fall.

PLAYBOY: You lost some impact players on defense—Shaun Cody, Mike Patterson, Matt Grootegoed. Can the defense be as good as last year's?

CARROLL: It'll be difficult to replace all the experience and talent we've had on the defensive side of the ball. The three guys you mentioned started almost every game when they were here. But we have a good group coming up. They handled things well this spring, so while I think it will be difficult for us to be better than we were last year, I'm hoping we'll be as good.

PLAYBOY: How much will the losses of Norm Chow and some of your other assistants from last season affect the team?

CARROLL: Our philosophy and systems remain in place, so the changes are to personnel only, not approach. In the spring I saw signs that our coaching transition has taken place seamlessly.

PLAYBOY: What don't you like about coaching college football?

CARROLL: There's nothing to dislike about my situation at USC, but I wish we had a playoff system to determine the national championship rather than the current BCS setup.

PLAYBOY: Can all your aspirations as a football coach be attained at USC?

CARROLL: My goal as a coach is to try to establish a long-standing tradition of excellence. You can't do that by jumping from job to job. I remember walking out of the stadium when I was with the Buffalo Bills and looking up at the wall listing Marv Levy's accomplishments. He may not have won a Super Bowl, but he established a winning tradition over the long haul. That's my goal, and I think USC is the right place to do it.



"OK, that's one and two. What's the third thing you find most attractive about me?"

the new playboy

eight of the world's top designers offer innovative updates of classic looks for the modern man

fashion by
Joseph De Acetis

J.Lindeberg

"Like the Playboy man, we are intellectual and modern, comfortable at a serious meeting or a rock concert," says Lindeberg. OPPOSITE PAGE: The jacket (\$595), vest (\$225), trousers (\$235), shirt (\$595) and tie (\$100) are by **J.Lindeberg**. Her dress is by **Binetti** (\$525), her wrap by **Armani Collezioni** (\$625), and her boots by **Casadei** (\$560).

Chairs from Troy (138 Greene Street, NYC).
Couch from Fritz Hansen (fritzhansen.com).



Alessandro Dell'Acqua

"The Playboy man does not follow any particular trend. He follows his personal attitude," says Dell'Acqua. "Our collection fits him perfectly: It has a natural masculinity, and it's wholly sensual." Above, the jacket (\$1,195), trousers (\$1,195), vest (\$300) and shirt (\$325) are by **Alessandro Dell'Acqua**, and his boots are by the **Frye Company** (\$195). She is in a gown by **Nakulsen** (\$595).

PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIMOTHY WHITE / PRODUCED BY JENNIFER RYAN JONES

PLAYBOY
FASHION





Cloak

"Cloak is for guys who, like Playboy guys, want clothing to complement rather than define their already strong sense of individuality," says designer Alexandre Plokhov. The blazer (\$1,250), trousers (\$390) and shirt (\$320) are by **Cloak**. The shoes are by **BOSS Hugo Boss** (\$295), and the belt by **Torino** (\$75). Her dress is by **Gharani Strok** (\$645), and her shoes are by **Casadei** (\$370).

Chair by Arnie available at Fritz Hansen.
Martin Visser sofa available at Troy.



Valentino

“Like Playboy, Valentino is synonymous with elegance—in a classic way, with dashing cuts and great-quality fabrics, but with a modern spin,” says Valentino Garavani. At left, **Valentino** makes the jacket (\$1,195), trousers (\$350) and shirt (\$275). The tie is by **Best of Class by Robert Talbott** (\$125), and the shoes are by **Bostonian** (\$90). At right, his jacket (\$3,250), trousers (\$295) and shirt (\$425) are by **Valentino**. His shoes are by **Mezlan** (\$195), and his socks by **Gold Toe** (\$7).

WOMEN'S STYLING BY MERIEM ORLET

Jean Paul Gaultier

"We're taking the silhouettes of the 1930s and reinterpreting them in a new modernist way for the man of the 21st century," says Gaultier. THIS PAGE: At top, the trousers (\$820) and shirt (\$635) are by **Jean Paul Gaultier Homme**, and the mesh top is by **Gaultier Knits Homme** (\$235). At bottom, his shirt (\$830), waistcoat (\$830) and trousers (\$700) are by **Jean Paul Gaultier Homme**. His fedora is by **Optimo Hats** (\$495). Both belts are by **Trafalgar** (\$65).

Ted Baker

"Our fall collection is for the most self-assured—a nod to 1960s gangster chic and international playboys," Baker reports. OPPOSITE PAGE: At left, he's in a coat (\$1,095), shirt (\$295), tie (\$75) and velvet trousers (\$325) by **Ted Baker London**. At right are a velvet jacket (\$795), pants (\$295), shirt (\$395) and tie (\$75), also by **Ted Baker London**. She's in a top by **Alessandro Dell'Acqua** (\$975) and a skirt (\$560) and coat (\$3,200) by **House of Diehl**.

Swan chair available at Fritz Hansen.







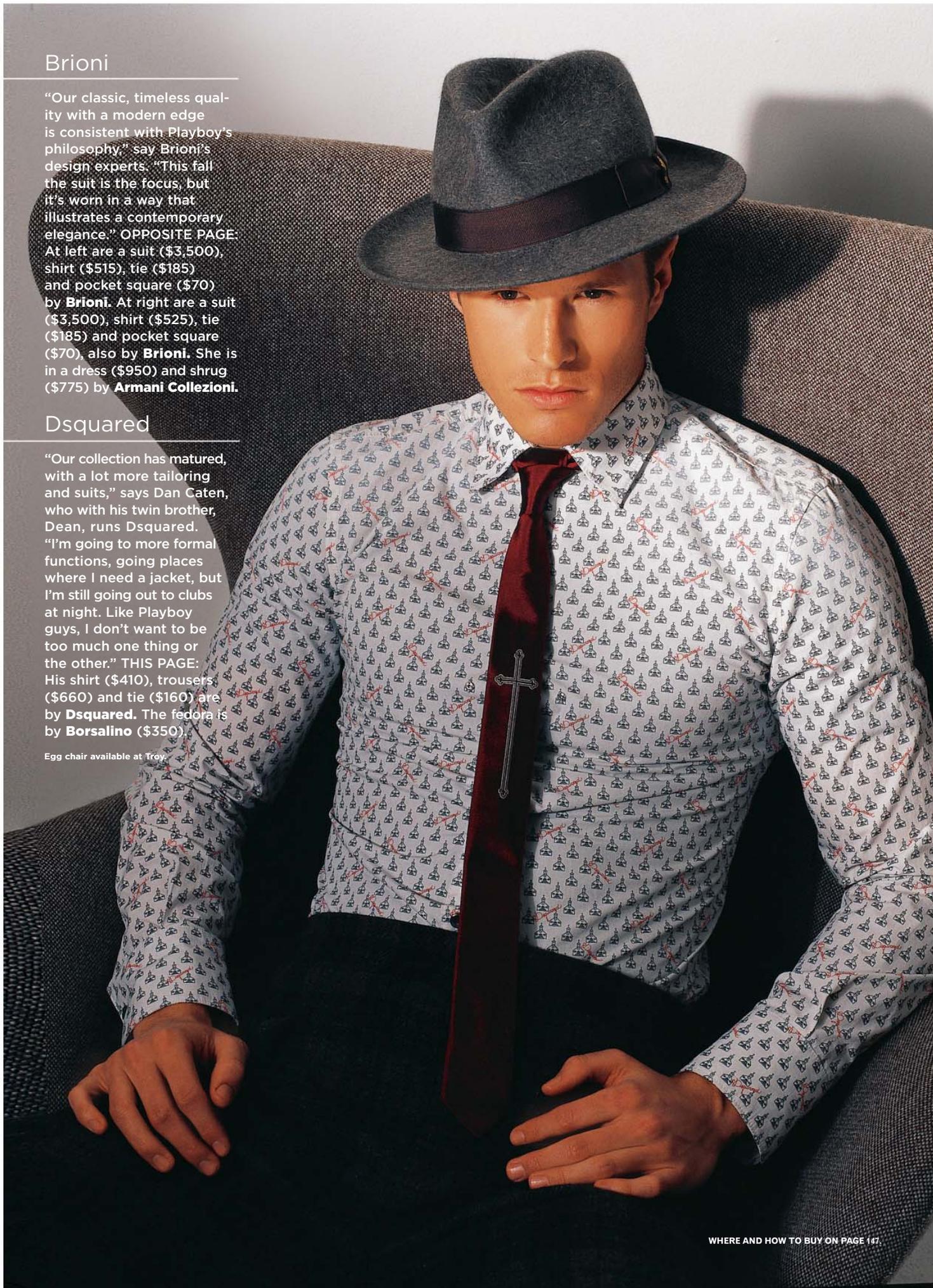
Brioni

"Our classic, timeless quality with a modern edge is consistent with Playboy's philosophy," say Brioni's design experts. "This fall the suit is the focus, but it's worn in a way that illustrates a contemporary elegance." OPPOSITE PAGE: At left are a suit (\$3,500), shirt (\$515), tie (\$185) and pocket square (\$70) by **Brioni**. At right are a suit (\$3,500), shirt (\$525), tie (\$185) and pocket square (\$70), also by **Brioni**. She is in a dress (\$950) and shrug (\$775) by **Armani Collezioni**.

Dsquared

"Our collection has matured, with a lot more tailoring and suits," says Dan Caten, who with his twin brother, Dean, runs Dsquared. "I'm going to more formal functions, going places where I need a jacket, but I'm still going out to clubs at night. Like Playboy guys, I don't want to be too much one thing or the other." THIS PAGE: His shirt (\$410), trousers (\$660) and tie (\$160) are by **Dsquared**. The fedora is by **Borsalino** (\$350).

Egg chair available at [Troy](#).





Rubbermaid

Rubbermaid

GOOD

NASCAR

BEAM

Ford RACING

Sharpie

Rubbermaid

NASCAR
NASCAR
NASCAR

Ford

RACING

AD
STAR

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ICE
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Sharpie

Rubbermaid

MAX
TOOK

Castrol



BY WARREN KALBACKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG FOSTER/
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

KURT BUSCH

One of NASCAR's hottest wheels sounds off about the perks of being a champ, the curse of headlights and why he wears all those hats

Q1

PLAYBOY: NASCAR didn't invent the ball cap, but it has taken that hat to the next level. Just how many caps do you don after a win?

BUSCH: You'll go through 30 sponsor hats during the hat dance in victory lane. When sponsors pay you the money they do, you're going to wear those hats. They fit your head real good. Our team has about a dozen sponsors, NASCAR has its sponsors, and the race tracks have theirs. Some want specific photos. Coca-Cola wants me doing a chug—with label out and hat on, mind you. I have a huge personal collection, mainly baseball hats. I'm heavily into the Chicago Cubs, and baseball hats have a low profile and a clean fit. The trucker style has that mesh. But I do wear one of those, a John Deere, when I mow my lawn with my John Deere tractor. I'm from Las Vegas originally, but I've grown to be a country boy.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Is there a sponsor you couldn't imagine driving for?

BUSCH: It would suck to be sponsored by Viagra when you're 26 years old. Mark Martin's cool, but he's able to blend in with the marketing for that

brand. It's a tough question because sponsors pay the bills and allow us to race no matter what name is on the car.

Q3

PLAYBOY: NASCAR has generated its share of dynasties—Petty, Earnhardt and Jarrett. Is there an auto-racing gene?

BUSCH: You catch the racing bug from your family. That's how most of us get involved. My dad raced, and there was always a race car in our two-car garage. One year he won 15 out of 16 races. That was in Las Vegas, where he raced primarily. You almost have to win if you want to break even. I didn't start racing till I was 15. I had my own little home-made-style go-kart, and Dad taught me how to drive it. I was a hands-on crew guy for him, doing tires, changing oil. I was the grunt. Mom thought it was too dangerous, but she went to work for our tire money when I was racing.

Q4

PLAYBOY: You studied pharmacy in college. Were you trying to deny your inner race car driver?

BUSCH: I was trying to make sure I had my priorities straight—go to school and race as a hobby. I was doing okay

in college, struggling a little bit, and it looked as though the medicine wasn't as interesting as the racing. Every time I looked around, I noticed I was at a racetrack and my books were on the backseat of my Volkswagen Bug. Racing was beginning to take over.

Q5

PLAYBOY: In your rookie year Dale "the Intimidator" Earnhardt flashed you the finger. Did you feel that was an honor, a salute to your aggressive driving style?

BUSCH: It was February 2001. That was the inaugural Daytona 500 for me. It was confusing at first. I was minding my own business in my lane, and he changed lanes. I may have crowded him a little bit. *[laughs]* I thought, What did I do? If he's mad at me, I obviously did something wrong. That was his last race. He crashed in the last corner of the last lap and passed away at the hospital. It was not talked about until later. Now it's great to be able to laugh about it. It was an honor to get the bird from the Intimidator in his last race.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Well-financed racing teams support young drivers with the finest

equipment and experienced pit crews and crew chiefs. But it all comes down to the driver. Is car 97 a real pressure cooker?

BUSCH: Definitely. I got the job at Roush Racing through what they call the Gong Show. They selected a group of drivers out of hundreds of résumés and narrowed us down to five, then told us one of the five was going to get the job. I put pressure on myself because they want you to win right away, but I put on so much pressure that I didn't do that hot. They brought me back after I won a lower-division championship. When you get into the excitement of qualifying at the race or the last few laps, your adrenaline is pumping so hard you don't even know you're breathing. You don't even know you're driving. You can't hear anything inside the car. You're in the zone. You get lost in it. And you have to get there by being comfortable, taking deep breaths and staying loose.

Q7

PLAYBOY: In 2003 you bumped Jimmy Spencer, he punched you, and you were booed by fans. Do you have a strategy to become a more popular champ?

BUSCH: I still get booed. Dale Earnhardt once said whoever gets the most noise wins. It's what makes our sport so great. You have 43 guys out on the track who anyone can root for, so fans are going to pick their driver and go against a few others. It's going to take time to change my image. Winning a championship definitely helps. I do sponsor affairs, and that can help fans gain a picture of who I really am. When I came in at 22 I didn't know if I was going to have a job the next day, and that made me race too hard. I ran over some people on the track, and then I got a bit sarcastic trying to cover up for that. Now I see the bigger picture, and it's made me a better person. I'm 26 and having more fun. You grow and mature with age.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You arrive at the track with what you believe is a perfect setup—a tune-up, suspension and aerodynamics geared to the day's race. But isn't a car's setup a moving target?

BUSCH: One thing you'll never hear from a race car driver is "The car was perfect." You're always adjusting it. The race progresses. More rubber from the tires gets laid down. More oil gets spilled on the track. Temperatures change. Every track is different. Some tracks need a soft setup, others a stiffer

one because they're more banked to hold the stock cars at speed. Tire pressure is a big factor. We'll change half a pound of air during pit stops and make the car drive differently. That's the competitive state we're in. I'm involved in setup out on the racetrack. If the car is tight—if the front end won't turn well—I relay that information. I like a car on the looser side. You're not restricted by what the front tires are grabbing. I give advice because I feel all four tires underneath me. We call it the ass-o-meter.

Q9

PLAYBOY: Did your stint as a grunt for your dad give you an appreciation of what a pit crew does?

BUSCH: Those guys are athletes. Those seven guys throw themselves into danger. Cars are pulling in behind, around and in front of mine. And they have to dodge those cars and complete a pit stop in 12 seconds. Fifteen seconds is way too long. You're going to lose 10 spots in the pits. In real life, if I have a flat tire, whether on my own vehicle or a rental car, I can't help but make it a NASCAR-style pit stop. I thrash through it and see if I can get it done as quickly with a regular tire iron. I don't have the pressurized gun. I've done one in about three and a half minutes.

Q10

PLAYBOY: NASCAR track lengths and layouts vary. You have to compete on all of them. Can road courses, with their twists, turns and differing elevations, be tough for a driver used to an oval circuit's high-speed lefts?

BUSCH: Right turns are cool with me. I enjoy the road courses. If we had more on the circuit, that would be okay. When I first came in I ran real good on the big ones—1.5 miles. I hated short tracks. The cars would never turn, the rear tires would never hook up, and I'd be sliding all around, overdriving the car. Only a couple of tracks are really long: Daytona is 2.5 miles, Talladega is 2.66. Watkins Glen—that's a road course—is 2.5 miles. Over time you learn what your favorable tracks are versus tracks that you struggle on. You have to go to those tracks and work on them to get better. NASCAR gives us seven practices. You can choose the tracks you want to go on.

Q11

PLAYBOY: At one time NASCAR drivers had a reputation for carousing

the night before a race. Does today's driver spend more time in the gym than the bar?

BUSCH: Yes, it's changed. The sport originated from moonshining—quick runs through the Southeast trying to outrun the law. Now there's such a demand on a driver's time, whether for sponsors or autograph sessions, that you want time to spend with your family or loved ones. So you're with them the night before a race. You try to get a good night's sleep. I do cardiovascular work to build up my lungs, and I have a treadmill at the house. I do a lot of strength training for my upper body because I'm working a wheel.

Q12

PLAYBOY: The reigning champ gets the best parking place at every NASCAR track. How does it feel to be right up there with the employee of the month?

BUSCH: That helps in many ways. The team gets to park our tractor trailer first. Our car is the first through technical inspection every week. If we have a small infraction, we have plenty of time to go back and fix it. Another perk is that I get to hit the track first in practice. If you're the defending champion, you get to go out first every week. They spoil you the whole year.

Q13

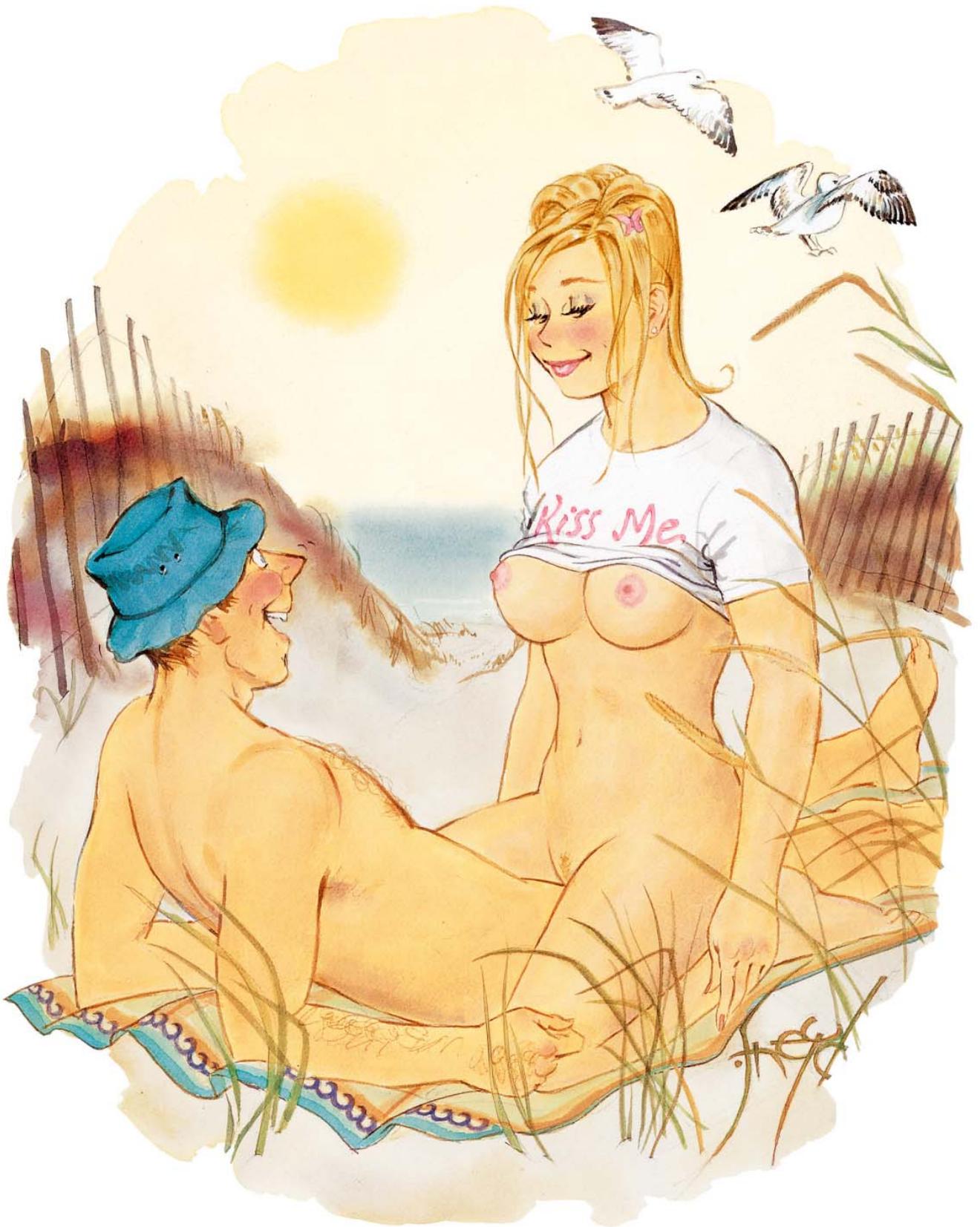
PLAYBOY: Can those of us who are not NASCAR drivers learn to draft behind 18-wheelers and get better gas mileage?

BUSCH: You can. My car was a Volkswagen Bug. It had about 40 horsepower and would do only 60 miles an hour floored. You don't want to drive a car at its limit, because you're going to burn something up. I would make trips to L.A. from Tucson to watch a race. On Interstate 10 through Indio, California the headwind is ferocious. So I'd get behind a fast semi and could do 70 without burning my engine up and with better mileage. It matters how ballsy you are about getting close. You get an ideal draft at five feet, but you don't want to get that close and deal with a mad 18-wheeler driver.

Q14

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about backseat driving. Is it possible for a NASCAR champion to ride with his girlfriend behind the wheel without giving pointers?

BUSCH: My girlfriend drives well. She's
(concluded on page 161)



“Just think. None of this would have happened if you hadn’t been wearing that T-shirt.”





THE SLUGGER'S WIFE

From triples to three-ways, Jessica Canseco has seen it all

By David Hochman

It began with one of the most embarrassing bobbles of the decade.

Nineteen-year-old Jessica Sekely, fresh as the Ohio farm on which she'd been raised, was on her third day of training at Hooters in Cleveland when Jose Canseco, one of the greatest sluggers of his era, walked in and cast his gaze upon her. Clearly he was smitten, though not until the next night was it clear how deeply her glorious image had been impressed on his mind. That night, during a game against the Indians, the Havana-born Texas Rangers outfielder, the first player in major league history to hit 40 homers and steal 40 bases in the same season, lost a fly ball in the lights. It plunked him on the head, bounced over the wall for a home run and earned him a prominent spot in the pantheon of great sports bloopers.

"I guess I distracted him," Jessica says with a smile, sitting pretty in her luxury high-rise apartment in Los Angeles. "Maybe I should have taken it as a warning."

Instead Jessica got an all-stadium pass to one of the wildest periods in modern sports. As Jose's girlfriend

and then wife (his second), she quickly learned a little secret. "Baseball is not the apple-pie experience everybody makes it out to be," she says. There were the countless sex partners Jose listed by hair color in his little black book. There were the steroids that hobbled him with injuries and caused his testicles to disappear. Then there was the threesome Jessica arranged with one of her friends in a desperate effort to keep Jose interested. "Honestly, I don't think I ever said no to him," she says. "Jose was always in complete control."

At the time they met, Jose was one of the game's most luminous stars. In the late 1980s he and Mark McGwire were the celebrated Bash Brothers who slugged the Oakland A's into three consecutive World Series. He'd won a Rookie of the Year award in 1986, was the American League's MVP in 1988 and was a regular at the All-Star Game. He made his mark off the field as well, with an appetite for high-performance automobiles, a fondness for exotic pets (he kept a collection of lynx and cougars), a proclivity for getting into trouble (he earned a number of notorious speeding tickets and was cited for carrying

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHEN WAYDA



a loaded handgun in his car) and an eye for the ladies. In his recent tell-all on steroids and fast times in baseball, Canseco estimates he slept with a “couple hundred” women in 17 seasons in the majors. He would sometimes organize a “beauty contest” in his hotel room to select potential dates, and the winners would be allowed to join him in public later that evening. The guy also toyed with the Material Girl. (The *New York Post* once dubbed him “Madonna’s bat boy.”)

But it’s easy to understand why a man who could have any woman would choose Jessica. In her black tank top and sweatpants, she is as voluptuous as her ex-husband was rock solid, and she devoted herself wholeheartedly to pleasing him, she says, whether that meant riding shotgun on 200-mile-an-hour joyrides in his \$225,000 Lamborghini Diablo or merely having sex with him in Fenway Park. “I can’t tell you where exactly,” she says. “I don’t want to get in trouble.”

Almost from the beginning Jessica knew she was in for a different kind of relationship. Jose would sometimes shower before going out in the middle of the day and then not answer his phone for hours on end. Soon Jessica started hearing stories from other girlfriends and wives about ballplayers having mistresses in different cities whom they’d fly to away games for assignations. One of the wives specifically said that Jose was part of that group. At first Jessica didn’t want to believe it, but the evidence kept mounting. “One time I went to Orlando, and when I came back, the girlfriend of Jose’s brother Ozzie [also a major leaguer] told me another girl had been there,” she says. “Then the woman started calling the house, claiming she was pregnant.” Meanwhile Jose was extremely suspicious of Jessica’s behavior. “He hated it if I went anywhere where guys might hit on me,” she says. “There were days when I couldn’t leave the house.”

All that injected testosterone wasn’t making the situation any easier. Jessica first learned of Jose’s steroid use four or five months into their relationship, though she didn’t really know what steroids were. As she delved into the subject, she began to realize the source of her husband’s bulky physique. Jose carried 240 pounds on his six-foot-four frame, though Jessica knew (text concluded on page 138)



See more of Jessica’s pictorial at cyber.playboy.com.









Jessica Canseco *(continued from page 133)*

"I used to have to dress him in the morning," she says. "His body just kept shutting down."

that, with more bulges than a pack of 12th-graders at a strip club, his size wasn't natural. "He had this buildup of muscle on a frame that's thin and tall," she says. "You can see it in his legs. He has these bird legs. Jose wasn't supposed to be so big."

Jessica saw firsthand what the fans could only speculate about. The roids were slowly destroying Jose's career. His excess muscle mass was wreaking havoc on his back and joints and accounted for many of his trips to the disabled list. As his power faded, general managers began to conclude he wasn't worth the investment. (Eventually he changed teams eight times.) After numerous surgeries he deteriorated to the point where he could barely function off the field. "I used to have to dress him in the morning," Jessica says, "put his socks on because he couldn't bend. His body just kept shutting down." Although Canseco ended up with 462 home runs and won another World Series ring with the Yankees in 2000, noted baseball columnist Peter Gammons says that he ranks with Darryl Strawberry and Dwight Gooden as the biggest wastes of talent of their era.

Then there was the matter of Jose's other, well, teammates. In his autobiography Canseco is frank about the effect steroids had on his private parts. Jessica is even more candid. "It does definitely affect your testicles," she says shyly. "That's for sure. Jose's were nonexistent. They're not there." Didn't she think that was odd? "A little. Because, you know, men have... balls. It wasn't until we separated and I dated that I realized it." Jessica dated Kansas City Chiefs tight end Tony Gonzalez, among other men. "With other guys," she says, "I was like, Wow, those are some very large balls!" At the same time, the human growth hormone Jose was taking actually made his penis larger. "Your penis is a muscle, so it makes it heavy, solid," she says. "He was very well-endowed down there."

Not that it made him happy. One day Jose would be on a high; the next it was as if the world was crashing. Because Jessica didn't have anyone else in her life, she had to adapt to his moods. And there were worse things, though some of these she isn't quite ready to reveal. Jessica admits she engaged in activities she knew

weren't healthy for her husband, but when asked point-blank whether she was forced to inject Jose with steroids, she hedges. "I think it's best I don't talk about it," she says. "You can imagine what I saw, but yeah, I just can't. Ask me something else."

Did she ever use steroids herself? She laughs nervously and says, "I don't want to talk about that, either, but I've been around women who have, and it's not good for them at all. Putting testosterone in a woman isn't normal. It affects women badly."

Surely the temptation to use them would have been enormous. Jose was quite specific about how he wanted Jessica to look, and although she had been a gymnast and dancer and had been named "best body" in high school, she was a little too thin for Jose. He was constantly telling her to eat. Says Jessica, "He doesn't like skinny girls. He wanted me to be meaty. One time my mom came and saw me and was mortified. I wasn't fat, but I was about 130 pounds of solid muscle—all because Jose wanted me that way."

Today, despite all the differences, Jose and Jessica's relationship is amicable. They talk on the phone nearly every day because of their eight-year-old daughter, Josie, and Jessica is supportive of Jose shining a light into the dark corners of baseball. "If it can help America's pastime get under control, writing the book was great," she says, "because I think steroids are horrible. There are times when you need to use them under a doctor's care, and that's fine, but recreationally they can really mess with you."

Jessica's apartment in the Westwood section of L.A. is elegant and cozy but not nearly as opulent as her former surroundings. The palace she and Jose shared in Weston, Florida was 22,000 square feet, with enough room for their fleet of impossibly expensive automobiles. She admits she loved the lavish lifestyle but is freer and happier today without it—and without a steady man in her life—than she's ever been before.

The Florida house was the setting for the Cansecos' wildest and darkest times. Their relationship was on a roller coaster: She would leave,

Jose would beg her to return, and then things would go haywire again. Despite his promises he kept seeing other women. Once, Jessica caught Jose with a secret cell phone he used to contact other women. "I managed to get his password, and there were, like, four messages from girls saying, 'Oh, I'm waiting for you to meet me.'"

Jessica also got hold of notes and numbers, as well as a book with contact information for women in various towns. Says Jessica, "There were things like 'Two girls in Detroit. Stripppers. Brown hair.' He'd have to write down descriptions because there were so many of them." Another time she found a note that read, "Your number-one regular." Jessica suspects it was from a woman in Oakland whom Jose had been seeing for years, dating back to his first marriage. The woman started showing up at games, she says. "Jose always said she was there for another player, but I knew," Jessica says. "The other wives couldn't believe she was there. We knew Jose had slept with her. I didn't know if all the other guys were sleeping with her too."

Out of answers, Jessica resorted to desperate measures. By this time she and Jose weren't living together but were still having sex. Taking one last shot at making the relationship work, Jessica invited a friend of hers to join them in the bedroom. "We had a threesome," she says. "It was at a point where I thought, What else can I do? He can have me and another woman, and we'll see if this will finally sow his wild oats." No such luck. "It doesn't work," she says. "I thought, This could be perfect. We'll be together forever. What a disappointment!"

That was pretty much the last straw. Jessica moved out and the divorce was finalized in 2000. These days she's writing her own book, due out this fall, and taking acting lessons. Sometimes she thinks back on that fateful day in Hooters and the man with the oak-tree arms who appeared at her table. She wonders what might have happened if she had that afternoon to live over again. Slipping the band off her ponytail, she says, "Looking back on the way things happened, all the things I went through and the way I felt all those years, I wouldn't have stayed. Then again, I wouldn't have become as strong as I am now." That's the sort of strength even someone as big as Jose Canseco can't take away from her now.





F. THORNE

"That's not my foot."

PIGSKIN PREVIEW

(continued from page 116)

last season with an injury. On offense, Erik Ainge is back at quarterback; he passed for a freshman school record 17 touchdowns in 2004. Gerald Riggs Jr. will be a force at tailback, and Tennessee always has a crew of fleet-footed wide receivers.

What they lack: The Vols are thin on the offensive line, and the defensive secondary is talented but young. Overall, however, this team isn't missing much.

Outlook: Anything less than another SEC East title will be considered a failure, and coach Phil Fulmer and the Tennessee fans have their sights set even higher.

Prediction: 10-1



5. VIRGINIA TECH Last year: 10-3, ending with a 16-13 loss to Auburn in the Sugar Bowl.

What they have: Another top-10 team. The Hokies have skill at nearly every position, although the only marquee name is Playboy All America cornerback Jimmy Williams. The offense features eight returning starters. Coach Frank Beamer generally likes to run the ball, but with a strong group of receivers and no proven stud in the backfield, the Hokies may look to pass more often. Defensive coach Bud Foster likes speed, and he has plenty of it this season, so expect Tech's defense to be quick to the ball.

What they lack: Quarterback Bryan Randall, who graduated. Marcus Vick, brother of NFL superstar Michael, will replace him after sitting out last season because of off-field problems. Four other quarterbacks are on the roster, all six-foot-

three or taller, so Beamer has options.

Outlook: The genes will kick in, and Vick will emerge as a star. The schedule is easier—no USC, and Miami has to come to Blacksburg. Underrated coach Beamer continues to attract talent to a school most people can't find on a map.

Prediction: 10-1



6. IOWA Last year: 10-2, with a 30-25 victory over LSU in the Capital One Bowl.

What they have: One of the best young coaches in college football. Kirk Ferentz, beginning his seventh season at Iowa, continues to land strong recruiting classes, and he coaches them to their potential. Drew Tate is back at quarterback after earning first-team Big 10 honors last year as a sophomore. The bulk of the offensive line returns, as do the top two receivers, so expect the Hawkeyes to be explosive. Linebackers Chad Greenway and Abdul Hodge are two of the country's best.

What they lack: Last season's entire defensive front has gone the cap-and-gown route. Coordinator Norm Parker thinks he has promising players ready to step up, but experience up the middle is lacking. The pressure will be on the rest of the defense to compensate.

Outlook: If the defensive front gels, Iowa will be a definite BCS contender.

Prediction: 9-2



7. OKLAHOMA Last year: 12-1, but for the second straight year the Sooners ended a strong season with a bowl game loss.

What they have: Running back Adrian Peterson, who broke nearly every freshman rushing record last season. He'll run behind Davin Joseph, one of college

football's best offensive linemen. Defensive tackle Dusty Dvoracek, a consensus All-Big 12 selection in 2003 who sat out last season because of disciplinary problems, is eager to prove he's worthy of being a high NFL draft pick next year.

What they lack: The Sooners are another team trying to find a quarterback. Jason White, who won one Heisman Trophy and finished in the top three for another, is gone, and his shoes will be difficult to fill. Three candidates are in the wings: Paul Thompson, who redshirted last season, Tommy Grady, who backed up White last year, and Rhett Bomar, the top-rated prep quarterback in the nation two years ago.

Outlook: Coach Bob Stoops's team is in a rebuilding mode. Though a top-10 finish is still likely, the Sooners figure to end up outside the top five for the first time since 2001.

Prediction: 9-2



8. AUBURN Last year: 13-0.

Because of cupcake nonconference games against the Citadel and Louisiana-Monroe, the Tigers couldn't be too vocal about not getting a chance to play in the BCS title game.

What they have: Quite a bit, despite the loss of four players chosen in the first round of the NFL draft (quarterback Jason Campbell, defensive back Carlos Rogers and running backs Ronnie Brown and Cadillac Williams). Marcus McNeill (six-foot-nine, 332 pounds) will hold down the left-tackle spot and protect Auburn's next quarterback, likely Campbell's backup, Brandon Cox. The backfield is still strong. Tre Smith, who sat out last season on a medical redshirt, is ready for action, as is Carl Stewart, the team's third-leading rusher in 2004. A quick defense will operate out of a 4-3 alignment the majority of the time under new defensive coordinator David Gibbs.

What they lack: Experience on offense. No trio could make up for the departures of Campbell, Brown and Williams.

Outlook: Opening with five home games, the Tigers should get off to a quick start. But tough late-season trips to LSU, Arkansas and Georgia make another SEC championship a reach.

Prediction: 9-2



9. GEORGIA Last year: 10-2. The Bulldogs beat Wisconsin (24-21) in the Outback Bowl.

What they have: A huge offensive line (averaging 308 pounds) to block for running backs Danny Ware and Thomas Brown, who combined for more than 1,600 rushing yards last season. Coach Mark Richt, 42-10 in four years, also has senior quarterback D.J. Shockley, who has patiently played understudy to now-graduated David Greene. Shockley has impressive arm strength and running ability, but can he make the right decisions in the clutch?

What they lack: A surefire replacement for departed defensive end David Pollack, who had 12.5 sacks last year. Junior Quentin



"I should warn you, I'm a poor loser."

ADVERTISEMENT

“My Boyfriend’s **SECRET** ... for Amazing **SEX!**”

As a faithful reader of your magazine, I just had to tell your readers about a recent experience I had with my boyfriend.

First, let me just say he is a great guy. **But, after dating for six months, it seemed he was having confidence issues in AND out of bed.** It was having a real negative effect on his sexual prowess and let's face it, with any new relationship, it usually doesn't last very long without a real strong sexual connection. My dilemma was that I really liked the guy.

Thankfully, I didn't have to make a difficult decision because everything changed a few days ago. I came home from work and he basically tore my clothes off before I even made it through the door. Right there on the stairs he practically pounced on me. Confident, aggressive, he made all the right moves. I definitely felt sensations I'd never felt before ... in places I forgot existed. We made love for what seemed like an eternity. I never knew what some of my friends meant when they said the earth moved from having sex - I do now. **“I can honestly say it was the best sex I've ever had in my entire life!”**

When I asked him what was going on - what brought about the change - he wouldn't answer me. So I did what any red-blooded American woman would do, I started snooping. It didn't take me long to figure out his secret. In his underwear drawer under the "men's magazines," was a tube of Maxoderm Connection. After reading the fine print and finding the website, I went online to maxodermct.com to discover more about this magic in a tube.

Maxoderm Connection (of which I'm having my boyfriend buy a lifetime supply) is a lotion that is applied topically to either the clitoris or the penis. **An all natural mix of herbs and who knows what, brings blood flow straight to the source - that's when amazing things start to happen. He achieves harder, stronger erections and my orgasms go through the roof!** We aren't into taking pills of any kind - not even aspirin - so I was relieved to find he was using something topical without any systemic side effects. Unless you want to think of great sex as a side effect, because that's definitely what's going on at our place - ALL the time!

So ... please print this letter. Anyone who wants to experience mind-blowing intimacy has to try Maxoderm Connection. They need to tell their boyfriends, husbands or partners about this product. Or just "accidentally" leave a tube lying around for them to "accidentally" find. I really want to thank the woman who developed Maxoderm Connection - only a woman could design something that feels this good.

T.J.

T.J.
Phoenix, AZ



**“ I felt
sensations
I'd never felt
before
... in places
I forgot
existed.”**



P.S., Let your readers know I'm pretty sure they can still get a **FREE MONTH SUPPLY** of Maxoderm Connection with their order by calling **1-800-897-2150** or by visiting their website at www.maxodermct.com. Oh and even better, their product is backed by a 90 day full money back guarantee.

Moses will make up for part of that loss. Georgia's biggest weakness, however, is its secondary, which gave up too many passing yards last year. Without Pollack to rush the passer, the challenge will be even greater. **Outlook:** If Shockley clicks at QB and defensive coordinator Willie Martinez can solve the Bulldogs' secondary woes, Georgia will vie with Tennessee for the SEC East title. **Prediction:** 9-2



10. MICHIGAN Last year: 9-3. A promising season turned ugly as the Wolverines dropped their final two games, allowing 37 points to Ohio State and 38 to Texas in the Rose Bowl.

What they have: A find in quarterback Chad Henne, who more than filled the bill as a freshman. Michigan also has Mike Hart, a tough inside runner and a dangerous receiver out of the backfield. He's another sophomore star in the making. The anchor of the defense is tackle Gabe Watson, who looks as if he's

wearing pads even before he suits up. **What they lack:** Depth at quarterback. Coming off shoulder surgery, backup Matt Gutierrez is a question mark. Jason Avant is a promising receiver, but he won't provide the deep threat of Braylon Edwards, now with the Cleveland Browns. The defense also lacks depth and has some real concerns in the secondary, especially with the graduation of two-time Playboy All America Marlin Jackson.

Outlook: Michigan has averaged better than nine wins a season during coach Lloyd Carr's 10-year tenure in Ann Arbor, but Carr hasn't been able to get his team over the hump and into a national championship game since 1997. **Prediction:** 9-2



11. MIAMI Last year: 9-3, including a 27-10 win over Florida in the Peach Bowl.

What they have: Opponents will have a hard time scoring on Miami. The only loss from last season's starting defense is Antrel Rolle, a first-round pick in the NFL

draft. He'll be replaced by Playboy All America Devin Hester. Linebacker Willie Williams will make a significant impact in his first season, and Greg Threath returns in the secondary after leading the team in tackles last year. On offense Playboy All America Eric Winston may be the best tackle in the nation, and tight end Greg Olsen (six-foot-six, 247 pounds) is a probable future NFL first-rounder.

What they lack: A proven quarterback to replace Brock Berlin. Sophomore Kyle Wright won the starting job over redshirt freshman Kirby Freeman, who will be his backup. The quality of Wright's play will determine whether the Hurricanes are a top-five or a top-15 team.

Outlook: Sunny. Larry Coker, entering his fifth season as head coach, continues to land great recruits. This year's jewels include *USA Today's* high school defensive player of the year, Kenny Phillips. The offensive and defensive starting units will feature multiple underclassmen. Coker's biggest problem moving forward will be in persuading players to stay in school rather than turn pro early. **Prediction:** 8-3



12. FLORIDA Last year: 7-5, which wasn't good enough for coach Ron Zook, who lost his job. Urban Meyer, one of the nation's top young talents, was hired after leading Utah to 22 wins the past two seasons.

What they have: Chris Leak, who should be one of the nation's five best college quarterbacks. A junior, he already has 45 career TD passes, and he'll fare well in Meyer's spread-out scheme, thanks in part to an experienced front line led by senior center Mike Degory. On defense, eight of 11 starters return, including secondary standouts Jarvis Herring and Dee Webb.

What they lack: The ability to stop the run. Opponents exploited the middle of this defense last season and could do so again unless a young linebacking corps steps up to the challenge.

Outlook: Pretty good and trending up. Meyer will maximize this team's ability, which is considerable.

Prediction: 8-3. The chant from the stands: "Who needs Steve Spurrier?"



13. OHIO STATE Last year: A spotty 8-4, but the Buckeyes finished well by topping rival Michigan and routing Oklahoma State (33-7) in the Alamo Bowl.

What they have: A dominant defense. Nine starters are back, including Playboy All America linebacker A.J. Hawk. The defensive front is strong and experienced inside and young but fast on the ends. Offensively, coach Jim Tressel has game-breaking receivers in Antonio Holmes and Ted Ginn Jr. The offensive line is solid, and Antonio Pittman is the best of a good group of running backs. **What they lack:** The certainty of having a



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quarterback who can take this team over the top. Justin Zwick played poorly early last season but came on strong late. A prototypical pocket passer, he relies on good reads and avoiding errors to make up for his lack of athleticism. OSU has yet to settle on a replacement for Mike Nugent, the best placekicker in college football last season.

Outlook: If the Buckeyes can win an early game against Texas, a BCS bowl is a possibility. The longer-range outlook for Tressel may not be as sunny. Scandal has plagued the Ohio State program since Maurice Clarett made accusations that boosters were compensating athletes. If more dirty laundry turns up, Tressel will probably be out.
Prediction: 8-3



14. LOUISVILLE Last year: 11-1, including a 44-40 shoot-out victory over Boise State in the Liberty Bowl. The lone blemish on Louisville's record was a razor-thin 41-38 loss to Miami.

What they have: Building on a solid foundation inherited from former coach John L. Smith, coach Bobby Petrino has turned the Cardinals into a national power. Louisville's success going forward will depend largely on the arm of highly touted sophomore Brian Brohm, who takes over at quarterback for the departed Stefan LeFors. When he's not airing it out, Brohm will hand the ball to running back Michael Bush.

What they lack: A defense as formidable as last season's, which ranked 15th in the nation. Linebacker Robert McCune, the heart of last year's squad, is gone, and the secondary has been depleted by graduation as well.

Outlook: The Louisville faithful held their collective breath when rumors surfaced that Petrino might be headed

to LSU. But he's back, and his Cardinals are favored to win the Big East in their first season in the conference.

Prediction: 9-2

included wandering in the street in the middle of the night and telling officers that he was God. Redshirt freshmen Drew Weatherford and Xavier Lee, with

2005

And the Award Goes to...



Jeff Backes is a cornerback and kick-return specialist at Northwestern University. Last season the five-foot-nine, 190-pound senior led the Big 10 in kickoff returns with a 30.3-yard average. He has also made 99 tackles over the past two seasons in the Wildcats' secondary. Currently holding a 3.8 overall grade point average in psychology (premed), he will graduate this year and has already been accepted to Northwestern's School of Medicine. In recognition of his achievements on the field and in the



classroom, **PLAYBOY** has selected Jeff as its **Anson Mount Scholar/Athlete for 2005** and will donate \$5,000 to Northwestern's general scholarship fund in his name.



15. FLORIDA STATE Last year: 9-3, ending with a 30-18 win over West Virginia in the

Gator Bowl.

What they have: Lightning speed on defense. Ernie Sims and Playboy All America corner Antonio Cromartie anchor a unit that will cause trouble for opposing offenses. FSU is loaded at running back, with a group led by Leon Washington and Lorenzo Booker.

What they lack: An experienced quarterback now that Wyatt Sexton's status with the team is uncertain. Sexton, who started seven games last season and is the son of Seminoles running-back coach Billy Sexton, was suspended on June 3 for a violation of team rules. The junior was also arrested by Tallahassee police for "erratic behavior" that

just one collegiate snap between them, will battle for the QB spot.

Outlook: Despite the uncertainties at quarterback, Florida State is good enough to win another ACC title.

Prediction: 8-3



16. FRESNO STATE Last

year: 9-3. The Bulldogs finished with a six-game winning streak, in which they outscored opponents 317-114.

What they have: Seventeen returning starters, including Paul Pinegar, who's back for his fourth season at quarterback. Pinegar became just the seventh QB in NCAA history to win three straight bowl games as a starter and stands a good chance to become the first to win a fourth. Coach Pat Hill has a strong offensive line, a bevy of speedy running backs and plenty of good receivers. The defense, best in the WAC in every major statistical category last year, should be just as good this season.

What they lack: Opportunities to play before a national audience. This powerful program still flies under the radar.

Outlook: Hill has been able to keep his coaching staff intact, and he signed another top-notch recruiting class, all of whom are expected to redshirt. As long as he remains in Fresno, the Bulldogs will succeed.

Prediction: 10-2



17. BOISE STATE Last

year: 11-1. The Broncos suffered their only loss, to Louisville, in a Liberty Bowl nail-biter.

What they have: Quarterback Jared Zabransky, who could be the WAC's offensive player of the year. Seven other starters are back on offense, including running backs Lee Marks and Jon Helmandollar and receivers Drisan James and Derek Schouman. Middle linebacker Korey Hall leads a defense that was one of the best in the nation at stopping the run.



"It's not commitment I'm afraid of. It's the thought of never having sex with another woman."

What they lack: Situated far from major media markets, the Broncos' program hasn't benefited from the kind of credibility that media coverage provides. Their 11 wins a year ago, however, got the attention of the football writers back East. Coach Dan Hawkins continues to do a great job of recruiting at a school that's a long way from any traditional football talent base. Boise State's biggest obstacle will be a tougher schedule that includes games at Georgia, Oregon State and Fresno State. **Outlook:** This team will be tremendous until Hawkins is lured to a higher-profile coaching job. **Prediction:** 10-2



18. TEXAS TECH Last year: 8-4, including an impressive 45-31 win over California in the Holiday Bowl.

What they have: Because coach Mike Leach has consistently recruited well in his five years in Lubbock, the Red Raiders are talented and deep on both sides of the ball. Last year's quarterback, Sonny Cumbie, graduated, but like his predecessor, B.J. Symons, Cumbie was a one-season starter. Now fifth-year senior Cody Hodges gets his chance, supported by running back Taurian Henderson and wide receiver Jarrett Hicks. The biggest turnaround for Tech has been on defense. It finished 100th in the nation two years ago before stepping up to 42nd last season. Defensive coach Lyle Setencich has eight starters back.

What they lack: Leach may be pushing his luck with this one-season-starter business at quarterback. Three starters on the offensive line graduated, and Leach is still looking for a tight end.

Outlook: This is a well-rounded team in a tough conference. Tech's schedule includes games against Texas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Kansas State.

Prediction: 8-3



19. ARIZONA STATE Last year: 9-3, capped by a 27-23 win over Purdue in the Sun Bowl.

What they have: The second-best team in the Pac 10. Coach Dirk Koetter has most of last year's roster to work with. The Sun Devils' receiving corps, led by tight end Zach Miller and Playboy All America wide receiver Derek Hagan, is especially dangerous. There's also excellent size and strength on the offensive line. The strength of the defense is at linebacker, led by Jamar Williams and Dale Robinson.

What they lack: An experienced leader behind center now that Andrew Walter has graduated. Sam Keller, who filled in for Walter in the Sun Bowl, will likely be the starter. New defensive coordinator Bill Miller will look to seven junior-college transfers to contribute immediately.

Outlook: Koetter will continue the turnaround he began two seasons ago. Apart from a road game against LSU, ASU plays its toughest opponents at home. **Prediction:** 8-3

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20. BOSTON COLLEGE

Last year: 9-3, including a 37-24 win over North Carolina in the Continental Tire Bowl.

What they have: A defense that will keep the Eagles in games. The unit got a big break when Playboy All America end Mathias Kiwanuka opted to stick around for his senior year. BC also returns one of the nation's best groups of linebackers, led by last year's Big East Rookie of the Year, Brian Toal. The offensive line is solid, and coach Tom O'Brien has an assortment of talented running backs and receivers.

What they lack: BC's success, like so many other teams', will hinge on the play of an unproven quarterback. Quinton Porter, who started 10 games in 2003, is back after having been supplanted by the now-departed Paul Peterson. If Porter shines, the Eagles can go a long way.

Outlook: In BC's first year in the ACC, September 17 looms large: a home game against Florida State. But expect the Eagles to get a bowl game invitation for the seventh consecutive year.

Prediction: 9-2



21. CALIFORNIA

Last year: 10-2. Cal's only losses were by six points to national champ USC and to Texas Tech (45-31) in the Holiday Bowl. **What they have:** A powerful offensive line

that returns largely intact. Six-foot-seven, 340-pound tackle Ryan O'Callaghan and center Marvin Philip are the best of the group. The Bears also have a star emerging in rusher Marshawn Lynch, who scored 10 TDs last season as a backup to 2,000-yard rusher J.J. Arrington. Coach Jeff Tedford has mined the junior-college circuit effectively, bringing in quarterback Joseph Ayoob, a JC first-team All-American.

What they lack: Certitude. Quarterback Aaron Rodgers went to the Green Bay Packers in the first round of the draft. School career reception leader Geoff McArthur and single-season sack record holder Ryan Riddle are also gone.

Outlook: Not bad for a team that lost so much to graduation. Cal has a relatively weak nonconference schedule, and other than USC the Pac 10 isn't that tough.

Prediction: 8-3



22. IOWA STATE

Last year: 7-5, which is not that impressive until you consider that the Cyclones won five of their last six to finish tied for first in the Big 12's North Division. They also beat Miami of Ohio (17-13) in the Independence Bowl.

What they have: More skill and depth than this program has seen in a long time. Bret Meyer returns at quarterback after accounting for 2,257 yards of total

offense in 2004. Thousand-yard rusher Stevie Hicks is back as well. The defensive line, with Nick Leaders at nose guard and Brent Curvey at tackle, could be the best in school history. Linebacker Tim Dobbins was the Big 12 Defensive Newcomer of the Year last season.

What they lack: The confidence to win big games. That's the challenge coach Dan McCarney faces as he attempts to beat the Big 12 powerhouses. ISU's defense will keep the Cyclones in striking distance.

Outlook: Definitely looking up. The team's run defense last season was its best since the 1940s, and most of the unit returns. The division as a whole will be better, but ISU should be improved as well.

Prediction: 7-4

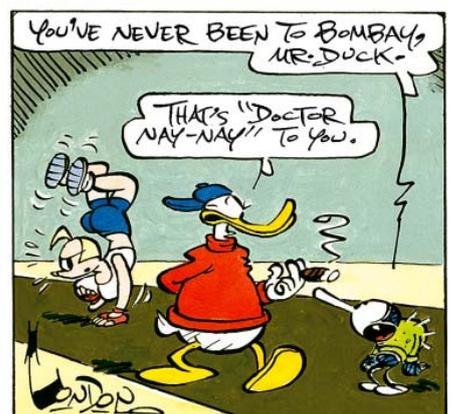
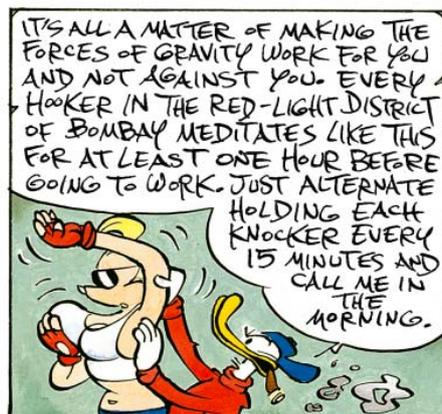
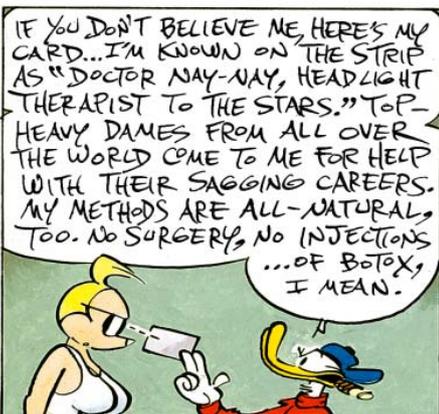
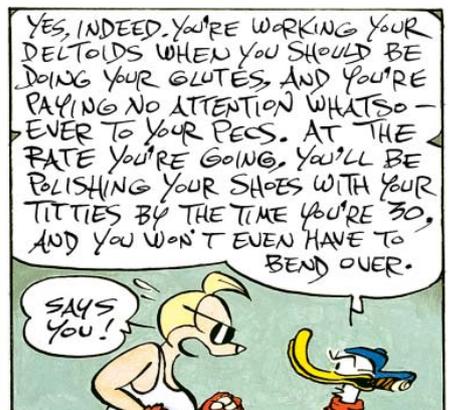
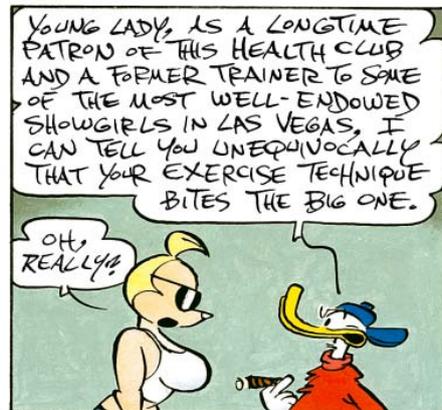


23. GEORGIA TECH

Last year: 7-5, including a 51-14 win over Syracuse in the Champs Sports Bowl.

What they have: A mostly intact defense that was 12th in the nation last season, allowing 298 yards a game. Middle linebacker Gerris Wilkinson and defensive end Eric Henderson are two of Tech's best, and several players have all-conference potential under the tutelage of defensive coordinator Jon Tenuta. On offense the team has one of the nation's best young receivers in Calvin Johnson

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and an outstanding tailback in P.J. Daniels, who returns after missing part of last season with an injury.

What they lack: A consistent quarterback. Reggie Ball returns after starting the past two seasons, but coach Chan Gailey isn't entirely in Ball's camp. The coach is taking a hard look at two redshirt freshmen. Gailey also needs to replenish a depleted offensive line.

Outlook: Promising, if the offense can score. This is a scrappy bunch looking for a breakout year. Opponents beware.

Prediction: 7-4



24. NOTRE DAME Last year: Coach Tyrone Willingham's 6-6 swan song was punctuated by a 38-21 loss to Oregon State in the Insight Bowl.

What they have: New head coach Charlie Weis and his four Super Bowl rings. The former New England Patriots offensive coordinator will attempt to restore the luster to the Golden Domers by attracting blue-chip football talent. Brady Quinn, about to start his third season at QB, dramatically improved his touchdown-to-interception ratio in 2004, finishing with 17 TD passes. The offense lost just one starter, so the Irish should be able to score.

What they lack: Cohesiveness. It's tough to get new systems running under a first-year coaching staff. Only three defensive starters return, but that may not be a bad thing: Notre Dame's play against the pass was miserable a year ago.

Outlook: Much depends on the coaches' ability to shore up the Irish defense. As usual, Notre Dame's schedule is formidable. The fans can pray for an impressive first season for Weis, but they will have to be patient while he builds the program.

Prediction: 7-4



25. WYOMING Last year: 7-5, finishing with a 24-21 win over UCLA in the Las Vegas Bowl.

What they have: Joe Glenn, one of the best up-and-coming coaches in college football. In two years Glenn has rescued the Cowboys from mediocrity. Wyoming also has the best receiving corps in the Mountain West Conference, a strong offensive line and game-breaking running backs. Corey Bramlet, who threw for 2,409 yards and 12 touchdowns in 2004, leads the attack again. Eight starters return from last year's improved defense, including nose guard Dusty Hoffschneider, defensive back Derrick Martin and safety John Wendling.

What they lack: Depth at quarterback. If Bramlet goes down, the Cowboys will be in trouble. Running backs Ivan Harrison and Joseph Harris, who each missed spring drills with injuries, have to get healthy.

Outlook: If Wyoming can survive tough early road games (Florida, Air Force, Mississippi), a bowl game could be in store.

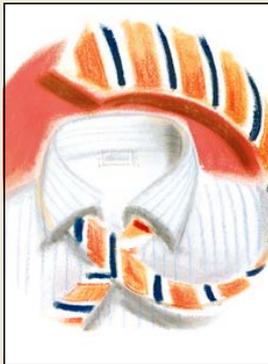
Prediction: 7-4



WHERE &

HOW TO BUY

Below is a list of retailers and manufacturers you can contact for information on where to find this month's merchandise. To buy the apparel and equipment shown on pages 36, 41-44, 118-125 and 166-167, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.



GAMES

Page 36: *Capcom*, capcom.com. *EA Sports*, easports.com. *Microsoft Game Studios*, microsoft.com/games. *Turtle Beach*, turtlebeach.com. *VU Games*, vugames.com.

MANTRACK

Pages 41-44: *Aleph hotel*, boscolo.hotels.com. *Chopsticks*, mrslinskitchen.com. *Gunter Wilhelm*, gunterwilhelm.com. *Italian wines*, available at fine liquor stores. *Kanji-inscribed teacups*, mrslinskitchen.com. *Mossy stone chopstick rests*, mrslinskitchen.com. *Ritmo Mundo*, ritmomundo.com. *Sake cups and decanter*, 2000 cranes.com. *Sakes*, available at fine liquor stores. *Sanguine Moon Tetsubin teapot*, mrslinskitchen.com. *Soy sauce bowls*, mrslinskitchen.com. *Soy sauce dispenser*, ekitron.com. *Sushi stand*, ekitron.com. *Vemar*, vemar-usa.com. *Voodoo*, voodooopc.com. *Wooden platters*, chefscatalog.com.

THE NEW PLAYBOY

Pages 118-125: *Alessandro Dell'Acqua*, 212-253-6861. *Armani Collezioni*, available at Giorgio Armani bou-

tiques. *Best of Class* by Robert Talbott, roberttalbott.com. *Binetti*, ilovebinetti.com. *Borsalino*, available at Saks Fifth Avenue. *BOSS Hugo Boss*, 800-HUGO-BOSS. *Bostonian*, bostonianshoe.com. *Brioni*, available at Brioni boutiques. *Casadei*, 212-765-6846.

Cloak, available at Barneys New York. *Dsquared*, available at Bergdorf Goodman in NYC. *Frye Company*, fryeboots.com. *Gharani Strok*, nexuss showroom.com. *Gold Toe*, goldtoe.com. *House of Diehl*, 212-358-8915. *Jean Paul Gaultier Homme*, available at Lior in Las Vegas. *J.Lindeberg*, available at Saks Fifth Avenue. *Mezlan*, mezlanshoes.com. *Nakulsen*, nexuss showroom.com. *Optimo Hats*, optimohats.com. *Ted Baker London*, available at Saks Fifth Avenue. *Torino*, available at Oak Hall in Memphis. *Trafalgar*, dann-online.com. *Valentino*, 212-772-6969.

POTPOURRI

Pages 166-167: *Bacardi Reserva Limitada*, available at the Bacardi gift shop in San Juan, Puerto Rico. *Bullicie*, bulliciecare.com. *Egg Rite*, amazon.com. *Expert Insight: Final Table Poker*, expertinsight.com. *Headbanger Audio*, headbangeraudio.com. *Iogear*, iogear.com. *Mares*, limitededition.mares.com. *Taschen*, taschen.com. *10 Cane rum*, available at fine liquor stores. *Vonage*, vonage.com.

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BOMB SUIT (continued from page 74)

Baghdad is a city of bombs—mines, artillery shells, grenades, dynamite—detonated by suicide or cell phones.

prepared for the bloodiness of the battle, and the dead marines were stored in ice coolers, he says. Sarver recalls that every time he went in there to grab a Coke, he saw the face of a young private nestled in the ice next to the sodas. “I knew him. He was a really nice kid,” he says, shaking his head.

Toward the end of the month in An Najaf, Sarver and Williams were dismantling IEDs under heavy fire, and Williams began shaking, disoriented from the severe 120-degree heat. Sarver sent Williams back to the Humvee for water. When Sarver made it back to the truck upramp he found Williams prone in the back of the Humvee.

“Williams, where’s the firing device?” Sarver asked.

“I left it back at the IEDs,” Williams replied.

“Did you cut the wires?”

Williams stammered.

“Did you cut them? Did you cut them, Williams?”

“Yeah.”

“Did you segregate them?”

“Yeah. But the mortars are getting really close.”

“Did you put a charge on them?”

“No.”

“Why didn’t you put a fucking charge on them? Now we have to go back and blow them up!”

The two men were forced to go back to the IEDs in order to put a charge on the explosives and detonate them safely.

“How much time fuse are you using?”

“I put, uh....” Williams stammered some more.

“Three feet!”

“Why are we yelling?”

“Because we’re getting shot at!”

Sarver never held the incident against him. In fact, as they were driving back to Baghdad, Sarver told the younger man that he trusted him and that there was no tech—not even another team leader—he’d rather have at his back. “You are going to be hot

shit one day, Williams, and one hell of a leader,” he said.

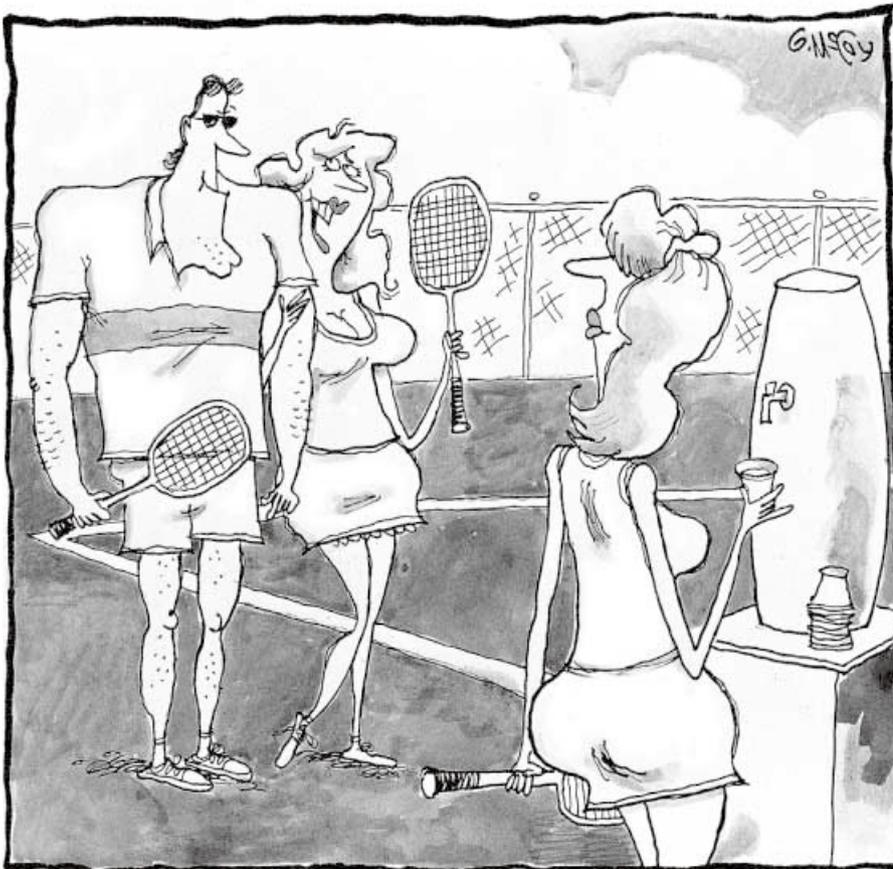
Then he shared his private view of the war. “Where else in the world do you think you’re going to get to disarm five or six IEDs in a day?” Sarver asked him. Back in the States you would be lucky to see an IED once every five years, he said, so they may as well enjoy the opportunity to work while they had it. Plus, if the pace continued, they might just end up disarming more bombs than any team in the war. That would be a better souvenir than the memory of the private’s face nestled in ice cubes.

The subject turned to their home lives, and Sarver told Williams about his son: “One cool dude. He’s like me, a hard-headed bastard. But he’s a stud.” Then, ever the team leader, Sarver advised the younger man on how to handle being separated from his wife by the war. There were ways to behave during those phone calls home that would put a woman’s mind to rest. “Ah-huh, okay,” Williams said.

“Sarver’s always trying to tell me how to live my life,” Williams says later. “It’s just funny. I mean, I’ll listen to him when it comes to IEDs or being an EOD tech, because he’s a great team leader. But he’s telling me how I should talk to my wife. And I’m like, ‘Jeff, you’re not even married.’”

All EOD techs start their training at a school in Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. The Army looks for volunteers who are confident, forthright, comfortable under extreme pressure and emotionally stable. To get into the training program, a prospective tech first needs a high score on the mechanical-aptitude portion of the armed forces exam. Once the school begins, candidates are gradually winnowed out over six months of training, and only 40 percent will graduate. “We have not yet cracked the code on what makes a great EOD tech. There is no textbook answer to the question of how to be a team leader,” says Staff Sergeant Major Matthew Hughs, the commander of Eglin’s bomb school. “The only way to find out if a man has the right qualities is to put him in the field, in the situation, and see how he does. You can simulate it, but the simulation will never be as tough as the real thing.”

When Sarver was six years old his dad, a carpenter, took him hunting for the first time. They left the trailer park near Huntington, West Virginia and went into the forest. Dad showed him how to be alone, how to be self-sufficient. If you were willing to bear the isolation of waiting for hours in a thicket, you could catch an animal in its natural grace, a flash of fur, muscle and hoof. His mother never understood him, Sarver says. She always wanted to take him shopping, to visit relatives and socialize. “Sorry, Mom,” he’d say, “I just don’t have the gay gene.”



“Kyle is part of my new fitness plan. He has a third less fat than my regular boyfriend.”

As Sarver got older he was introduced to more intense encounters: how a coyote, its hind leg caught in a trap, would scream and howl, then finally whimper in a voice that sounded like an infant's; or how a 200-pound buck shot in the sweet spot above its shoulder would shiver, fall to its knees and lie panting, its last hot death breaths melting the snow. Sarver fell for all of it. He spent his free time hunting, and when he wasn't hunting he pored over hunting catalogs, and when his family moved to Ohio Sarver discovered new hunting grounds.

He finished high school and worked in construction for a few months before joining the Army at the age of 19. Later he signed up for the Rangers. That was cool at first. The legendarily tough entry requirements were a cakewalk after a childhood spent tracking coyotes. He did the whole gung-ho routine—he jumped out of airplanes, marched for 12 miles in full battle rattle, got in bar fights, punching until he hit bone, scarring his knuckles—and proved himself to be an excellent soldier, a natural. But in a year Sarver soured on the Rangers. He came to hate the long marches with 100 other guys on a trek to nowhere, just to train as a group. Despite the Ranger Creed, Sarver never got over the feeling that he was just another glorified grunt. This suspicion was solidified when he was sent to Central America on a hush-hush mission that escalated into a disastrous jungle firefight. Sarver took an AK-47 round in the hip. The medic cleaned the wound by twisting his finger in the bullet hole, shot him full of morphine, then sent him back to the fight. After that Sarver quit the Rangers, figuring anything would be better than mindless groupthink. He volunteered for EOD, where brains mattered more than biceps; plus these guys didn't march, they traveled in trucks. He proved to be suited to the job.

Sarver showed an intuitive grasp of engineering and with a quick glance could suss out the architecture of any bomb. This was evident even in training sessions, when the techs built their own bombs to practice with. Instead of the shoe boxes with basic triggers that the other techs built, Sarver's mock IED consisted of a monitor hookup, remote cameras, an array of motion detectors and multiple triggers linked by collapsible circuits so that if one were cut the others would deploy. "If I put that in a room, nobody could beat it," he says. "It's the ultimate IED." More important, Sarver proved that he could work on bombs without becoming bogged down by fear.

To Sarver EOD offered an infinite number of challenges—man-versus-materials moments when he would go down on a bomb and everything else would fall away, the Morbid Thrill. There were times, in fact—as when he was in Egypt disarming unexploded ordnance from the Arab-Israeli wars—when he understood that

each bomb has a fascinating and dangerous allure: It has strengths and weaknesses like any adversary, and there is beauty to be found in a well-constructed killing machine. There were times when he felt bomb work was better—far better—than hunting. The only problem with the job: There weren't that many bombs to disarm, and it could be hellishly slow going between deployments.

In September 2004 Sarver and Williams were back in Baghdad, where the situation had deteriorated even further. At this point in the war, the U.S. Army had pretty much hunkered down, hemmed in by an invisible insurgency that relied on small arms and improvised explosive devices. Every day a small part of this huge operation was sent into the streets of Baghdad to look for IEDs, which had also killed countless Iraqi civilians—we don't count them, and neither does the interim government—as well as more than 200 American soldiers, sailors and marines. While it was hell on the Iraqis, it was heaven for the EOD techs.

Baghdad, bombed twice from above, erupts beneath the feet of its conquerors several times a day. It is a city of bombs—mines, artillery shells, grenades, dynamite, cordite—exploding by suicidal transport or remotely held wireless phones, spreading blood and body parts, leaving a signature of black, greasy smoke curling above the carnage. This is a modern city of nearly 6 million, almost the same population as Hong Kong's but spread over a metropolitan area of 81 square miles. It is a major urban center by any standard, but more to the point it is Iraq's capital, with office towers and mosques, highways and traffic circles, middle-class neighborhoods like Mansur and slums whose markets draw pedestrians by the thousands at midday. With the rise of the insurgency, these features of a modern metropolis have been transformed into opportunities and platforms for killing Americans. From tall buildings and mosques, snipers watch and wait for passing patrols. The traffic on the roads gives cover to car bombers, who merely have to pull alongside your Humvee and wave hello. In the slums people bury bombs in the dirt roads among the garbage, in the concrete medians of the highways and in the bodies of roadkill, while the street dogs bark and never seem to stop.

These bombs are created from a vast supply of explosives left over from a dictatorship that poured its riches into military hardware. Saddam Hussein even stockpiled missiles that couldn't be launched, and they collected rust on the ground, waiting for this opportunity. After a war with Iran, Kurdish uprisings and two invasions by the United States, Iraqi soil has become a repository for every weapons system on the market. In the ground are an estimated 10 mil-



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lion land mines—if Baghdad is a city of bombs, Iraq is a nation of mines—making it one of the most heavily mined areas on the planet. Even if the U.S. Army sealed the borders today, there would be enough explosives loose in Iraq to sustain the insurgency for several decades.

All this has taken the U.S. military by surprise. The protocol for suspected IEDs calls for securing a 300-meter perimeter around the bomb. No soldier goes near it and nothing can happen until the EOD arrives and takes control of the scene. The problem is there are only about 150 trained Army EOD techs in Iraq, a reflection of the fact that, until this war, bomb work was never considered a major duty of the nation's fighting forces. The Army is scrambling to add more techs. Plans are in the works to activate a total of 1,400 techs in the next four years by somehow convincing soldiers to join what may be the most dangerous unit in the armed forces for an extra \$150 a month in "demolition pay." In the meantime U.S. generals have announced a Manhattan Project-like effort to combat IEDs and perhaps come up with a better day-to-day solution than having troops shoot at them, which is known as "recon by fire." This almost never works out and in most cases renders the unexploded bomb that much harder to defuse.

As summer turned to fall in Baghdad, Sarver and Williams worked 48-hour shifts, taking only a day off between runs

into the city. The days blurred. Either it was morning or night, either you were driving out from the base or coming home, either the bomb was in a pile of garbage or in the carcass of a dead dog or on the side of the road, and either you disarmed it or, if you were too late, there would be bodies or brains on the backseat of a truck. The incidents always started the same way, with Sarver jumping out of the truck and joshing with the soldiers on the ground—the lewd, crude ball of energy. Then he would go down on the bomb alone and feel the Morbid Thrill. Then he'd come back upranged, glowing from the rush, only to learn that command wanted him to get back in his truck and drive to a new intersection where another bomb was waiting.

By September, intelligence estimates put the number of bomb makers in Baghdad at somewhere between five and 50, but as one expert said, "the skill set was spreading." How else to explain the daily rise in the intensity of the campaign? Sarver followed these intelligence reports closely, and he tried to help by passing along the bomb circuitry he collected on his missions. After coming back to the base from a day in the field, he would sort the bits of wiring he'd picked up on Baghdad's streets and place them in neatly labeled plastic bags, which would eventually be sent to the FBI for analysis. In these devices Sarver could read the history of the insurgency as it grew in ferocity and sophistication. When he first landed in Iraq the bombs he encountered were rudimentary: a blasting

cap and shell connected by a command wire to an insurgent with a button. Now they were progressing to more lethal, wireless designs, incorporating modified car alarms, pagers and wireless phones for remote detonation. Still, the insurgents were far from fully exploiting the available technology. He predicts they will turn to remote motion sensors, pressure sensors, heat sensors and light sensors, all of which they will use to increase the body count.

After every shift, Sarver comes back to the base and paints a little bomb stencil on the door of his Humvee to keep track of his numbers. "How many you got now?" asks Staff Sergeant Kelsey Hendrickson, a tall, bald, strapping 26-year-old tech. Sarver tells him 120 IEDs and four vehicle-borne IEDs—car bombs.

"Man, I hate the car bombs," Hendrickson says. "They're the worst."

"I'll take 'em. Give 'em to me."

"You can have them." Hendrickson lights a cigarette. "Who cares, anyway? It's not like you get a special prize for disarming x number of IEDs, you know. They don't put a patch with a number on it on your uniform."

"But I'll know," Sarver says.

Sarver, a loner by nature, dips in and out of the roughhousing Southern-boy frat house of the 788th's social life. For the other guys it is the only way to blow off steam. "You need an escape," one tech tells me. "The last thing you want to do is come back and sit around thinking about what you just did, because then you'll go crazy. As long as you don't get contemplative, you're all right." Sarver takes his meals alone. When it's time to go to the gym and the guys are all guzzling protein shakes and getting ready to lift heavy, they don't even bother to ask him anymore.

"I'm saving my energy for IEDs," he'll say.

By October Sarver and Williams had disarmed 160 IEDs. The insurgency began targeting Iraqi civilians. One day Sarver's team was called out on two IEDs, but one went off before Team One reached it, and it killed an Iraqi family driving by in a pickup truck—father, mother, daughter and a sheep tethered in the flatbed. "If we had stopped, it could have been the starting point of an ambush because we didn't have the trucks to secure it. On the other hand, it really bothers me that a kid got killed inside that truck," Sarver says. "That was a catastrophic kill. There was brains all through the truck—that gray matter. Nobody survived."

That night Sarver went back to his trailer, which he shares with Williams. Sarver has divided the room with a wall of lockers, squeezing Williams into a corner. "You don't need the space," he declared, pulling seniority. All Williams has on his side are pictures of his family and his EOD certificate. Sarver



"I'm used to being around celebrities. That's something you develop as a stalker."

has decorated his considerably larger wall space like a command center, with photographs of classic IEDs, schematic drawings of fuses and maps of Baghdad showing the locations of major installations. His computer screen saver is an image of a bomb tech in Ireland taking the lonely walk downrange. Sarver keeps recovered bomb parts in a box by his bed. He keeps pictures of his son and his new girlfriend in his desk drawer, under bits and pieces of IEDs. Sarver would take out the photos if anybody asked to see them, but he wouldn't volunteer them.

In December, with only a month left in the tour, Sarver and the other techs feel the stress pile up. The last 30 days are the most dangerous time. Even under the best conditions EOD is one of the most dangerous jobs in the military, but the chances of dying grow especially high in the last month, when fatigue, distraction and homesickness can dull a soldier's instincts. "You zig when the bomber zags" is how Sarver describes the kind of mental mistake that can lead to death. Staff Sergeant Michael Sutter, an experienced tech and a close friend of Sarver's, zipped at the wrong time and died in the field the day after Christmas 2003, his last scheduled day on duty. Staff Sergeant Kimberly Voelz was laid open on the side of the road by a bomb that had been duct-taped to a telephone pole, and she survived long enough to make it home and die in her husband's arms.

In the second week of December, on a rare call when a colonel is in the field, Sarver's team travels to a location in downtown Baghdad. A hundred feet away is a rebar house with a high cement wall and a satellite dish, typical Baghdad styling—a dull, putty-colored job like everything else in Baghdad, a whole city in earth tones and faded yellows, with beat-up shitty cars, a once modern, shiny place now banged up and dirty.

Team One attempts to disarm the IED with a robot, but it doesn't work and Sarver has to take the long walk by himself. Millward seals him into the bomb suit, which makes him look like a cross between the Michelin Man and a hazmat specialist. The only visible part of him is his face; it is slightly distorted by the clear acrylic visor of the helmet, but if you look closely you can see he is smiling as he walks down on the bomb and prepares to face the ultimate fear. The rest of his face is tight with terror—the wide nose, small soft chin and large blue-green eyes, all drawn in and back—except for the lips, which are set in a cocky smile.

As he leaves the safety of the group, thoughts of his family flash at him. *What have I done bad? he thinks. Have I done everything I should have done? Have I done everything I can as an individual? Will my family be okay if this bomb goes off? How different from my parents, married for 40 years. My relationships have been big flops. So many*

mistakes. If I learned from each one, shouldn't I be a Ph.D. by now?

As he approaches the bomb his mind goes blank. "Everything shuts down except for you and the device. I can hear myself breathing." His heart beats so loud he can hear it in his helmet, overlaid with the sound of the barking dogs; they all sound so close they could be biting off his ear. There is a radio receiver in the suit, but it's turned off to avoid sending stray radio waves that could set off the IED. So he is walking toward the bomb without any communication with his team—cut off, alone and in the open.

"When you get to 10 feet away from it, you get comfortable because you are at the point of no return," he explains. "And you look at it. Everything is shut off."

This bomb sits beneath a pile of garbage, the rusty metal cone poking out from under a banana peel, under a mountain of trash: rotting vegetables, plastic, tin cans. Sarver puts his hands on the device, an artillery shell containing 18 pounds of explosives with a blasting cap cemented in the nose. Rising from the cap is a pink wire leading to a battery connected to a cell phone. When the phone rings, it opens a circuit that sends 1.5 volts of electricity—less than the static charge on your dry-cleaning bag—to the blasting cap, which then detonates the entire contraption.

He must separate the blasting cap from the main charge, but it won't come out of the cement. Sarver reaches for his knife and starts digging. He digs around the wire, where there is no more than an

inch of space to work with, and he tries desperately not to disturb the cap, which can blow from even a hard jolt.

Sarver is digging with the knife, trying to lift out the cap. From 300 meters away, he seems to be moving at hyper-speed, but inside the bomb helmet the moments seem to be stretched, and he feels as if he's moving in superslow motion. Finally the wire gives, the bomb separates, it's over, and he stands up. His face is flushed, and his body shakes in the aftermath of his adrenal hailstorm.

It's clear that he's tasted the incomparable rush of having disarmed a deadly weapon—of having seen how easy and real it would be to die—and lived. He rejoices in the sensations of his existence: the salty sweat falling in his eyes, the 80 pounds of weight on his back, the dogs barking madly in his ear.

When Sarver is finished, the colonel, whose personal convoy had almost been destroyed by the IED, comes up to congratulate him. Sarver recognizes him as one of the authors of the "recon by fire" tactic.

"Are you the crazy man in the bomb suit?" the colonel asks.

"Yes, sir, that was me."

"Look at that hero. America's finest. That is some good shit. Check that shit out—all right, good job," he says and shakes Sarver's hand. "I want a picture with this man."

Then Sarver begins to explain to the colonel exactly how a bullet would have failed to disarm the device. The



"The new bed's arrived, Harry—it's great!"

colonel nods, makes no reply. Sarver picks up the remains of the bomb to illustrate the point.

"Hey, hey, hey," says the colonel. "Don't be touching that thing around me."

As he walks away, the colonel says to his aide, "You wouldn't catch me going down on no fucking bomb."

That night Camp Victory is dark, nearly pitch-black. The Baghdad smog hides the stars, and the lights are turned off to avoid giving the enemy easy targets. It is quiet in the camp, too; the sounds that escape from individual trailers—music, laughter—quickly lose volume in the wide-open spaces, and Sarver, killing time in his room, confronts thoughts of home. "Not a day goes by that I don't think of my son," he says. "I know that I will not have the kind of relationship with him that my dad had with me," he adds wistfully. Sarver's dad wasn't in the military, and military life is different, especially EOD. Separations and relationship troubles are par for the course. "That's why they say EOD stands for 'every one divorced,'" Sarver says.

Taking a broom in hand, he sweeps the day's worth of sand out the front door of his trailer, then wipes the floor clean with a rag. "Believe it or not," he says, "I'm really going to miss this shithole."

On Christmas Eve, with six days left in his field duties and 190 bombs painted on his truck, Sarver is sent to assess the damage caused by an oil-tanker-truck bomb that has exploded in front of the Moroccan embassy. By the time he arrives, the only illumination is coming from a fire smoldering in the top of a palm tree. The air, thick with debris, smells wretched: sulfur, burned fuel and human blood.

A family of five has been caught under the rubble of one building, and the bodies are still inside as Sarver and his crew examine the scene. A taxi driver who was sitting in his car within the blast radius has been taken away, but the vehicle

remains, a charred hull still smoking, its insides melted and wrecked, and bits of the driver's hip on the seat.

Sarver examines the site with the guys from forensics, shining his flashlight in the crater, 30 feet wide and 10 feet deep, where there had been concrete and road. He steps through the crunching glass and bits of metal to the engine block and looks at that for traces of explosives to see whether the bomb was detonated remotely or was the work of a suicide bomber.

Now he walks from the center of the blast, his flashlight beam illuminating the progress of the destruction. At 40 paces he walks through a completely blackened expanse that gives way in another five paces to a few visible shapes—a bit of concrete, part of a wall. Then come recognizable things, charred but not consumed, and then finally just burned, the paint on a gate blistered from the heat. Beyond the gate, weird-looking chickens peck at the dirt, their feathers burned off. Sarver aims his light up into the branches of a tree and finds an orange, perfect and ripe. "This is where it ended," he says, then walks back to the center.

Sarver notices two well-dressed men standing in the doorway of their home. He approaches them. "I'm sorry this had to happen to you," he says.

"I'm sorry too," says one of the men, a Kuwaiti.

"Was anybody hurt?"

"My brother, next door. The glass fell on him. But he's okay."

"I'm sorry. If you see anything hazardous, give us a call and we will come and take it away for you."

"Yes, thank you." Then he shrugs and tilts his head. "What can we do? What can we do?"

Back at the base the men of Team One and Team Two sink into the couch. They tear into packages of Froot Loops and add the bitter reconstituted Iraqi milk. They talk about random cartoons and movies with funny-sounding characters. To emphasize a point, Millward imitates Elmer Fudd and then tries an impression of Daffy Duck that makes Williams laugh so hard the milk dribbles down his cheek.

Williams and Millward keep goofing off, laughing and laughing, while Sarver, ashen, leans against the wall, still lost in what he has seen. "Them chickens is what got me," he says finally. "It was horrible the way they had their feathers burnt."

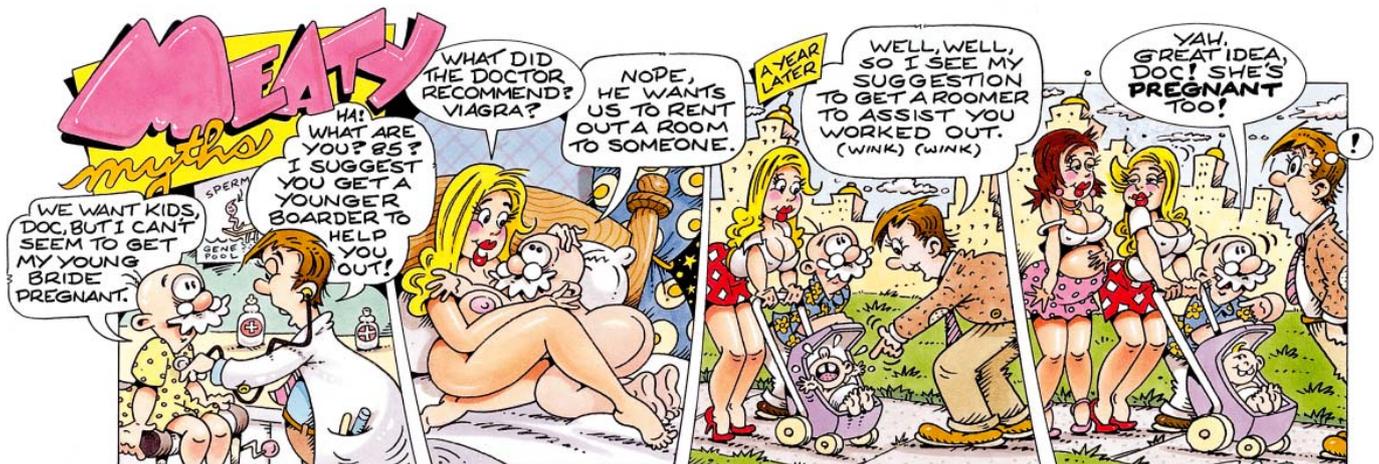
A tech who is walking by overhears Sarver and asks, "Did the chickens smell like barbecue?"

"No, man, they..." Sarver shakes his head and shrugs, as if he is unwilling or unable to answer the question aimed to poke fun at his softness. He pushes himself away from the wall, stands straight for a moment, then leans back. He stands there with his hunched shoulders, looking down at the floor. After a while he gets up to leave, and on the way out he finally says, "By the way, it's Christmas Eve, so merry fucking Christmas."

Christmas comes and passes without celebration; then it is time to go. Before he leaves Iraq, Sarver tallies his bombs one last time. The number is 208. Every bomb he defused meant an Iraqi or an American didn't die that day. How many lives has he saved? The number could be anywhere from dozens to several hundred people. This does not go unnoticed by Army brass. In his After Action Report, the commander of the 788th Ordnance Company (EOD), Captain Christopher Wilson, notes that Sarver's team "was engaged by enemy militia on almost every mission" and in the end had "rendered safe the largest number of IEDs that were disarmed by any one team since operations began in Iraq."

On a C-130 en route to Wisconsin, flying for the last time over Camp Victory and the unending parking lots of machinery, Staff Sergeant Sarver is officially a hero. Nestled in the pocket of his shirt is a Bronze Star.

In late January the company lands in Wisconsin, nine days before Iraq holds its national elections. The men quickly find that the town next to their base in Fort McCoy—Sparta, Wisconsin, population 8,727—is just as dull as when they left it: shopping malls and bars and fast food.



At night Sparta shuts down, especially beyond the main road, where the farmland, much of it Amish, stretches out for miles of open countryside with only cows and silos and flat, straight roads all the way to St. Paul, Minnesota. In the woods the ground is covered with several feet of snow, but the men do not pile into a car and go camping in the powder.

Nor do they wish to linger at homecoming parties down at the local tavern, not after all that time rubbing up against one another in Iraq. They split up, each to his own. Williams rushes home to his wife and two boys, one of whom is already "a little terrorist." Sarver returns to his modest rented one-bedroom five minutes from the main road in Sparta.

He finds the place just as he left it, undisturbed by trespassers or visitors. None of his 100 rifles, shotguns and handguns have been moved from the three gun cabinets, the largest of which blocks the entrance to the front door, forcing him to use the side entrance. The living room also looks fine, still crowded with animal mounts—a pheasant, a fox, a beaver and a deer head, all hung on the wall and positioned with their eyes turned away from the couch so Sarver can sit there and admire the lush fur and brilliant feathers without being confronted by their staring eyes. Which is what he does. He sits on the couch, checks out his mounts, orders pizza and watches TV.

Then—as always, keeping his position fluid, not spending too much time in one place—he goes off on a hunting trip, a spree that leads to his killing dozens of animals and storing up enough meat to make him self-sufficient for a year. "I take pride in providing for myself," he says. The hunting trips may have had another purpose as well: They've used up his vacation time, and he will not be seeing his son right away.

One night he calls Williams and invites him to come out for a beer. "Come on, man, you have to," he says, but Williams begs off, citing obligations to his kids and wife. So Sarver calls another tech, a younger guy, and he agrees to knock back a few cold ones.

Sarver settles back on his bar stool and tells his friend how much he misses Iraq. More beers are ordered—it's now going on two cases—and Sarver is feeling lively again. "Baghdad was a blast," he says, the best time of his life. "Where else can you wake up in the morning and say, 'Okay, God, what are you going to give me?' Where else can I spend the morning taking apart an IED and in the afternoon drive down the road with 200 pounds of explosives in my truck, blowing up car bombs and trucks? I love all that stuff. Anything that goes boom. It's addictive. The thump, the boom—I love it. It's like the moth to the bright white light for me."

As the beers flow and Sarver gets a little sloppy, his posture slackens and the emotions come more readily to the surface of his face, softening it. He says he will be missing his second kid's birth because he used up so much time hunting. He doesn't want to ask another guy to sub for him. "I'll never hear the end of it from those guys," he says, and perhaps he is right, for already they are mocking ol' Sarver for sowing his seed and warning him that he will soon be besieged by crying infants. They say he'll have to move across the state line just to find a little peace and a fresh batch of women to love and leave. He is now not even sure if the thing with the new girlfriend, the one who's having his baby, will work out after all. "That's up in the air right now," he says.

"Have you told her yet that you're gonna miss the birth?"

"I'm going to have to sit with her tomorrow and tell her."

"Well, I guess it's good for you," says the buddy.

"Yes, it is," Sarver says as he gets up to go to the bathroom.

"Fuck it," he says when he comes back. Then, slamming another beer, he adds that he needs to transfer to another unit so he can get back into the theater quickly. "I need to get back to Iraq."

The next day he goes to work with a massive hangover and has to tackle a mountain of papers. This is his life now: filling out forms, answering to civilians, killing time. Only once in a month does he have to take the bomb suit out of the truck, when a family calls, having found an old pineapple grenade from World War II in their dead grandfather's trunk. The job is so easy it's ridiculous; it's a PUCA (pick up and carry away), and Sarver scoops up the old grenade and doesn't even bother to try to find the challenge in it because there is just none to be found.

A few weeks later, Sarver receives an e-mail. Back in Iraq, the new Team Three was hit with an IED. The team leader was killed instantly.

Finally a day off arrives. Hunting season is over, and there are no pineapple grenades to pick up. Sarver decides to visit his family; he drives to Ohio and spends an evening with his father. Then he goes to his ex-girlfriend's house in Michigan to see his son, Jared. After hugging them, he's hit with a wave of emotion, and he excuses himself to take a moment alone on the front porch.

Sarver sits down and takes a deep breath. He looks out into the calm Michigan evening, in the nation he has sworn to protect, where there are no IEDs to harm his son. Then Staff Sergeant Jeffrey S. Sarver, the best bomb tech in Baghdad, puts his head in his hands, and for two hours straight he cries.



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HAPPY RETURNS

(continued from page 96)

Which brings us to the present and what to do now. First, almost all the economic factors that created the Goldilocks economy have slowed, stopped or reversed. The economy remains sluggish, and because the recession was brought about by a crash in capital spending, it has not responded well to the fiscal and monetary stimuli. The reason? Even low interest rates won't help when excess capacity is widespread and profit margins are under pressure. Inflation and interest rates are rising and in my view will continue to rise. I have no idea if consumers are "stretched to their limit," as some in the business

press have argued. But retail sales this year have been mediocre, higher inflation and interest rates will pinch, and higher gasoline prices for the full year will restrain enthusiasm. Cash-out refinancings will be significantly lower, but home equity loans should continue to grow. This may reflect a fundamental change in consumer borrowing—away from more costly credit card debt. The automakers, through expensive incentive programs, have financed today's sales from future profits. Unfortunately the future is now.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries appears to have raised its target floor for crude oil prices from \$30 to \$40 a barrel, probably because of strong worldwide demand,

particularly from India and China. In addition, oil is denominated in dollars, so with the weakness of the dollar OPEC members receive less profit when it is converted to other currencies. Housing starts have been erratic, but prices for existing-home sales continue to rise. For April 2005 the national median home price was \$206,000, up 15.1 percent from a year before. Residential real estate seems to be another avenue for investors trying to make up for their failures in stocks. It looks like another bubble to me. I don't expect housing prices to tank the way the NASDAQ did—but their mere stabilizing would remove one of the economy's major propellants.

Regarding the weak dollar, there is good news, bad news and potentially horrible news. The good news is that imported products now cost more, so domestic manufacturers have seen some improvement because their own prices are more attractive to consumers. The bad news is that higher import prices allow U.S. manufacturers some power to raise their own prices, thus raising inflationary pressures. The potentially horrible news is that foreigners may lose confidence in the dollar, starting a run on the currency. If foreigners start selling Treasury securities, yields will rise and at some point the Fed may have to intervene and raise interest rates to protect the dollar.

With the demise of the Goldilocks factors perhaps the postboom economy has entered another, more appropriate mythical land: Lilliput, the island where Gulliver, in Jonathan Swift's tale, wakes up and finds himself tied down by the six-inch-tall Lilliputians. Whereas previous conditions were "just right," the economy is now restrained by many small changes in those factors. Under these circumstances the stock market will not be as rewarding as it has been in previous decades. In another analogy, the economic tailwinds of the past have been replaced by headwinds, making progress for stocks more difficult. More difficult but not impossible—there will always be attractive individual issues.

In 2004 investors and speculators reentered the market and picked up where they had left off five years earlier. If I were to write a report titled "What Investors Learned in the First Quarter 2000 to Second Quarter 2002 Bear Market," it would contain only the phrase used in prospectuses: "This page intentionally left blank." Speculation has resumed, and it's as pronounced as it was in the late 1990s. The names of the stocks in play may be different, but the fundamentals remain highly questionable. I won't go into the individual stocks—from stun-gun makers to satellite radio systems and Internet darlings—but valuations are exceptionally high no matter how they're measured. It does not seem to matter. Some issues trade between



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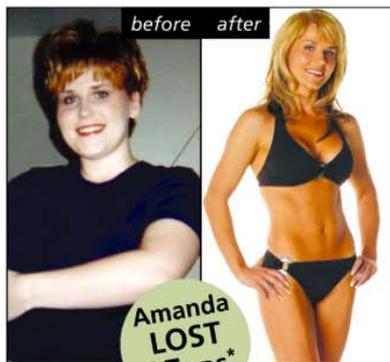
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50 million and 90 million shares daily, which approaches the float—the amount of stock outstanding that is tradable. The game being played is to chase the stocks that are going up—and not just individuals are doing it. When done by institutions it can be called momentum investing, although it certainly is not investing.

BAD ADVICE

With some regularity the financial media—newspapers, magazines and TV—produce reports titled “Where to Invest in [fill in the new year].” This year some of the advice has been highly questionable: *The Wall Street Journal* started the trend with a lengthy article on alternative investments, titled “Investing Your ‘Play Money’” and subtitled “With Market Returns Modest, Some Investors Are Placing Bets on Wall Street’s Risky

Corners.” Some of the suggestions are really just that—bets. Some media recommendations encourage you to “have more fun with your portfolio,” get “more bang for your buck” or, in the *Wall Street Journal* article, “dodge the tedium of what has generally been a relatively flat stock market. That boredom is likely to continue.”

Two of the worst investment strategies are hope and prayer, with hope coming in second because prayers are sometimes answered. There might be a Clarence, the angel, second class, of the film *It’s a Wonderful Life*, willing to come down to earth to boost your portfolio. The *Journal* article suggests that no more than five percent of a person’s portfolio be put into “play money.” Others advise investing no more than you can afford to lose completely, but we all know how that develops: One or two successful lev-

eraged trades and investors are hooked and in over their head.

Some of the other suggestions to alleviate boredom:

- **Stock options.** These are contracts to buy or sell a stock at a specified price within a stated period and can be exciting enough to cure investors’ boredom. The terror felt in losing all your money quickly is a sure cure for tedium. The rule of thumb regarding stock options is that roughly two thirds are worthless when they expire. Experts call this the aspirin game. When a person racks up staggering losses in options and the losses are still running, it is quite difficult to sleep at night. He or she will go into the bathroom and consider how much capital has been lost and what can be done now to limit the losses. If the marital partner asks what’s going on, the standard reply is “Taking an aspirin.”

- **Microcap or small-cap stocks.** The microcaps, or penny stocks, posted in the pink sheets include many that are outright pump-and-dump swindles. Good investments are available in small-capitalization stocks; the trouble is that little information is available on many of them. The many mutual funds specializing in small-cap or midcap issues would be a better way to go. The *Journal* article cited one stock dealing in Elvis Presley memorabilia, which went from 10 cents a share to more than \$11. I thought that example was inflammatory. All too frequently when you want to sell some of your pink-sheet stocks your broker gives you the punch line to an old Wall Street joke: “Sell? Sell to whom?”

- **Venture capital.** As they say in New York City, “Fuhgeddaboutit!”—unless you can put up several million dollars and your net worth is a lot more than that. A rule of thumb among venture capitalists is to look at 10 or more proposals before investing in one, then hope one in 10 of those selections becomes a big winner. That’s one in 100 professional investments working out.

- **Junk bonds.** My stomach lurched when I read this suggestion. The yields may be high, but there’s always a question about whether they’ll offset the risk of defaults. Thousands of sophisticated investors—individuals and institutions—are looking for fallen angels that may recover. The danger here is not only that the yield may not offset the default risk but that buyers tend to leverage up. Buying a million dollars’ worth of bonds for a \$50,000 down payment means the price of the junk bond has to move only about two points against you and you’ll be asked to put up more money.

- **Futures.** Usually included with the pitch to hold futures is a warning that, while a large amount of some commodity can be controlled with a “pittance of cash,” it is “possible to lose more than the original investment.” I question the use of the word *investment*—for the nonprofessional



“We’ll have to postpone it a week because of that seven-day waiting period for handguns.”

these are really just bets. Among professional futures traders, an estimated five to 10 percent make a comfortable living; most of the others are marginal and undercapitalized and have a low threshold of panic.

• Hedge funds. Because the Securities and Exchange Commission requires that investors in hedge funds be sophisticated, there is usually a minimum initial investment, as well as a minimum net worth—frequently more than \$1 million. But some financial services firms now require only \$100,000 as an initial investment, and one brokerage firm has a minimum of \$25,000. Results, fee structures and volatility range widely, and some firms do not hedge but only buy stocks long. Critics of hedge funds maintain that there is an element of moral hazard involved with the fee structure. Frequently there is a management fee and an incentive fee of 20 percent of the profits. If the fund takes 20 percent of the profits and none of the losses, there is an incentive to take higher risks, which may not be in the best interest of the investor. There may also be difficulties or delays in withdrawing money. With roughly \$1 trillion under management, many hedge funds appear to be using the same strategies with the same securities. My opinion? Hedge funds are not for everyone, but if those who qualify thoroughly investigate them, they're probably the least dangerous of the alternatives to stocks suggested in where-to-invest articles.

22 PERCENT OF YOUR LIFE

The current stock market is an odd mixture of boredom, frustration, hope, fearlessness, speculation, bullishness and occasional panic when an earnings disappointment or surprise unfavorable development is announced (think Viiox/Merck and General Motors). TV's talking heads keep asking, "Are we in a new bull market?" The analysts generally say we are and go into contortions about why the three popular averages, all virtually unchanged through May of this year, are not applicable to the market's action over the balance of the year.

I see no indication of Templeton's "point of maximum bearishness," but the fear factor, as measured by the Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index, or VIX, is quite low, just above the 10-year low of last December. Money managers appear overwhelmingly bullish, and the put-call ratio shows high levels of bullishness, but multiples remain high by historical standards, actually outrageously high for many Internet and technology companies. In addition, yields are low, speculative activity is extensive, and insider sales outnumber insider purchases by more than 40 to one; it used to be considered a bearish sign when the ratio exceeded 20 to one.

I do not think this is a new bull mar-

ket in that, like a rising tide, it will lift all boats. People do not consider that the bull market of the 1990s was a decade-long aberration. Historically most bull markets last less than three years. The economic headwinds I mentioned before should restrain a broad advance in stocks for at least the balance of this year. What investors are going through now is what I'll call the trauma of withdrawal due to drastically lowered expectations. This will be compounded by another type of headwind. During the explosive part of the bull cycle, the prevailing thought on Wall Street was, "Stocks have to go up. The demand is too great—there won't be enough stocks to go around." In my experience, the demand for stocks is always vastly overestimated and the supply similarly underestimated. But now all that stock in 401(k)s, held for approaching retirements, represents supply. It will be coming into the market as baby boomers retire and cash it out or reinvest in securities providing yields.

No nest egg is safe and perfect—not collectibles, bonds, stocks, housing, art or gold. But over the longer term, stocks have outperformed all competitors. A credible study reported in the January 1, 2005 issue of *The Economist* concluded that over the past 100 years American stocks have outperformed U.S. Treasury bonds (and bills), property, art and gold, providing an annual average total return of 9.7 percent, or 6.3 percent after inflation. Property returned close to seven percent annually before inflation, and U.S. Treasuries less than five percent annually before inflation.

What to avoid? With inflation likely to pick up, the bond market will be under significant pressure and is one area to avoid. I would also stay away from the high-technology sector. Valuations are high, inventories are exceptionally high, and excess capacity is widespread and rising—with prices falling. More significant, many of the products once considered innovative are being commoditized—and will behave the way commodities do when there is excess supply.

I have always maintained that technology is a cyclical business and that the innovation driving it also makes it risky for investors. Just look at the personal computer—over the hill at the age of 30. (I mean it is no longer a growth product; the market is saturated.) I would also avoid many of the Internet darlings. Competitors have few barriers to entry, and competition is rising in many areas. The Internet market is not limitless, as many expected it would be. The traditional brick-and-mortar operations have already fought back, and there are signs of developing maturity. The market is growing but not exponentially, as it once was.

I still consider stocks the best investment over the longer term and not just the 100 years illustrated in that study. What got investors in trouble was not

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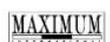
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The first of the 77 million baby boomers will turn 62 in 2008, becoming eligible for Social Security as they enter retirement. The widely discussed problems in Social Security represent only a small part of the problem for these Americans, who are facing a full-fledged retirement crisis. Financial planners describe the three legs of the stool that workers are expected to rely on for retirement: Social Security, employer-provided retirement plans and personal savings. Even casual observers can see that all three are showing downward trends and are less likely to support retiring boomers in their current lifestyles. Roughly 60 percent of middle-class Americans do not believe Social Security will provide them with income for their retirement, and 20 percent have not even started planning for this time. The retirement crisis as I see it is a collision of demographics, economics and financial behavior that should be addressed sooner rather than later. A person retiring today at the age of 65 can expect to live another 18 years on average. So my question is, What finan-

cial plans have you made for these years, which make up 22 percent of your life?

The best retirement plan, in my opinion, would have to include stocks. Many sectors will remain attractive over the longer term—health care is one example. I expect energy prices to remain relatively high for some time too. I would recommend sector funds or exchange-traded funds focusing on health care or energy, as well as index funds. Though I was appalled by the inclusion of microcap issues in “play money” portfolios, midcap and small-cap stocks have outperformed larger-capitalization indexes for extensive periods. There are many small-cap-stock mutual funds, offering varying degrees of risk. Not enough information is available for most investors to buy individual issues, so let the professionals do it. Avoid anything to do with the pink sheets or microcap stocks. You could get a lot more excitement than you expected.

Perhaps it's best to remember the old curse “May you live in interesting times.” We have gone through enough excitement. Boredom and tedium may be due to the withdrawal caused by drastically lowered expectations as investors adjust from unrealistic stock returns of 18 percent annually to something closer to six percent annually after inflation. Stocks may not be the perfect nest egg for retirement—nothing is. But a carefully selected portfolio of reasonably priced stocks with a moderate yield and a record of consistently raising dividends should be the best choice.



“So what are you saying, Joanne? Are you saying we should see other people?”

(continued from page 96)

ENERGY AND OIL: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries quadrupled the price of crude oil in 1973 and 1974, and there was a mad scramble to produce more energy, leading to a boom in the late 1970s to early 1980s in energy and oil-service companies such as Schlumberger and Halliburton.

INFLATION PROTECTION: Investors turned to stocks and precious-metal producers during the same period, which featured energy worries and double-digit inflation. Gold was selling at \$825 an ounce.

COLLECTIBLES—OR ANYTHING BUT STOCKS: From 1980 to 1982 investors turned risk-averse, and stocks were held in contempt. Some people sought protection from inflation in hard assets such as decorated plates, glass paperweights, coins and art. The stock market was the cheapest it had been in almost 20 years.

THE PC TECH BOOM: IBM introduced the first DOS-based PC in 1981, and hundreds of look-alikes followed. The boom included not just PCs but telecommunications, biotechnology, software and other technology sectors. I tracked 60 well-known companies that peaked in 1983. A year later they had fallen an average of 43.2 percent. (Intel is on the list, but it was a doomed company then. If it hadn't abandoned memory chips and concentrated on microprocessors, it would have gone out of business.)

TURNING JAPANESE: In the late 1980s the land under the Imperial Palace in Tokyo was worth more than all the real estate in California. Stocks were outrageously priced, but investors were preoccupied with trying to determine what the Japanese would buy next.

EMERGING MARKETS: Also in the late 1980s dozens of emerging markets and country-specific funds were launched.

DOT-COM AND BEYOND: In 1995 Netscape—an untested, unprofitable year-old company—launched its IPO, and the stock soared. Public demand for Internet-related stock was considered infinite, but Wall Street managed to create enough supply to meet that demand.

CUT AND FLOOD! Starting with the Mexican crisis of 1995, the Fed reacted to any economic crisis, perceived or real, by cutting interest rates and flooding the monetary system with liquidity. Low real interest rates, frequently near zero and occasionally negative, led to a boom in business fixed investment, not only in technology, telecommunications and information technology but in virtually everything, including shopping centers and multiplex theaters. That overcapacity is still around.

HOME IS WHERE THE CASH IS: The existence of the residential real estate bubble that began in 1998 may still be debated by some, but the argument that it is not national becomes meaningless when one considers that prices in every region are rising, some more than others. The characteristic mind-set of all bubbles is abundantly present: It is different this time—you can't lose; buy now before the price goes up further, and leverage yourself if necessary. The use of debt to maximize gains also increases the possibility of severe financial damage when the market turns. And the sales pitch “Buy land—they're not making any more of it” is meaningless when formerly unsalable land, like those rock-and-dirt pits on the outskirts of Reno, Nevada, starts selling out. A final caveat: Some of the swampland that speculators bought during the Florida land boom of the 1920s is still underwater. —RFD



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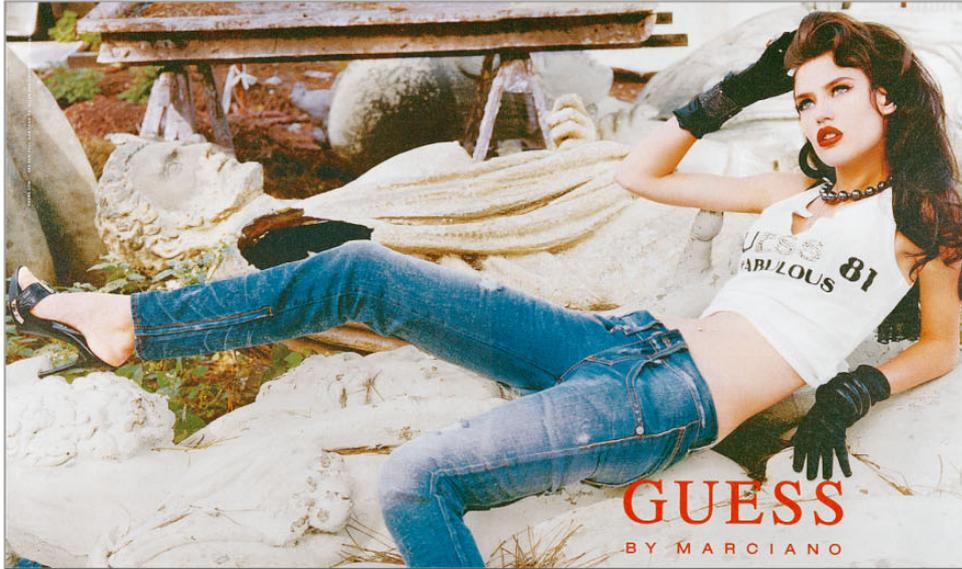
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PLAYMATE NEWS



GUESS WHO? IT'S LAUREN MICHELLE HILL

Have you noticed that the beautiful woman on Guess by Marciano billboards looks like a less sun-kissed version of Playmate Lauren Michelle Hill? Guess what? It is Lauren. "It's a big deal to be working with Guess," Lauren says. "I'm so excited. I was out walking, and there I was on a billboard. It was crazy. I never thought I would be a Playmate or have a billboard. I called my mom right away." Aside from inspiring frequent rubbernecking on city streets, Lauren is busy further distinguishing herself from the other famous Lauryn



Lauren as Miss February 2001.

Hill—the hip-hop singer. "I get a comment about having her name literally every day," she says. The singer, however, does not appear in the *Playboy: The Mansion* video game. "That was cool," Lauren says. "They did a good job making my character look as I do in real life." So what does the non-Fugee do for fun? "I'm one of the nerdy Playmates," she says. "I like to read and do dorky things. On Friday and Saturday nights I like to take people to a dive alley and go black-light bowling." We're certainly game.

40 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Four decades after posing as Miss September 1965, Chicago native **Patti Reynolds** has enough juicy Playboy stories to entertain us for days. Here's one of our all-time favorite Bunny tales: One time at the Mansion, she says, "I put on a little terry cloth cover-up with nothing underneath and went downstairs. Hef was there with, I think, Tony Bennett, Warren Beatty and all these other celebrities. I said, 'Oh, hi,' and reached over and grabbed two apples and put them in my pockets. The weight pulled that little shift right down to my ankles. They didn't say a word. They just stared. But I'm sure they snickered when I left."



THE CENTERFOLD FASHION AWARDS



When they're not starring in TV shows, ad campaigns and movies, our girls are setting the fashion world aflutter. From far left: Nicole Lenz at a Mean magazine launch party (best boots made for walking); Jenny McCarthy at the Cannes Film Festival (best white-hot look); Serria Tawan at a Rock the Vote benefit in Los Angeles (biggest orange crush); Natalia Sokolova at the Playboy Mansion (most seductive stance); and Barbara Moore in an L.A. fashion show (hottest celebrity catwalk strut).



HOT SHOT



VICTORIA SILVSTEDT

POP QUESTIONS: SANDRA HUBBY

Q: So what have you been up to?
A: I've been traveling as a Playboy ambassador, going to Mexico City and Australia and other places I'd never been before.
Q: You moved from Ohio to California. Do you miss living in a small town?
A: I miss the space Ohio offers. It's nice to go down the back roads. There aren't tons of traffic lights and six-lane roads. Basically I try not to drive in California.
Q: Do you have any big plans for after you're finished spreading the Playboy love?
A: I'll eventually go back to Ohio, where I'll take courses and apply to get my real estate license—anything but a normal nine-to-five job.



PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR PARTY



It was all about female bonding when five decades of Centerfolds gathered at the Mansion Playmate of the Year luncheon honoring PMOY 2005 Tiffany Fallon (above left). Above right: Dalene Kurtis, Brande Roderick and Christina Santiago. Below left: Cara Zavaleta and Hiromi Oshima. Below right: Jennifer Walcott and Shallan Meiers.



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

What happens in Vegas no longer stays in Vegas, thanks to *Party at the Palms* host Jenny McCarthy. On the show, Jenny leads the ultimate party train from the Palms Hotel and Casino's rooftop bar to its legendary pool. Catch it on E!... What does Dr. Phil think? His son, Jay McGraw, is dating Erica Dahm (below), one of the famed Dahm triplets. The two met when Jay, a best-selling author, hosted



LEBOY/NEWMAN



Erica listens to Dr. Phil's son.

Renovate My Family, on which Erica and her sisters Jaelyn and Nicole appeared as construction experts.... Daphnee Duplaix and Ja Rule feted Nicole Narain's recent cover of *Smooth* magazine (below).... Pamela Anderson is taking a stand against magazines that print paparazzi shots of her kids. According to the *New York Daily News*, Pam says she won't do interviews with mags that print photos of her kids in private settings.... One of our fave *Baywatch* babes, Erika Eleniak, is back on



Daphnee and Nicole check out *Smooth*.

TV as one of two Gingers (Angie Everhart is the other) on *The Real Gilligan's Island 2*. "Ginger was always down for the cause," Erika says. "No matter what trouble the castaways had, she always tried to help. I feel similar to her in that way." Got that, Gilligan?

cyberclub

See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at cyber.playboy.com.

KURT BUSCH

(continued from page 128)

on the gas. My dad drives well. Mom is on the gas. If I ride with friends and they're not looking ahead and catching the green lights when they're supposed to, if they're stuck behind a car when the other lane is open or if they're just yip-yapping, yeah, I'm ready to tell them how to drive. But if I'm with sponsors, I'll put up with it. It's their time.

Q15

PLAYBOY: Are objects in your rearview mirror really closer than they appear?
BUSCH: If it's a fierce competitor, he's right on you. We do have a center rearview but no side mirrors. We'd probably knock them off. The cute answer is that we have our spotter up above with radio communications, so he keeps track of where other cars are. I probably look once a lap. You absorb it for less than a second—who's there? As it gets down to the end of the race and I'm racing for a win, I might look twice as often, but I'm telling myself not to look. I want to focus on the line—whether to run high or low—on hitting my marks or keeping the fastest lap.

Q16

PLAYBOY: At a recent NASCAR exhibit, no one seemed to notice that the Taurus's headlights were only decals. What's with the illusion? Is NASCAR trying to convince us that its cars actually have something in common with the cars the rest of us drive?
BUSCH: Cars without headlights don't look right. Cars have headlights, so we need headlights. We are NASCAR because we drive stock cars. Decals make the schematics look correct. Taking the real headlights out is also a safety thing because all the drivers would run into one another and poke them out. You don't want to have glass out on the racetrack.

Q17

PLAYBOY: The rest of us have driven fuel-injected cars for years. NASCAR sticks with carburetors. Will its technology ever catch up?
BUSCH: Eventually. I've worked on carburetors. I understand them. What NASCAR is trying to do, at least for a while, is keep money away from that aspect of competition. It would mean millions of dollars in fuel-injection-software research because the air-fuel mixture is basically what runs a car. I'm sure NASCAR will be forced to turn to injectors, and it will find the proper technology to put in the cars. There's research and devel-

opment going on for that, but right now we just run carburetors.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Carburetor restrictor plates slow NASCAR drivers down a bit. Do you hate them?
BUSCH: Some guys hate them. I'm on the fence. If you have to race and they're going to hand out points and a check, then you learn how to race with them. If they take them off, you learn to race without them. They put restrictor plates on our cars at Daytona and Talladega so that we don't go too fast. They're the largest tracks we race on, and without restrictor plates we'd be running 230 miles an hour, way too fast for a stock car. I'll hit 200 at most of our racetracks, but the average speed is 185, and that's unrestricted. Restrictor plates create entertainment value at Daytona and Talladega with the three-wide draft—30 cars on top of one another in three columns. But restrictor plates are needed for safety. I'm sitting in the seat. I don't want my ass to run into something so hard at such a rate of speed that I can't come back from it. I've been in some good wrecks. [laughs] I was dazed after one. I remember looking at the interview tape afterward, but I don't remember giving the interview. It was one of those goofy scramble-the-eggs wrecks. It's all about taking care of that egg in the carton.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Early this season NASCAR cited several drivers and crew chiefs for sus-

pension and fueling irregularities. Were they cheating?
BUSCH: It's a fine line. Every team in the garage is out to develop something new. If it's not in the rules, it must be okay for a little while. It's up to NASCAR to govern what teams bring to the racetrack. Negotiations take place. Some teams might get away with more. Competition is so tight right now that when you have that small advantage, you're going to be that much faster. Half an inch out of line at 200 miles an hour adds up to quite a bit of speed. Everybody wants to win, and you take risks, but NASCAR continues to make it tougher for cheaters.

Q20

PLAYBOY: Is bumping a strategy, or is it unavoidable?
BUSCH: There are so many different types of bumps. You can do it accidentally. You can do it to help pass somebody—that's bump drafting. And you can do it intentionally when you have that hunger and that drive when you're young. That's when I bumped Jimmy Spencer out of the way to win my first race ever, at Bristol. He finished second, though. It's not like I wrecked him. I have bumped guys and wrecked them by accident. I've heard cool quotes from drivers, like "I didn't bump him. He just backed into me." Dick Trickle says, "Yeah, I bumped him. He just chose to wreck it instead of save it." Bumping happens, and it's best just not to do it.



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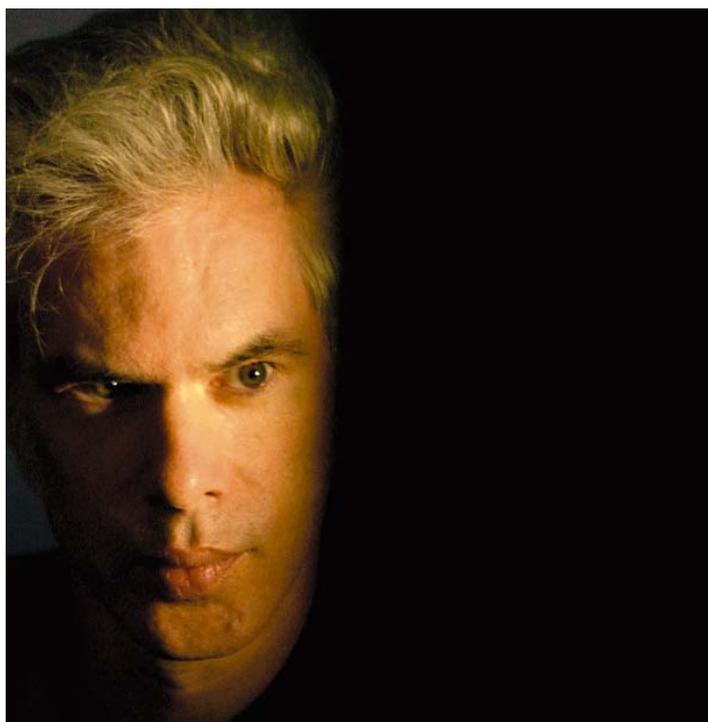
Playboy On The Scene

WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN

The Long Run

Dean Karnazes jogs more than 100 miles at a time—is that even legal?

Aeschylus once said, “Suffering leads to wisdom,” but the Greek playwright has nothing on the remarkably indefatigable Dean Karnazes, who has made a career of running more than 100 miles at a stretch—and pushing the human body further than any other marathoner in history. In his memoir, *Ultramarathon Man: Confessions of an All-Night Runner*, 42-year-old Karnazes chronicles everything from completing the Badwater 135-mile race through Death Valley (during which his shoes literally melted) to tackling a 200-mile relay—as the only guy on his team. During races Karnazes keeps his energy up by eating éclairs, burritos and pizza ordered from the road. Still, he sometimes falls asleep while running. The obvious question: Is he crazy, masochistic or both? “This is a good thing,” he says. “If I thought I were damaging my body, I wouldn’t do it. My life mission is to get Americans to be more active.” Karnazes has been approached for the motion-picture rights to his life story, but before he gets to that, he has another goal. “This fall I want to run 500 miles nonstop from San Francisco to L.A.,” he says. If he completes it, that distance will put him in the world-record books, as well as raise thousands of dollars for charity. But come on, does it ever get old? “Actually, I wish I were running right now.”



Mr. Outsider

The man behind some of the world’s most inscrutable films takes a stab at pop

Jim Jarmusch is already thinking about his tombstone. “It’ll probably say, ‘He never saw any *Star Wars* films or *Gone With the Wind*,’” jokes the iconoclastic director. Jarmusch, 52, has been making movies his own rebellious way for more than 20 years, from his 1983 breakthrough, *Stranger Than Paradise*, to 2003’s chain-smoking, java-swilling *Coffee and Cigarettes*. “I’m not anti-Hollywood,” he explains. “It’s just not the place for me. I would be either very unhappy or a complete failure.” Jarmusch’s latest film, *Broken Flowers*, is his most accessible yet. A Grand Prix winner at Cannes, the comedy follows a man (played by Bill Murray) who learns he has a long-lost son as he reconnects with a series of ex-lovers (including Sharon Stone, Jessica Lange and Julie Delpy). Jarmusch says *Broken Flowers* isn’t an attempt to strike box-office gold, just an excuse to work with a national treasure. “I think Bill Murray should run for president,” says the director. “The thing is, he’d probably win. All chaos would break loose, but we’d have fun for a while.”

Grapevine

Marceau Called Life

Anybody want to storm the Bastille? French actress SOPHIE MARCEAU seems set to proclaim "Liberté, égalité, fraternité." Alas, she merely suffered a wardrobe malfunction at Cannes.



JIM SNEAL/REXUS

Supermodel, Superexposed

Surely you've read JANICE DICKINSON's books, *No Lifeguard on Duty: The Accidental Life of the World's First Supermodel* and *Everything About Me Is Fake...and I'm Perfect*. We have a title for the next one: *Pride and Prefabrication*.



Opera Lungs

Now that we know British actress JENNIFER ELLISON is in the movie *The Phantom of the Opera*, maybe we'll spend more time with the DVD....

SCOTT McALPIN/ETWINE

RICHARD BEETHAM/SPLASH NEWS

Pretty and Pink

After lunch with friends on Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood, PINK was spotted smoking—and smoldering. Expect a new CD from Missundaztood next year.



Great Cannes

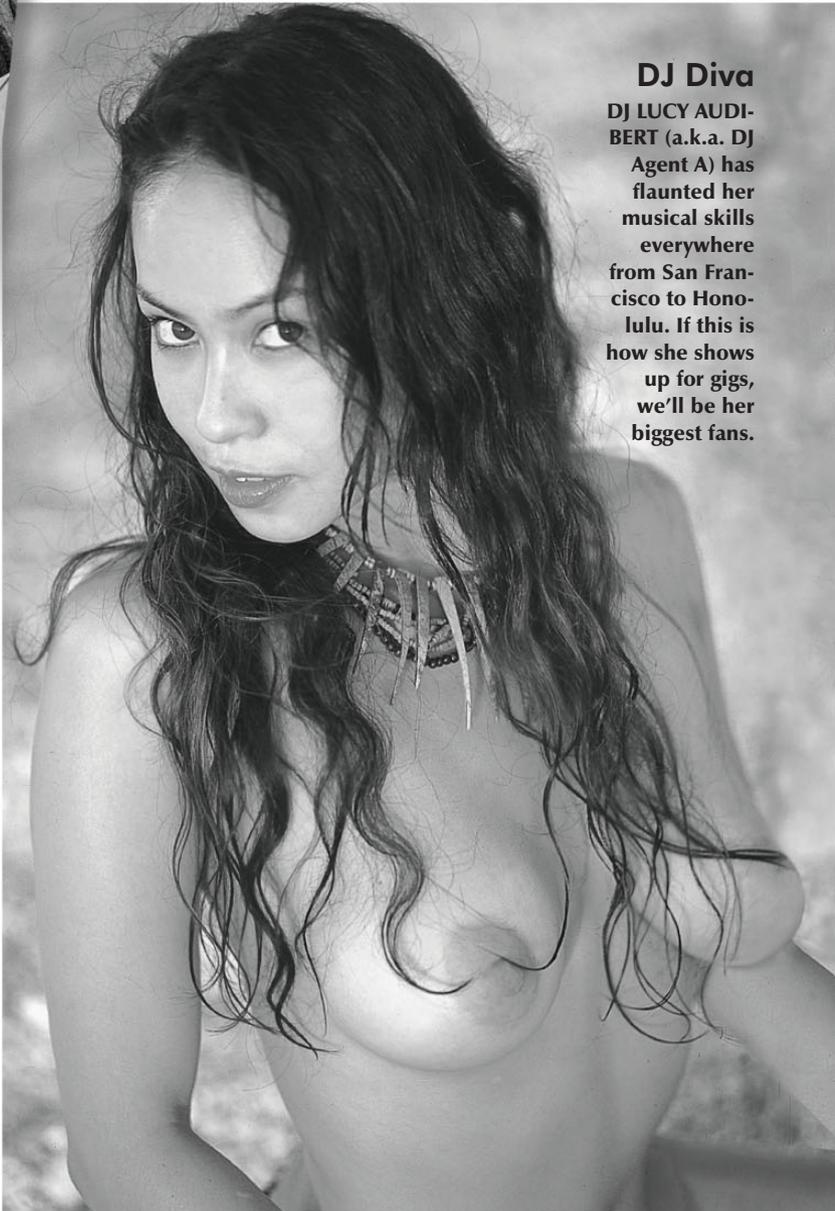
Known for her racy Calvin Klein ads, Russian model NATALIA VODIANOVA didn't disappoint at the Cannes Film Festival premiere of the movie *Joyeux Noël*. "I have everything I want," she once said. Funny, all we want is her.



PAUL HAYTHORN/GETTY IMAGES

DJ Diva

DJ LUCY AUDIBERT (a.k.a. DJ Agent A) has flaunted her musical skills everywhere from San Francisco to Honolulu. If this is how she shows up for gigs, we'll be her biggest fans.



VINCE CARVATTO



ZIPP/ZUMA PRESS

A Knightley to Remember

At this very moment actress KEIRA KNIGHTLEY is possibly being stalked by paparazzi in an airport near you. She's only 20, so expect at least a few more decades of excellent shots.

Potpourri

WHAT THE STORE MOUSE SAID

Net cafes are great for travelers, but we don't like the idea of using mice that have been handled by every grubby hippie with a Gmail account. Smart travelers bring their own and make it Iogear's Memory Optical Mini Mouse (\$60, iogear.com). Tiny enough to slip into your pocket, with a tangle-free retractable cord, it contains a 128-megabyte USB hard drive for your files. Just plug in the mouse as you normally would and it shows up as an external hard drive on even the funkier public computer.



SIMPLY DELICIOUS

Nothing's simpler than boiling eggs. However, judging from our well-documented ability to forget to set the timer when we dunk the little bastards, the process could still use some tuning up. Amazingly enough, the kitchenware wizards at Norpro have managed to simplify the process further with their Egg Rite egg timer (\$7, amazon.com). Just toss it into the water along with your soon to be soft-boiled chicken ova and watch the indicator on the side as it passes through SOFT, MEDIUM and HARD. If you screw it up now, you're on your own.



GOOD CALL

By now you've probably heard of voice over IP (or VOIP), a nifty phone system that routes your chatter through the Internet instead of conventional phone lines. The service works well and can save you serious dough on long distance. It's new, though, and so far it has been a bit lackluster in the hardware department. Finally Vonage is offering its users that most basic phone amenity: a cordless handset (\$100, vonage.com). We were already partial to the company; this just gives us one more reason to recommend it.



FACE VALUE

Every square inch of your skin contains 19 feet of blood vessels (that's about as long as your average anaconda), not to mention 90 oil glands and 625 sweat glands. Who knew? The scientists at Bullie did. They've created a full line of skin-care goo in three different formulations so you can tailor a regimen to the needs of your individual epidermis, whether it's normal, dry or oily. Pictured, from left: under-eye restorative (\$20) with aloe, cucumber and green tea; post-shave and toner (\$19) with ginseng and wheat amino acids; moisturizer (\$30) with antioxidant vitamins A, B, C, E and K; close-shave gel (\$16) with eucalyptus, tea tree oil and aloe; and cleanser (\$24) with amino acids and cucumber.



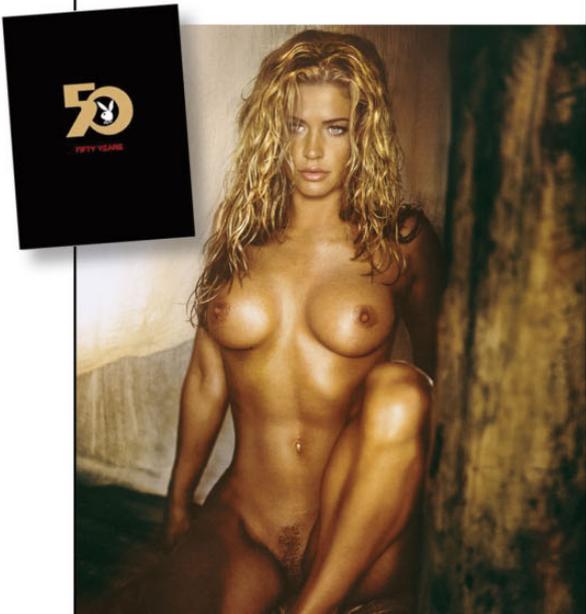
STIR IT UP

Good rum is a vacation in a glass, a Caribbean sunset in every sip. Two favorites: 10 Cane (\$35) from Trinidad with its earthy sugarcane flavor—great for cocktails or over ice—and Bacardi's 12-year-old Reserva Limitada sipping rum (\$50), which packs a serious butterscotch note. You can get it only at Bacardi HQ in Puerto Rico, but believe us, it's worth the trip.



HEF'S BIG BLACK BOOK

New from Taschen, *The Playboy Book* (\$40, taschen.com) delivers between its two covers half a century's worth of the greatest magazine ever published. Inside you'll find every Playmate—all 600 of them—from the first 50 years. You'll tour the Playboy Clubs, the Mansion and the DC-9 *Big Bunny* jet, and get the backstory on the finest entertainment for men. You'll also say hello to Kristy Swanson (pictured). She's very nice, you know.

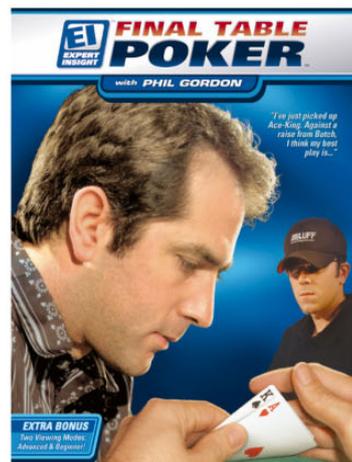


EARS TO YOU

We love taking our music and games with us, but we can't stand the crummy earbuds that ship with every gadget. Aside from being one-size-fits-none, most have an appalling lack of boom. Fix that with a pair of Headbanger Audio Ear Subs (headbangeraudio.com), which come with a powered-bass amp. It's not audiophile quality, but it'll put bass in your face for just \$30 to \$40.

WANNA BET?

Ride shotgun with a top professional poker player during a tournament's climax in *Expert Insight: Final Table Poker* (\$25, expertinsight.com). A groundbreaking new instructional DVD featuring *Celebrity Poker Showdown* co-host (and PLAYBOY contributor) Phil Gordon, it plays more like a movie than a lesson; viewers hear Phil's internal monologue while he plays 25 hands at the final table of a no-limit Texas Hold 'Em tournament. Think of it as 15 years of the school of hard knocks in chewable form.



WET SUIT

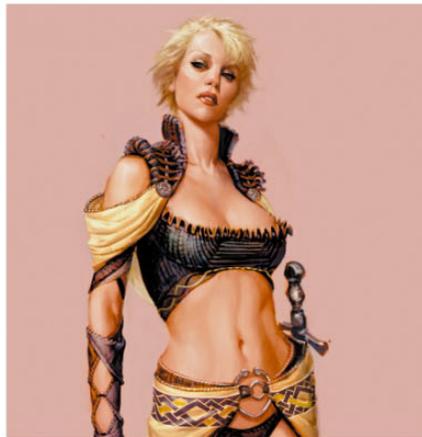
Mares's new Limited Edition Metal line of scuba rigs is the Paul Smith tuxedo of the diving world, serving your underwater breathing needs with unparalleled style. The company's most technologically advanced gear ever includes the Metal Tech LE regulator (\$700), the Morphos buoyancy compensator (\$850) and the Quattro Excel fins (\$250). Mares will even engrave your name on the regulator. Available at limitededition.mares.com. DVD of *Open Water* not included.



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GEORGE CARLIN—FRESH FROM A MELTDOWN ON A VEGAS STAGE AND A STINT IN REHAB, THE GROUNDBREAKING COMEDIAN COMES CLEAN ABOUT WHAT WENT WRONG, HOW HE'S MAKING IT RIGHT AND HOW HE STILL HAS MORE BRAIN CELLS THAN ANY OTHER COMIC. A *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW* BY **DAVID HOCHMAN**

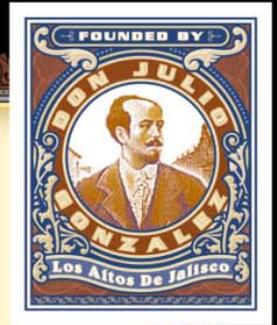
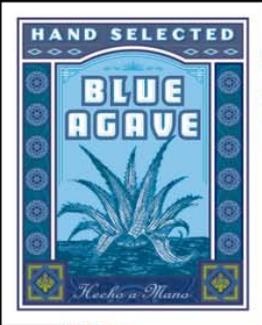
EARNEST GOES TO COLLEGE—FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, COLLEGE KIDS ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH JOINING CLUBS AND BUILDING THEIR RÉSUMÉS THAN PLANNING THE NEXT KEGGER. WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT WOULD THE GUYS FROM *ANIMAL HOUSE* THINK OF ALL THIS SERIOUS CAREER-MINDEDNESS? **RICHARD MORGAN** INVESTIGATES.

STATEHOOD—IT'S YOUR 12TH BIRTHDAY AND YOU'RE HALF-WAY THROUGH YOUR FIFTH O'DOUL'S. YOU'RE KNEELING BENEATH THE BLACKBOARD, KEEPING SCORE, READY TO DODGE ANY DART THAT BOUNCES OFF THE WIRE. IT'S FUNNY—GROWING UP IN A BAR ISN'T AS GLAMOROUS AS IT USED TO SOUND. BY **KEVIN A. GONZÁLEZ**, OUR COLLEGE FICTION CONTEST WINNER. PLUS: CAMPUS ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE WORLD'S NEXT PICASSOS, WARHOLS AND SILVERSTEINS.

OZZY OSBOURNE—THE LEGENDARY PRINCE OF DARKNESS ON THE WORLD'S BEST AND WORST REHABS, BEING PIGEONHOLED AS A CRAZY ROCK STAR WHO BITES THE HEADS OFF BATS AND WHY HE'S PISSED THAT "OVERFUCKINGWEIGHT GUYS" ALWAYS PORTRAY HIM ON TV. "DO I LOOK THAT FAT?" HE WONDERS. 20Q BY **ALISON PRATO**

VIDEO GAME BLOWOUT—FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW YOUR FAVORITE VIDEO GAME VIXENS ARE GETTING NAKED—AND WE'RE NOT PLAYING. A SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION FOR THE GAME BOY IN ALL OF US.

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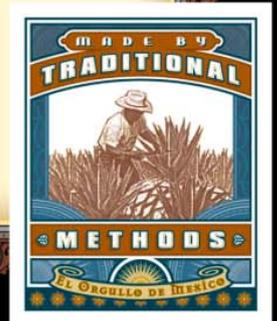
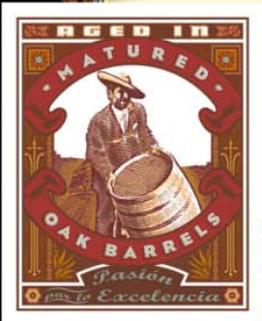
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