

THE SEX AND MUSIC ISSUE

PLAYBOY

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

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INTERVIEW
KANYE
WEST

PLAYBOY
MUSIC AWARDS

PLUS

THE SOUNDS

FALL OUT BOY

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

SEAN PAUL

AMBULANCE LTD

20^Q

FRANZ
FERDINAND

BURT BACHARACH

TRU LIFE

ROCK RAP FASHION

AND THE
ALBUM OF THE YEAR

UFC'S SOFTER SIDE

WILLA FORD NUDE SHE'S WORTH FIGHTING FOR

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SEXIEST

CELEBRITIES

JESSICA
ALBA

SEX STAR OF THE YEAR

INCLUDING

JENNIFER GARNER

ANGELINA JOLIE

HOLLY, BRIDGET & KENDRA

SCARLETT JOHANSSON

SHAKIRA

DENISE RICHARDS

JAIME PRESSLY

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wishes
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"I'M LOSING ALL MY COOL
I'M ABOUT TO BREAK THE RULES
I WANNA BE BAD"

— "I WANNA BE BAD"

**WILLA
FORD**



Rappers are often criticized for violent lyrics, but **Kanye West** has made his name avoiding that aspect of the hip-hop counter-culture. In the *Playboy Interview* West tells **Rob Tannenbaum** how his independence and contrarianism in the face of rap conventions have helped him become a pop-chart mainstay. "He talks about how much he loves bands," Tannenbaum says. "Most rappers don't open up to other music. West listens to rock, so he understands the structure of a good pop song. That has made him very successful." West also tipped off Tannenbaum that he may soon be a bit richer. "Three years ago, Jay-Z told me in his *Interview* that he was retiring," Tannenbaum says. "I made him a \$20 bet with 50-to-one odds that he wouldn't stay retired. In this *Interview* West says it will pay off. If he is correct, Jay-Z is going to owe me \$1,000—and I will collect."



Queens of the Stone Age and Corey Gunz headline our *Rock/Rap/Fashion* spread, which was shot by legendary music photographer **Mick Rock**. "We are such a visual society, so it is important for musicians to have a look," Rock says. "Musicians need something people can visually latch onto, and in turn musicians strongly influence what we wear. People emotionally bond to music, and it seeps into their psyche and soul. The proliferation of the artists' imagery gets it hammered into them; to identify with the music, people take style tips from the artists."



Ranking one and two on Jeremy Bloom's 2006 agenda: win an Olympic gold medal in skiing, then break into the NFL as a return man. The path is steep, but if he succeeds he will surely become America's new favorite two-sport athlete. We tapped **Roberto Parada**, no stranger to challenge himself, to paint Bloom for *Jeremy Bloom Can't Lose*. "I was severely ill with aplastic anemia, which I contracted from my paint thinner," Parada says. "I had to receive a bone marrow transplant. My love and livelihood nearly killed me; I was totally unaware of the dangers in my studio. Now I use only safe products. With pieces like this I have to prove to the art world that you can do great work without toxic chemicals."



When **Tim Flannery's** *The Weather Makers* was published in Australia this past year, it persuaded the government to change its stance on global warming and finally acknowledge the growing threat. Let's hope our excerpt, *What's Going On Here?*, along with the book's appearance in America (Grove/Atlantic), will have the same effect on the Bush White House. "Some Americans feel there are more crucial issues," Flannery says, "but if we keep polluting at the current rate, we will see a catastrophic climate change in a decade or two. The outcome of the Iraq war will be decided in a few years, but climate change will continue to grind on, costing more and more lives."



"I had to turn it into fiction," **Tony D'Souza** says of the three tumultuous years he spent in Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer. Here he offers *Sogbo's Wife*, the tale of an affair between a villager and a relief worker, a story he didn't think he would live to tell. "I was living in a hut, teaching about AIDS, when civil war broke out. I crossed the war zone without any possessions and spent days hiding in the jungle before I escaped. So much happened that I had to tell it somehow. The medium of fiction provided an emotional buffer."

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Catastrophic hurricanes like Katrina are only harbingers of extreme climate changes to come. The fate of humanity, not to mention the rest of the planet's animal and plant life, is already in desperate peril—as shown by the facts presented in this excerpt from what may be the year's most important book. **BY TIM FLANNERY**

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From veterans lighting up the comeback trail to promising new artists from every genre, the winners in our annual music poll prove that 2005 was abundant with aural pleasures. We also check out the rise of Houston hip-hop, ponder the fate of the New Orleans music scene and reveal which songs members of Smash Mouth, Spoon and other bands were listening to when they lost their virginity.

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Here are the things to play with when playing's the thing. Our ultimate game room has it all: a pool table that would make Minnesota Fats do sit-ups, a selection of classic pinball and arcade games, pinup-girl poker chips, a chess set made from auto parts, a high-end backgammon set (for when Hef comes over), a table hockey game, a Ping-Pong setup, foosball and more. Don't ever tell us you're bored. **BY JOEL JOHNSON**

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America's best hope for gold in Turin could be Jeremy Bloom, a freestyle skier so competitive that he plans on taking his muscular five-foot-nine physique and model's looks from his MTV gig to the NFL. Meet a man who may have the word *limit* in his vocabulary but hasn't much use for it. **BY PAT JORDAN**

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An international relief worker assigned to an African village tries to go native. He falls in love with a married woman but soon finds his secret affair threatened by racial and cultural clashes—and a bit of jungle witchcraft. **BY TONY D'SOUZA**

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Don't blame China for outsourcing. The country is adopting the latest developments in technology so quickly that it attracts enormous investments from global corporations. Yet China is losing large numbers of jobs as well, which goes to show that the creation of a fair global labor market amid pervasive offshore outsourcing is one of the great challenges of our time. **BY ANDREW ROSS**

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112 FRANZ FERDINAND

Alex Kapranos and Nick McCarthy are the driving forces behind Franz Ferdinand, the million-selling nu-new wave band from Glasgow. The two come clean about backward messages on their albums, why their group is named after a certain archduke and their affinity for Interpol. **BY TIM MOHR**

interview

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He's sold millions of albums, earned Grammys and scored last year's biggest rap hit with "Gold Digger." Now the anything-but-modest rapper and producer talks about why he said George Bush doesn't care about black people, how he compensates for not having the best flow, how his stand against homophobia has affected him and why his mom wants him to shut up. **BY ROB TANNENBAUM**

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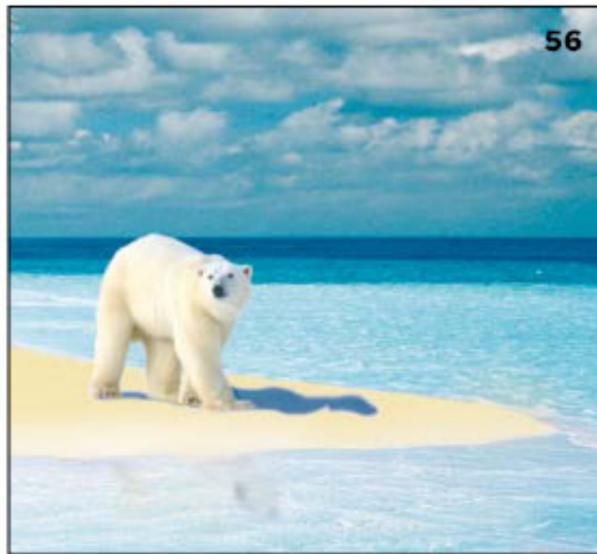
COVER STORY

The unforgettable women we selected as the 25 Sexiest Celebrities kept pulse rates dangerously high during the past year. We could write a book about the lasting appeal of Ziyi Zhang, Angelina Jolie, Jennifer Aniston, Jennifer Garner, Beyoncé and especially Sex Star of the Year Jessica Alba, photographed here by Andrew Eccles. We put our Rabbit back into the blue with Jessica on this photo.



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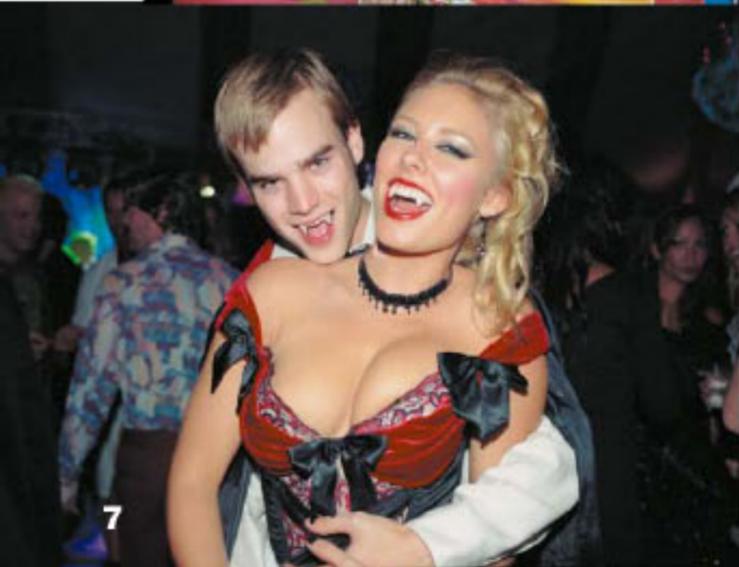
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Hef's HOUSE OF HORRORS



Not even the host recognized Leonardo DiCaprio disguised as an old man at Hef's unforgettable Halloween party that included a Mansion of Madness and a Grotto of ghouls and goblins. (1) Playboy Mansion maidens showed off their freshly carved jack-o'-lanterns at Holly's pre-party Pumpkin Night. (2) A devilish Hef with Kendra, Bridget and Holly. (3) Chicago mobsters Billy Marovitz, spouse Christie Hefner and Hef's brother Keith. (4) "Weird Al" Yankovic and his wife, Suzanne. (5) 2006 Playmates Miss April Holley Ann Dorrough and Miss February Cassandra Lynn get down with *Malcolm in the Middle's* Frankie Muniz. (6) Actor Steve Guttenberg with the host. (7) David Gallagher takes a bite out of delicious Jillian Grace. (8) Retired slugger Jose Canseco and guest. (9) *American Idol's* Ryan Seacrest, singer Debbie Gibson and guest. (10) A sexy assortment of Painted Ladies. (11) Mike Tyson with announcer Michael Buffer and girlfriend Christine Prado. (12) The ladies fall for Jeff Goldblum. (13) Jenny McCarthy cuddles up to the Man.



Hef's HOUSE OF HORRORS

continued



Centerfolds and celebrities partied the night away as tricks and treats lasted well past the witching hour. (1) Jim Belushi, Hef and Holly. (2) A kittenish pair of Bentley twins. (3) Kelly Monaco is the vampire with the great dance moves. (4) Comedian-author Bill Maher with his girlfriend, video vixen and author Karrine Steffans. (5) First lady of adult films Jenna Jameson flashes her ID. (6) 2005 Playmates Miss June Kara Monaco and Miss March Jillian Grace with friendly actor Matthew Perry. (7) Heiress, actress and girl-on-the-go Paris Hilton with a hug for the host. (8) Corpse Bride Bridget gets a scare from Oscar-winning special-effects makeup artist Rick Baker. (9) Actor Jackie Long, tennis champ Serena Williams and Hef's girl Kendra. (10) Mr. Playboy takes the dance floor with Wonder Woman, Playmate of the Year Tiffany Fallon. (11) Erica and Nicole Dahm with Erica's fiancé, Dr. Phil's son Jay McGraw. (12) February cover girl Adrienne Curry and Christopher Knight of *My Fair Brady*. (13) Owen Wilson and a friend keep it chill.



HERE'S to the GIRLS



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Beginning with Marilyn Monroe and including more recent legends like Pamela Anderson and Anna Nicole Smith, this history of Playboy Centerfolds profiles every Playmate from the 1950s through the newest beauties of the new millennium. Includes fantastic nude photos as well as updated personal information about their lives—just enough to spark your memory or pique your interest to see more. Hardcover. 9" x 12". 464 pages.

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MARILYN'S DEMISE

Your special report *The Strange, Still Mysterious Death of Marilyn Monroe* (December) brought to mind a 1992 book by the brother of Chicago mobster Sam Giancana. In *Double Cross*, Chuck Giancana claims the Mob killed Monroe in a failed attempt to bring down Attorney General Robert Kennedy. John Miner, the former Los



We know how she lived. How did she die?

Angeles County deputy district attorney who attended Monroe's autopsy, says the actress may have been given a lethal dose of Nembutal through an enema. Chuck Giancana makes the same claim, saying his brother ordered four hit men to use a Nembutal suppository to avoid suspicious bruising, needle marks and vomiting. But Giancana makes so many other wild claims in his book that it left my head spinning. We'll probably never know the truth.

Mike Farenell
Glens Falls, New York

After 43 years of investigation, there is still no credible evidence that Monroe had an affair with Robert Kennedy, that he was at her home on the day she died or that she was murdered. According to FBI records and witnesses, Robert and Ethel Kennedy spent the weekend of Monroe's death with John Bates and his family at their northern California ranch. Of Miner's transcript of tapes Monroe supposedly made for her psychiatrist, *PLAYBOY* remarks, "You can't make this stuff up." Who says? Any imaginative person who has read up on the actress could do it. Like many

others who have a tenuous or imagined connection to Monroe, Miner is trying to cash in. In August Monroe biographer and *Vanity Fair* contributor Anthony Summers said on MSNBC that Miner first approached him in 1995. "He obviously wanted money," Summers said. Suspicious of the transcript's validity, Summers said he and the magazine declined. He also said he couldn't understand why a reputable newspaper like the *Los Angeles Times* would run the material. We might now ask the same of *PLAYBOY*.

Peter Winkler
North Hollywood, California

Though the transcript is controversial, we find Miner's account credible. Miner is no bystander, after all, but the prosecutor who investigated Monroe's death. He says he used a "trial lawyer's memory"—sharp but not perfect—to make notes within hours of hearing the tapes. He broke his promise to Dr. Ralph Greenson to keep their contents confidential decades later, only after the late psychiatrist was attacked for possibly causing Monroe's death and only with the permission of his widow. We didn't pay Miner for the transcript—which we consider a public document because of its source—or for his interview with us.

The fascinating articles on Monroe left me stunned, and this is from a self-proclaimed Marilyn aficionado. Thank you for putting her on your cover once again; she can still make any red-blooded man's heart skip a beat—or two beats, in my case. The tribute to Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (December) is another of the absorbing pieces of writing I've come to expect. I'm not ashamed to say I subscribe for the articles *and* the photos.

Sam Ninalga
Layton, Utah

MORE GIRLS NEXT DOOR

My wife has taken to watching *The Girls Next Door*. I like it too, for reasons beyond the women's beauty. Specifically, I share Hef's love of movies. He seems more interesting than his public persona.

Michael Thornton
Florence, Kentucky

I am a feminist and a well-educated professional woman who earns more than \$200,000 a year and has been happily cohabiting for 13 years with the same man—and my favorite show is *The Girls Next Door*. My daughters, ages 18 and 22, and I haven't missed an episode. We even rewatch them. The show is full of good-hearted

laughs, the girls are gorgeous, and we get lots of tips on how to look sexy and keep life fun. I wish they lived next door to us. I totally understand Hef's relationships with all three—they are based on love.

Tamara Lee
Corona Del Mar, California

Thank you to Holly, Bridget and Kendra for stopping by Stogies Cigar Lounge while on their publicity tour. We had a great time, and it's still causing a buzz around town.

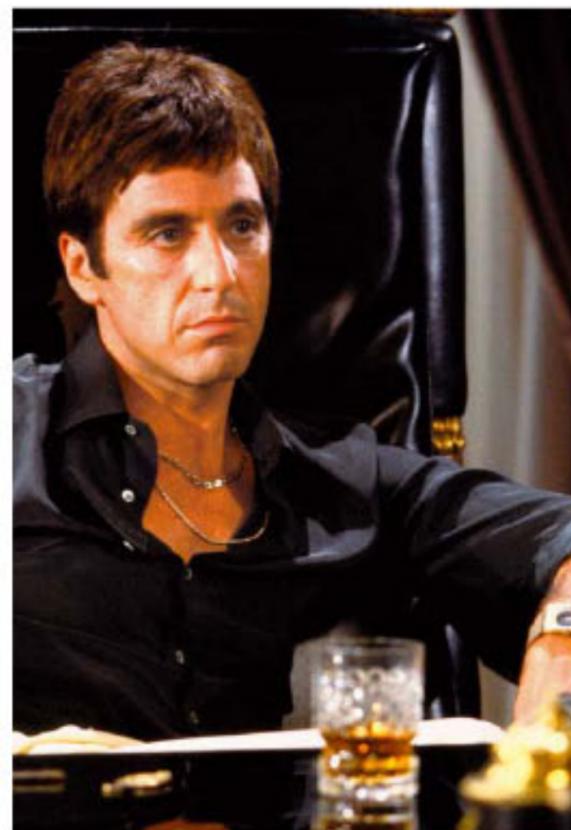
Russ Daniels
Lodi, California

AL PACINO

By posing such trivial questions to Al Pacino as "Do you feel as though you belong in a museum?" and "How does praise affect your hat size?" (*20Q*, December), Lawrence Grobel comes off as having little respect for the actor or his work. How did Grobel get this job, and who does he think he is, anyway?

Jared Sunrai
Twin Falls, Idaho

You never know which questions will provoke an enlightening response, and Grobel,



Tony asks, "You got a problem with that?"

who is a longtime contributing editor, knows this better than most. He has interviewed Pacino many times. In fact, Simon & Schuster in August will publish Al Pacino: In Conversation With Lawrence Grobel.

TOUGH TICKETS

Your report on Super Bowl hustlers (*The Ticket Masters*, December) is on the money. Jacksonville was a tough game because Eagles fans came in droves

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and expected a victory. I had orders for 480 tickets, and I found them, but I also lost \$150,000 doing it. Still, like the broker you call the General, we make a profit four of every five years. Last year wasn't even the most intense Super Bowl—that was 1998, Packers vs. Broncos in San Diego. Not only was John Elway expected to retire, but Green Bay fans rarely sell. That's why tickets still cost \$3,000 at the end of the first quarter. In Jacksonville, the General spent what he had to spend to fill his orders; many of his competitors did not. One broker had to stand in front of 300 Philadelphia fans in a hotel lobby and tell them he had only 220 tickets. That nearly caused a riot. In situations like that, when the middlemen are scrounging for seats, you'll be happy to be working with a licensed broker. The worst financial scenario I can imagine for the 2007 Super Bowl in Miami would be to have the Giants there. New Yorkers would pay anything, and that would drive up my costs to fill advance orders. One thing has changed: The game is less corporate and more of a house party, which has added an edge to the business, especially given the cash involved.

Alex Pramenko
VIP Sports Marketing
Chicago, Illinois

MARTINI SURPRISE

My husband made me a white Christmas (*After Hours*, December) this morning. I am writing to thank you for my first martini morning sex and the best day of my life so far.

Stephanie Whitacre
Akron, Ohio

ONE AND ONLY

In *Dream a Little Dream* (December), you describe Mark Hamill as "the original Luke Skywalker." But aside from an infant in *Episode III*, no other actor has played the character.

John Harris
Memphis, Tennessee

THE BEST PARTS

The photo of Mimi Rogers in *Sex in Cinema 2005* is easily the sexiest image in the December issue.

Louis Claudio
Safety Harbor, Florida

I am blown away by Chinese American actress Eugenia Yuan (*After Hours*, December). She doesn't think guys in the West consider her sexy? Please.

John Smith
Toronto, Canada

A CLASSIC ERROR?

In November's DVD reviews you call the "features-filled" *Birth of a Nation*

"worth making noise about." I'm all for freedom of speech and artistic value, but *Birth of a Nation* is nothing more than a tribute to the Ku Klux Klan.

Kevin Wilson
New York, New York

To recognize the film as a technical masterpiece is not to endorse the Klan, just as praising *Triumph of the Will* is not endorsing Nazism.

BARRET ROBBINS

Thank you for your article on my brother Barret Robbins (*Down Line-man*, November). His brain chemistry is being monitored, and we hope that he will get the treatment he needs and turn the tragedies of his life into a source of inspiration for himself and others who suffer from bipolar disorder.

Scott Robbins
Houston, Texas

HOLIDAY PLAYMATE

Game over! Christine Smith (*Must Love Dogs*, December) is the next Playmate of the Year. She is absolutely flawless.

John Devine
Las Vegas, Nevada



Christine Smith likes warm and cuddly.

Dog lover Christine Smith is incredible, especially her sweater puppies.

Tom Norman
Reno, Nevada

In my previous life I was a yellow Lab. Many of my doggy memories have been repressed, but the opening page of your pictorial brought back many fond ones. Will Christine take me back in human form?

Joseph Roosth
Houston, Texas





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after hours

Babe of the Month

Issa Bayaua

DUKES UP, MISS ISSA IS READY TO RUMBLE

Over drinks at a slick Santa Monica restaurant, pop music's 23-year-old diva-in-waiting Issa Bayaua is talking tough. "Watch out," she warns. "I may knock you dead." She's describing her sparring chops; boxing is part of the workout routine that keeps her physique cut yet curvy. "I'm very competitive," Issa teases, running a finger along the rim of her glass. "I have to be the best female fighter in the gym." Her debut single, "Stay Up," shows similar swagger; it's less an invitation to nocturnal fun than a challenge to your manly endurance. But enough with the sex appeal. Issa assures us that her pipes are what really count. She's been polishing her voice since she was five, when her mother would take her to San Diego parks to sing for picnicking families—an exercise in precociousness she admits was "kind of embarrassing." It's our only hint that Issa hasn't always been completely at ease being Issa. Seconds later she describes her habit of hitting the clubs solo. Finding a dance partner is never hard, particularly when she's dressed to thrill. "A lingerie designer at the PLAYBOY photo shoot gave me a red corset," she explains. "I wore it out the same night, and I looked *hot*." But then she has to dash: Baby, the tiny Maltese stashed beneath the table in a Louis Vuitton bag, is going to the vet. "I always make my Baby comfortable," she coos. So much for the knockout posturing—turns out she's a softy.



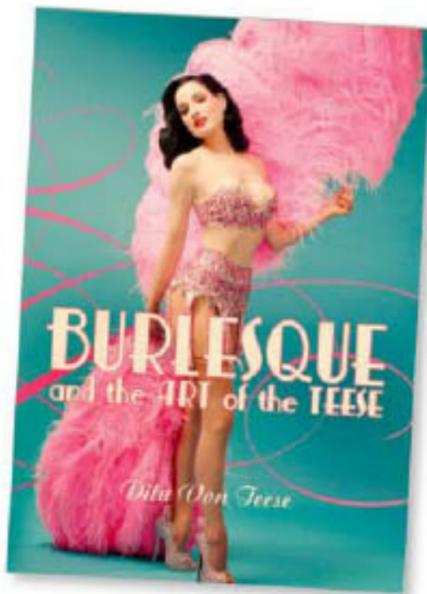
"I may knock you dead. I'm very competitive."



Tease and Spank You

FETISH QUEEN DITA VON TEESE WRITES THE BOOK ON RISQUÉ BUSINESS

Call her the torch-bearer for the lost art of burlesque, a *PLAYBOY* cover girl or Mrs. Marilyn Manson—just don't call her a stripper. With *Burlesque and the Art of the Teese*, Dita Von Teese provides a window (or three) on her world. More than a picture book, it's also a history of burlesque and fetish and a how-to guide for your own vamp-to-be. Intriguing? Of corset is.



Websites That Sound Smutty (but Aren't)

cummingfirst.com (Cumming First United Methodist Church)

gotahoe.com (Lake Tahoe, Incline Village/Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau)

speedofart.com (Speed of Art, the personal site of an art director)

whorepresents.com (a database of agents and whom they represent)

ipanywhere.com (ipAnywhere, an add-on to pcAnywhere software)

penisland.net (Pen Island, a custom-pen seller)

expertsexchange.net (European Experts Exchange, a source for IT advice)

therapistfinder.com (a database of therapists)

Roll Over, Bay City Rollers

BELLE & SEBASTIAN: BEST SCOTTISH BAND EVER?

You would never have bet indie-rock outfit Belle & Sebastian would make it this far. Started a decade ago by Stuart Murdoch as a school project, the band spun quiet, catchy tunes critics described as precious. The fragile sound hinted that Belle & Sebastian couldn't survive—much less conquer.

PLAYBOY: In a recent Scottish magazine poll, Belle & Sebastian was voted the best Scottish band of all time. How did that feel?

MURDOCH: I was mystified by that. It's just nice to be up there with the Jesus and Mary Chain, Aztec Camera and Cocteau Twins.

PLAYBOY: You've taken the band in some new directions on your past two albums, *Dear Catastrophe Waitress* and *The Life Pursuit*. Strange as it sounds, Belle & Sebastian is kind of rocking these days.

MURDOCH: Yes, the group has taken off to an extent and become tougher and more rocking. I picture myself as Ben-Hur in this chariot being pulled by six horses. The group is the six horses, and I'm the fellow trying to rein them in. I feel I have to make sure we don't just go off in a tasteless direction.

PLAYBOY: How does a Scot write "Piazza, New York Catcher"?

MURDOCH: The song isn't really about him, but I do have a fondness for the Mets and particularly their ex-catcher. In Scotland they show baseball late at night, and I find watching it a good way to wind down. On one of my first trips to New York I went to a game at Shea Stadium, and for once I didn't feel like a tourist.

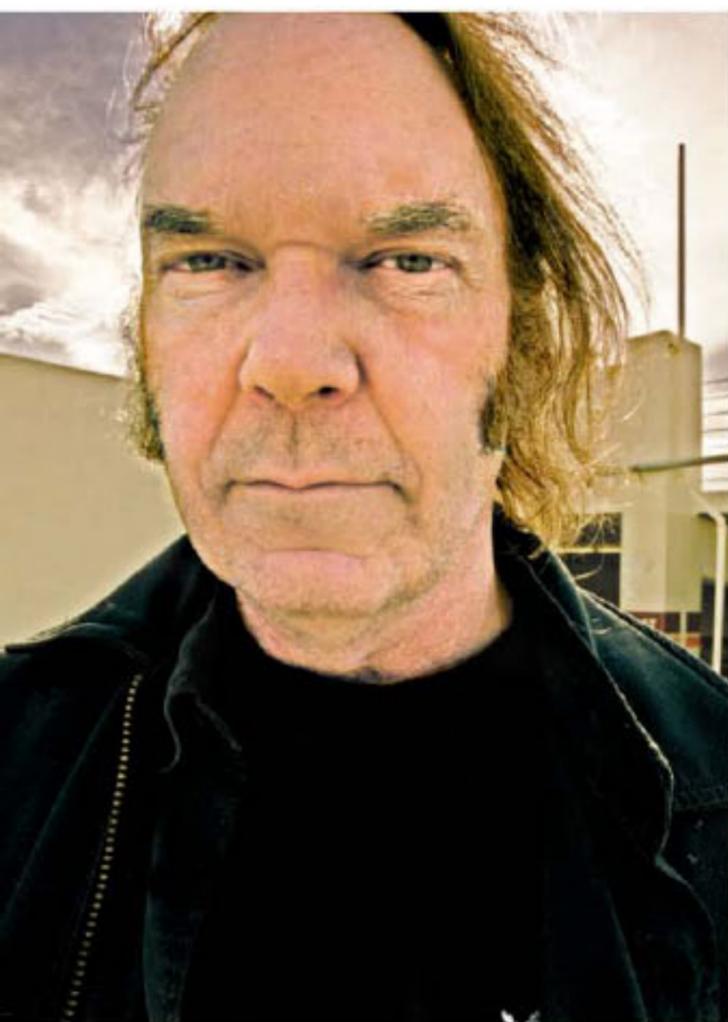


Alone and Loving It

"Here is a fact that most men will not admit to their girlfriends: They would rather eat alone. How eating got mixed up with talking remains a great mystery, but some historians have speculated that in homes where women were doing the cooking, they demanded a 'how was your day' conversation as remuneration. Modern man continues to suffer through meal after meal in which he has absolutely nothing to say about his day and doesn't want to hear about anyone else's day but has to pretend he does in order to fill his body with nutrients.

The single male, by contrast, can eat in silence. Even better, he doesn't have to use a fork or a napkin. If he stains his shirt, he can just throw it away and buy a new one."

—from *It's Not Me, It's You: The Ultimate Breakup Book*, by Anna Jane Grossman and Flint Wainess



Neil Before the Camera

JONATHAN DEMME CATCHES NEIL YOUNG ROCKING THE HIGH CHURCH OF COUNTRY MUSIC

Early on, Jonathan Demme emerged as a director with a distinctly musical bent, filming Talking Heads' *Stop Making Sense* and the soundtrack-driven *Something Wild*. With *Neil Young: Heart of Gold* he documents Young's two-night stand at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, formerly home to the Grand Ole Opry.

PLAYBOY: Neil Young is a much-filmed artist. What sets this movie apart?

DEMME: It's Neil taking stock: Here's what he has learned in his life thus far about family, friends, loss, joy and tragedy.

PLAYBOY: In the film Young displays more sartorial acumen than usual. Did you have any input on his wardrobe?

DEMME: No. All I can say is that one night I found myself at the dinner table with the clothing designer Manuel, who did all these great costumes over the years—Elvis's gold lamé suit, Gram Parsons's outfits, everything Johnny Cash wore for the last 20 years of his life. It was a fait accom-

pli that Manuel would do the costumes.

PLAYBOY: How did you pick the songs?

DEMME: I wanted to film the *Prairie Wind* suite at the Ryman—that was it. I had fallen in love with those 10 songs. Then I realized we'd end up with a 55-minute movie. So I asked Neil if he'd do an encore to pad out the running time to 90 minutes. We were in a restaurant, and Neil took out a pen and started writing on the white place mat, off the top of his head—"One of These Days," "Comes a Time," "Harvest Moon." I was looking at the place mat, thinking, *eBay, eBay, eBay*. One song I pushed for was "The Old Laughing Lady," which did not make it onto Neil's list. I told him, "I can't explain why, but it seems to be the missing jigsaw piece. You could do it alone onstage after the audience has left." After Friday night's show, he went out there, picked up his Hank Williams guitar and pulled notes out of it like you've never heard before. That's how we end the movie.



Stripped!

Here's Elena Gibson in winning form at Miss Pole Dance World 2005, held in Amsterdam. Judges later ruled that Gibson's routine had "strip elements" and gave her title to the runner-up.

Motorcycle Madness

HOW HE MADE A 40-YEAR-OLD BIKE DO 180

The World's Fastest Indian tells the story of Burt Munro, the New Zealand daredevil who set speed records in the 1960s on a motorcycle that was nearly an antique. Munro's friend Roger Donaldson, who is also the film's writer and director, tells us how the eccentric Kiwi did it.

"Burt's bike, a 1920 Indian Scout, would normally go about 50 miles an hour. In 1967 he set a record of 183 mph with it. To go that fast, he needed to streamline it, but he knew nothing about aerodynamics. He just built a fiberglass goldfish shape around the bike because that's what he thought would work. Inside, he first converted the engine from a side valve to an overhead valve, then radically modified the pistons, rods and valve equipment. He made cylinder liners out of cast-iron sewage pipes, and to make the pistons he melted down some old car pistons plus metal he had gotten from overseas—he never really knew what it



was, maybe titanium—and poured the liquid into a mold he had built by hand. He moved the fuel tank to the rear so he could lie prone. The first version of the bike, the one in our movie, was unstable, at times uncontrollable. To make it go straight he had to alter the aerodynamics by lifting his head into the slipstream. Once, the wind blew his goggles off and he was riding blind at nearly 200 mph. People ask why he didn't use a newer bike. I think he took a perverse pleasure in fixing up this old Indian. He wanted to be the oldest guy setting records on the oldest motorcycle."

What Sort of Men Study PLAYBOY?

NEXT TIME SHE ASKS—YOU NEED THEM FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Professors James K. Beggan (sociology, University of Louisville) and Scott T. Allison (psychology, University of Richmond) don't just read us for the articles—they dissect us for scholarly publications. From their curricula vitae:

"Tough Women in the Unlikeliest of Places: The Unexpected Toughness of the Playboy Playmate." *The Journal of Popular Culture* 38 (2005).

"'What Sort of Man Reads PLAYBOY?' The Self-Reported Influence of PLAYBOY on the Construction of Masculinity." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 11 (2003).

"The Playboy Playmate Paradox: The Case Against the Objectification of Women." *Gendered Sexualities* 6 (2002).

"What Do Playboy Playmates Want? Implications of Expressed Preferences in the Construction of the 'Unfinished' Masculine Identity." *The Journal of Men's Studies* 10 (2001).

"The Playboy Rabbit Is Soft, Furry and Cute: Is This Really the Symbol of Masculine Dominance of Women?" *The Journal of Men's Studies* 9 (2001).

"An Analysis of Stereotype Refutation in PLAYBOY by an Editorial Voice: The Advisor Hypothesis" (with Patricia Gagné). *The Journal of Men's Studies* 9 (2000).

Tip Sheet

Smirting \SMERT-ing\ *v.* flirting that takes place among smokers forced outside of bars and restaurants by smoking bans now in effect in many cities. Common icebreakers: "Do you have a light?" "Can I bum one?" and "This sucks—what are we, lepers?"

Irish Jigger

DON'T SHAKE OR STIR THIS SHAMROCK SHOT



We wouldn't presume to tell a native Irishman how or what to drink on March 17, but really, is the American urban sophisticate obliged to carry on as if he were in some dank, drafty pub of the Auld Sod? Moreover, despite the brewer's best efforts and fancy cans, the challenge of serving keg-quality Guinness in the comfort of one's own party has yet to be solved. So for the love of Saint Patrick, loosen up and do something different. Bonus: This colorful, cute and totally gimmicky shooter will be a hit with ladies who don't like Guinness or Jameson—that is, most ladies. *Sláinte.*

Irish Flag

1 part crème de menthe (green)
1 part Irish cream liqueur
1 part Mandarine Napoléon

In a tall shot glass, pour ingredients carefully, in order given, so that each floats on the preceding one.



Employees of the Month

Hot Sellers

TWINS BRIDGET AND KATRINA EVERETT PRODUCE IMPRESSIVE FIGURES

PLAYBOY: So you're both in sales?

BRIDGET (left): Yes, I sell plastic products to grocery chains.

KATRINA (right): I sell billing services to health clubs.

PLAYBOY: What's your favorite part of the job?

BRIDGET: Building relationships with clients.

KATRINA: Building relationships with clients.

PLAYBOY: Wow, you really are twins. Got any good tales of double-dating high jinks?

BRIDGET: Maybe we will, now that we're both single again. Katrina just moved in across the street from me.

KATRINA: We're going to start raising some hell.

PLAYBOY: For the record, you're fraternal twins, not identical?

BRIDGET: Yes, but the older we get, the more we look alike.

KATRINA: We sound alike, too. I have a huge crush on this guy, and I haven't done anything about it, so Bridget's going to call him and pretend to be me to break the ice. I'm a little shy.

PLAYBOY: What's your sister's best physical asset?

BRIDGET: Her butt is perkier than mine. She has a great ass.

KATRINA: Okay, but that's probably because I'm shorter. Her boobs are much better than mine.

BRIDGET: I've noticed clients staring at my boobs, but I don't take offense—you use what you got.

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.

R A W D A T A

SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS



Capital Hill

The U.S. Senate voted 57 to 42 in October to reject an amendment to a bill that would have raised the minimum hourly wage from **\$5.15** to **\$6.25**. It has been a decade since the Senate last raised the minimum wage; over the same period, senators' own annual salaries have increased by **\$28,000**.

Bunch of Bull Shirt

Laney High School, Michael Jordan's alma mater, collected **\$162,000** from Nike this past year from sales of a replica of Jordan's Laney jersey and other related gear. The figure represents just **7%** of the net sales of Jordan-Laney products, to which Nike holds exclusive rights.

Pointless Record

Most Dominoes Knocked Over

4,002,146, by employees of a Dutch television show. The feat was nearly foiled when an uninvited house sparrow felled **23,000** pieces during setup. The bird was shot by an exterminator, which made things worse: The feathered meddler was an endangered species.

State of Undress

53 Number of strip clubs in West Virginia—or about **3** per **100,000** residents, the highest ratio in the U.S.



Dump Roast

The U.S. rejected **357,000** pre-packaged meals donated by the U.K. after Hurricane Katrina because of the ban on British beef.

Price Check

\$3.6 million

According to *Forbes*, the amount Christina Aguilera received to sing three songs at the wedding of Russian billionaire Andrei Melnichenko and model Aleksandra Kokotovic in the south of France.

I Owe U.

\$300 billion

The total cost to put the class of 2009 through college.

Extra Credit

Last year credit card companies sent an estimated **6 billion** solicitations through the mail—or **27** for each adult in the U.S. The average American household has about **8** credit cards.



Nectar of the God

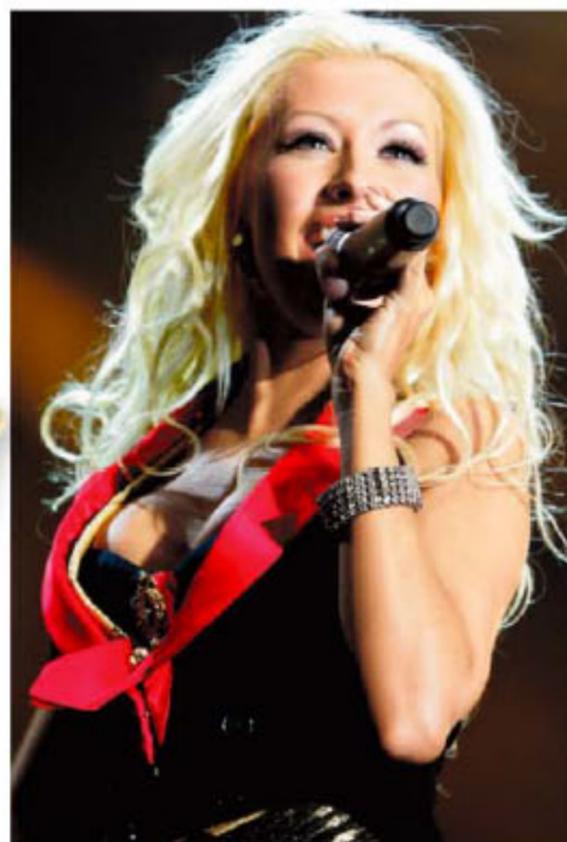
The Catholic Church spent **\$1,100** advertising for new priests on beer coasters in U.K. bars last summer.

Spam Futures

An online study that tracked **38** stocks touted in junk e-mails found that in a six-month period only **3** of the stocks had risen in price.

Czarbucks

Sergei Zuykov owns the Russian rights to at least **300** trademarks, though he doesn't plan to open any shops. When Starbucks tried to move to Russia, Zuykov offered to sell the company the rights to its own name for **\$600,000**.



Your PLACE or MINE?



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A. Keep both you and your sweetie sexy under wraps. These throws have the feel of cashmere and are generously sized (51" x 71") in the softest imported acrylic/cotton. A white Rabbit Head on black or a black Rabbit Head on pink or white; simply flip each over for the opposite color scheme.
6728 Black/White Reversible Throw \$49
Buy 2—SAVE \$10
7501 Reversible Throw Set of 2 \$88

B. NEW! Midnight blue. The neon tube around the Rabbit Head in this black wall clock will add a dreamy tint to your late-night encounters. 11½" diameter.
10222 Neon Rabbit Head Clock \$35

C. NEW! Three-dimensional refreshment. Molded crystal Rabbit Heads rise from the base of these sexy glass shooters. Set of 2. Each holds 2½ oz.
10224 3-D Rabbit Head Shooter Set \$18
Buy 2 sets—SAVE \$7
10225 4 3-D Rabbit Head Shooters \$29

D. NEW! Get a grip. Stylish stitched leather makes this stainless steel flask with a Rabbit Head on the side easy to hold on to. 4" x 3½". Holds 5 oz.
10044 Classic Leather Flask \$15

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R E V I E W S

m o v i e s



movie of the month

[V FOR VENDETTA]

Sometimes science fiction can seem very real

Science fiction often tackles the big issues and does so way ahead of the curve. We're talking serious and weighty problems such as totalitarian governments that use religion and fear as weapons. Such old-school masters of speculative fiction as Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke ignited the torch picked up by latter-day maestros, including the brilliant graphic novelist Alan Moore. Moore's vision of dystopia, poorly served by the screen versions of his *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* and *From Hell*, gets a more fitting adaptation in *V for Vendetta*. The film stars Natalie Portman, Hugo Weaving, Stephen Rea and John Hurt. At the helm is James McTeigue, former assistant director for *Matrix* creators Andy and Larry Wachowski, who produced *V* and wrote the screenplay. Set against the landscape of fascist Britain circa 2040, the action kicks off when a flamboyant masked freedom fighter known as V (Weaving) rescues a young woman (Portman) from torture and interrogation by secret police. "It's sort of an oblique way of referencing today's political situation by saying, 'Oh, it happens 35 years from now,'" Portman explains. "You can then criticize everything that's going on now and get it into people's minds subliminally."

"It's a way of referencing today's political situation."

—Stephen Rebell

now showing

BUZZ

Failure to Launch

(Matthew McConaughey, Sarah Jessica Parker) A 30-something slacker (McConaughey) is far too comfy sponging off his parents and playing paintball to ever leave the nest. But when he meets his dream girl (Parker), he fears he's been set up by his folks, who are frantic to get him out of the house.

Our call: The overhyped McConaughey may be the sexiest man alive to *People* magazine, but moviegoers tend to yawn when he's on the big screen. This man needs a hit.



16 Blocks

(Bruce Willis, Mos Def) This buddy action flick pits Willis, a gritty NYPD vet, against Def, a motormouthed key witness. But can the twosome walk 16 crime-ridden blocks to the courthouse while thugs are gunning for them? Bullets fly, jokes are cracked, and yes, polar opposites find common ground.

Our call: Those who wouldn't walk 16 feet to see Willis can take comfort that director Richard Donner knows how to deliver slam-bang action. And trash-talking Def is a winner.



The Amateurs

(Jeff Bridges, Tim Blake Nelson, Ted Danson, Glenna Headly, Lauren Graham, Joe Pantoliano, Patrick Fugit) This quirky ensemble comedy features Bridges as a beaten-down unemployed dad and ex-husband. Strapped for cash, he and his fellow small-town oddballs band together to make a porn movie.

Our call: Okay, imagine if Frank Capra tackled the world of porn, presenting loving families alongside jokes about carpet munching and dick size. It's an amusing spin on an old subject.



The Hills Have Eyes

(Aaron Stanford, Ted Levine, Emilie de Ravin) Nuke-deformed hill spawn terrorize a family headed cross-country in director Alexandre Aja's remake of Wes Craven's 1977 low-budget classic. Who will survive? We're pulling for beautiful babe De Ravin, who's already been put through hell on *Lost*.

Our call: Does anyone really tire of the endless struggle between humans and mutants? We don't, and we're intrigued that this remake boasts such a good director and quirky cast.



dvd of the month

[CAPOTE]

The celebrated author sells his soul to write *In Cold Blood*

This compelling portrait of Truman Capote focuses on the five years the ruthless young author spent conceiving his masterpiece *In Cold Blood*, based on the sensational 1959 murders of a Kansas family by a pair of drifters. Philip Seymour Hoffman shines as the title character, the preening, self-aggrandizing writer with the high Southern drawl who dazzles everyone—especially himself—with his devastating wit. When the drifters are caught and Capote slowly cajoles one to reveal details about his life and the killings, we realize that Capote is a consummate performer who does everything for effect. This is humorous when he charms the literati but terrifying when he's with the killers, methodically making sure he gets everything he needs for his great book before they hang. **Extras:** Preproduction and postproduction documentaries, including Hoffman on playing Capote. **★★★½** —Matt Steigbigel



Irene Dunne in *The Awful Truth* (1937), Jean Arthur in the adventure *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939) and Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday* (1940). **Extras:** Featurettes on each movie, 10 postcards with vintage images of Grant. **★★★★**
—Greg Fagan



DOMINO (2005) In director Tony Scott's ode to the late bounty hunter Domino Harvey, sexpot Keira Knightley plays the Hollywood offspring who busts balls with a crew of wranglers. The seizure-inducing cinematography will turn off some, but risk a grand mal to see scene-stealer Mo'Nique defend her custom mixed-race monikers such as Japanese and blacktino. **Extras:** Deleted scenes and featurettes. **★★½** —Kenny Lull



GREY'S ANATOMY: SEASON ONE (2005) A cult of brainy viewers has embraced ABC's medical drama about sex-obsessed surgical interns at a Seattle hospital. We can't blame Dr. Derek Shepherd (Patrick Dempsey) for offering private physicals to his co-workers when they fill out their scrubs as Ellen Pompeo, Katherine Heigl and Sandra Oh do. No wonder the season finale involves an outbreak of syphilis—among the staff. **Extras:** A making-of featurette, audio commentaries. **★★★**
—Buzz McClain



SAW II (2005) Jigsaw (Tobin Bell), a cancer-stricken psychopath, kidnaps his victims and puts them in depraved life-or-death situations. Bull-headed detective Eric Matthews (Donnie Wahlberg) is hot on his trail and snares the killer early on, but then must get inside Jigsaw's mind to rescue his son, whom the killer has abducted, before time runs out. Like its predecessor, this unapologetically gory and sadistic movie is more fun than it should be; Jigsaw's skewed moral sensibilities give it a twisted philosophical resonance. **Extras:** Commentary, interviews, behind-the-scenes featurettes. **★★★**
—Bryan Reesman



A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE (2005) When Viggo Mortensen defends his small-town diner from two killers on the lam, the subsequent media blitz alerts gangster Ed Harris to his whereabouts. This top-notch psychological thriller from director David Cronenberg proves that comic-book adaptations can be more than superhero movies. **Extras:** Cronenberg commentary, behind-the-scenes featurettes. **★★★½**
—Brian Thomas



THE CARY GRANT BOX SET The Cary Grant boxed in this essential set is, with one exception, a screwball comedian. The five movies are uniformly excellent, beginning with the disc debut of George Cukor's superb *Holiday* (1938, pictured) and closing with George Stevens's *The Talk of the Town* (1942). Formidable women always bring out Grant's best persona, a uniquely stylish sophisticate cum clown with an accent all his own. *Holiday* casts Grant to kinetic effect opposite Katharine Hepburn, but he's no less interesting with

tease frame

Buxom former B-movie siren **Virginia Madsen** has never shied away from chancy roles on her road toward legitimacy. She hit potholes like *Fire With Fire* (1986), *Zombie High* (1987) and *Hot to Trot* (1988) before scoring a surprise hit with 1992's creepy *Candyman*. A decade of mostly straight-to-video cheapies followed, until her unexpected turn as a soulful, wine-loving divorcée in 2004's *Sideways* earned her an Oscar nomination and left us thirsty for more. Her impressive anatomy has hardly been scarce on-screen, as 1983's *Class* (pictured) shows. But as a nurturing wife and mother opposite Harrison Ford in the new thriller *Firewall*, Madsen and her bosom buddies appear to be kept under wraps.



sonic youth movement



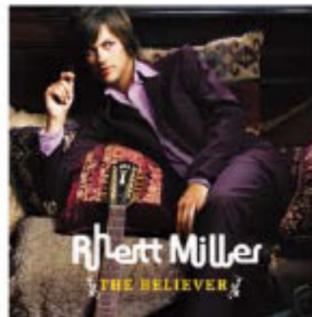
[GOING UNDERGROUND]

The Subways live fast on *Young for Eternity*

This trio takes cues from its Britpop forebears—bands such as Supergrass and Ash—but also seems conscious of the way Swedish bands like the Hives, Shout Out Louds and Mando Diao have managed to enliven what is a fairly static, conservative niche: classic, loud guitar pop. Billy Lunn has a good melodic howl. Bassist and occasional vocalist Charlotte Cooper is the newest in a distinguished line of indie hotties. And unlike many drummers since the success of the White Stripes and Franz Ferdinand, Josh Morgan does not ride the cymbals and high hat, taking instead a crashing-straight-ahead approach on catchy U.K. singles “Oh Yeah” and “With You.” The Subways have multiple gears, too, showing a quieter side on “Lines of Light” and “No Goodbyes.” What’s refreshing about this LP is that it’s not trendy. This is not a group of hipster record collectors who have stumbled upon another early-1980s obscurity to mimic. Instead, just as Oasis rejected many of the de rigueur affectations of Britpop to shoot for timeless, archetypal rock and roll, the Subways, in their desire to stay young for eternity, craft music similarly unburdened by today’s microfads. Nice one. (Sire) ★★★ —Tim Mohr

RHETT MILLER * *The Believer*

Rhett Miller is best known as the singer for the boozy, foot-stompin’ Old 97’s. Desperation is his strength, and he plays it up here on “Help Me Suzanne” and the jumpy “Singular Girl.” The album has less twang and more pop, possibly at the expense of his band’s usual power. (Verve Forecast) ★★★ —Jason Buhmester



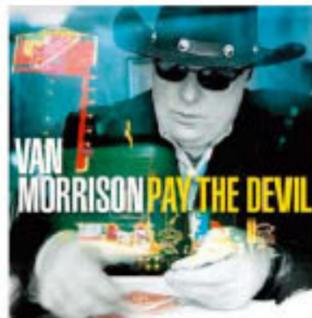
MYLO * *Destroy Rock & Roll*

Down-tempo electro, whimsical break beat, blissed-out trip-house—call it what you want. Or for simplicity, just call Mylo the Scottish version of Röyksopp. Whatever the description, it is the perfect midpoint between party pulse and chill-out beat. Take the club vibe home with this sleek classic. (RCA) ★★★ —T.M.



VAN MORRISON * *Pay the Devil*

Largely a tribute to Ray Charles’s 1962 *Modern Sounds in Country and Western Music*, this is Morrison’s take on Nashville. Given that he founded Them—regarded as the Belfast Stones—it’s no surprise to hear a blues touch, too, especially on songs by Louis Armstrong and Big Joe Turner. Truly great stuff. (Lost Highway) ★★★ —T.M.



CRUNA * *A Hustla’z Love Story*

As the name suggests, this one recalls the 1970s soul of Curtis Mayfield. But don’t let the old-school falsetto fool you. This Tennessee native has a harsh story to tell about the modern-day realities of romantic love. Cruna’s singing is sweet, but his lyrics pack a mean punch. (Reprise) ★★★ —Leopold Froehlich



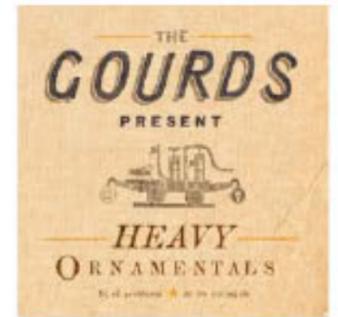
AUDIO BULLYS * *Generation*

Emerging at the same time as the Streets, the Bullys were lumped in with the nascent hooligan-hop scene. Back with a somewhat mellower sound—typified by the now familiar lead single, the dramatic, Nancy Sinatra–sampling “Shot You Down”—the Bullys maintain their signature bounce. (Astralwerks) ★★★ —T.M.



THE GOURDS * *Heavy Ornamentals*

These zydeco-influenced Texans have always mixed toe-tapping catchiness with foot-shooting quirk and seem a bit sheepish about this collection’s directness. Yet it’s just that quality that makes this a better Gourds record than most—meaning it’s a very good record indeed. (Eleven Thirty) ★★★ —J.R.



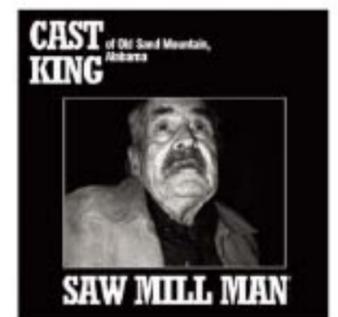
SERGIO MENDES * *Timeless*

This dreaded collaboration with today’s stars (produced by Black Eyed Pea Will.I.Am) isn’t bad. Tellingly, the rapper tracks are the least satisfying; we’d dig more of the ladies (Jill Scott, Erykah Badu, India.Arie). But you could do much worse for a summer deck-party disc. (Concord) ★★★ —Josh Robertson



CAST KING * *Saw Mill Man*

Some musicians get better with age. King, a 79-year-old Alabaman, can’t get much better than he is here, with a dozen relentless songs about death and drinking. This is unregenerate country music at its most intense. What King lacks in complexity he more than makes up in emotion. (Locust) ★★★½ —L.F.



game of the month

[CRASH COURSE]

Full Auto turns vehicular homicide into a day at the races

When you get behind the wheel in *Full Auto* (Xbox 360), you're also picking up a weapon. Each of these cars packs heavy ordnance, from mines to machine guns to missiles and more. And if the opponent in your sights somehow escapes unscathed, the buildings behind him won't. The muscle under the Xbox 360's hood allows for fully (and spectacularly) destructible scenery on a level we've never seen before. What the game lacks in realism it more than makes up for in sheer chain-reaction chaos—missile contrails roar past your windshield as entire buildings fly apart and fuel stations blow sky-high, scattering debris. But the game's crowning contribution to the genre has to be its "unwreck" feature, which lets players rewind to undo missed shortcuts or particularly nasty deaths; the clouds roil in reverse as blown-to-bits cars fly back together. Here's to the death of scripted animation. Every wreck here is uniquely your own. ★★★½ —Chris Hudak



MVP '06 NCAA BASEBALL (PS2, Xbox) The sights, the sounds, the sweating hordes of awkward-looking freshmen: It's baseball, college-style. This, the first-ever college baseball video game, is filled out with teams from 128 leading universities and plays a very respectable season thanks to solid gameplay mechanics (including an effective new batting scheme). We're big fans of the real-time score tickers from ESPN, which further blur the line between real and virtual ball. ★★★ —Scott Steinberg



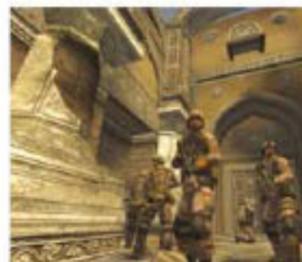
MARC ECKO'S GETTING UP (PC, PS2, Xbox) Trane, an aspiring graffiti artist, is out to make his mark on New Radius, an analogue for New York City. Help him by scaling and spray painting skyscrapers and billboards while evading oppressive authorities, rival crews and street thugs. The higher you can get your creations, the greater your rep will grow as you evolve from Toy to King. It's a refreshingly unique blend of street art and action with nary a nine-millimeter in sight. ★★★½ —Marc Saltzman



WORLD SOCCER: WINNING ELEVEN 9 (PC, PS2, Xbox) Video game soccer is often "arcaded up" in the States to compensate for the sport's demands on the attention span. But the long-running *Winning Eleven* has never felt the need to pander to footie-phobic American tastes, and we couldn't be happier about it. Purists who don't need to see every goal in the top corner and can handle a scoreless half or two will be in heaven. This year's version comes with online play. ★★★ —Scott Alexander



FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR: TEN HAMMERS (PC, PS2, Xbox) This sequel to 2004's innovative squad strategy simulator raises the adrenaline factor tenfold, with four squads of soldiers as well as vehicles at your command. Driving tanks through the fictional Middle Eastern country of Zekistan is a thrill. New vehicles also improve online multiplayer gaming, as does the ability to recruit neutral computer-controlled residents to join your side of the fight. ★★★ —John Gaudiosi

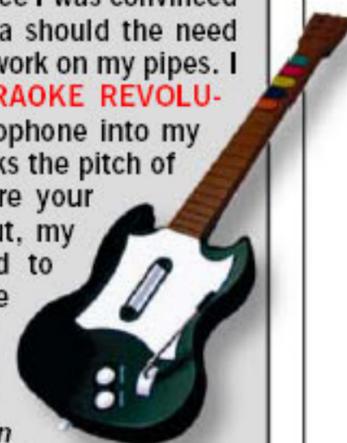


first person

[LET THE MUSIC PLAY]

One man's quest for musical immortality through gaming

Video games have convinced me that I'm Jimi Hendrix, DJ Danger Mouse and James Brown rolled into one. This may or may not be a good thing. It all started with **GUITAR HERO**, a PS2 music-and-rhythm game featuring a replica Gibson controller complete with five fret buttons on the neck and a whammy bar. I strummed while fingering the correct frets and within 30 seconds I had some very striking power chords humming out of my TV to the tune of "I Wanna Be Sedated." Suddenly I could play guitar. Drums were the next obvious step. I couldn't find games featuring full kits, so I made do with GameCube's frighteningly addictive **DONKEY KONGA 2** and its plastic bongos. Once I was convinced I could back Santana should the need arise, it was time to work on my pipes. I eagerly plugged **KARAOKE REVOLUTION PARTY**'s microphone into my Xbox. The game tracks the pitch of your singing to figure your score. As it turns out, my voice is best suited to duets with Boy George and Cyndi Lauper. Thankfully I am naturally modest. *Karaoke Revolution* supports dancing while you sing, but my brain does not, so I switched to the break-dancing game **FLOW** (PS2). It didn't take long for me to realize that my skills amount to one tired robot dance and a smidgen of running man. I figured if I couldn't bust much in the way of moves, at least I could spin a little juice. DJ simulator **BEATMANIA** (PS2) comes complete with a mini keyboard-turntable. Hit the right notes while you scratch and you'll create a musical stew that can zombie the neighborhood club kids for hours. Eager to test what I'd learned, I grabbed my turntable and some LPs, then borrowed amps, guitars and drum kits from friends. Since then I've ruined my records and been threatened with eviction, and my dogs haven't come out from under the couch. Thanks, music video games. Thanks a lot. —Brian Crecente

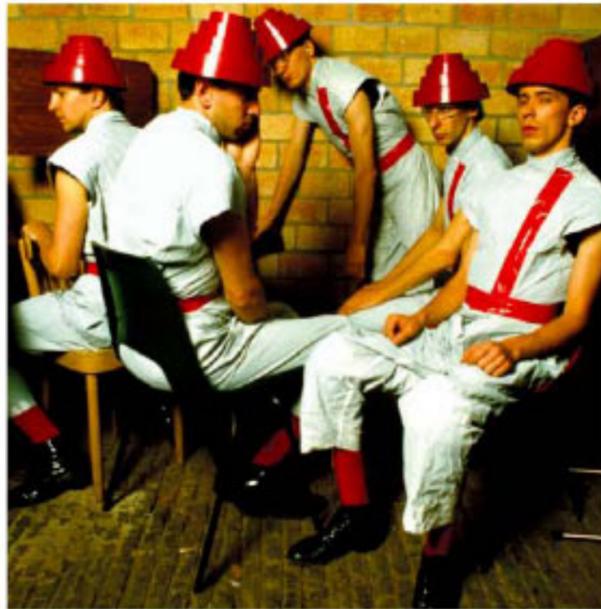


the latest hits

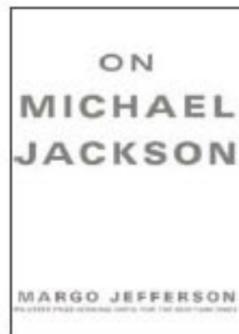
[MUSIC RIFFS]

Bowie, how to be a rap mogul and all that jazz

Last year was a banner one for books on music. If you're looking for more, try Mick Rock's *Moonage Daydream: The Life and Times of Ziggy Stardust*. It combines photographs of Bowie's androgynous alter ego with commentary by the Thin White Duke himself and does for cross-dressing what Jayne Mansfield did for the D cup. Picking up where Bowie left off, Simon Reynolds's *Rip It Up and Start Again* is a thoughtful history of the postpunk bands that today's artists never tire of referencing. Based on interviews with members of Devo, Talking Heads and more, it's essential reading for anyone wondering where such groups as the Strokes and Interpol found their musical inspiration. And lest anyone think the academy has fallen off the bandwagon, management expert Richard Oliver's *Hip Hop, Inc.* examines the success strategies of rap moguls like Suge Knight, while Syracuse professor David Yaffe's *Fascinating Rhythm: Reading Jazz in American Writing* provides a brilliant account of the music's often overlooked influence on J.D. Salinger, Philip Roth and other lights of the literary firmament. —Alex Abramovich



ON MICHAEL JACKSON * Margo Jefferson "Jackson's sperm count, I'm relieved to say, is one of the few things we know nothing about," observes *New York Times* cultural critic Margo Jefferson. She goes on to catalog what is known, assumed or rumored about the King of Pop, recounting his life from his childhood on the chitlin circuit and atop the pop charts, through his 2005 acquittal on molestation



charges. Along the way she makes cogent observations about Jackson's outsize talent and his bizarre behavior, but her intent isn't to find a Rosebud moment. Instead she turns her gimlet eye on the public that, she argues, has been complicit in the creation of all of Jackson's guises: child star, victim, alleged sexual predator. We have met the freak, and he is truly ours. ★★★ —Bill Vourvoulis

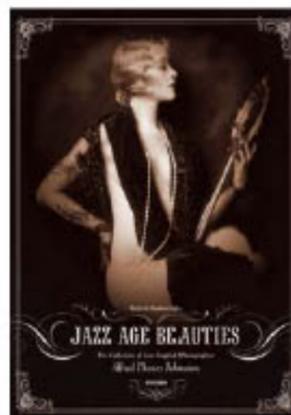
the erotic eye



JAZZ AGE BEAUTIES

Alfred Cheney Johnston

In the 1920s Alfred Cheney Johnston photographed stars, debutantes and *Ziegfeld Follies* dancers in velvet, pearls or nothing at all. Editor Robert Hudovernik hopes to revive interest in the neglected master with these sumptuous sepia-toned portraits, their subjects humming with erotic energy under a single, pitch-perfect light source. ★★★ —J. Reynolds



biographies

[NOTEWORTHY LIVES]

Sam, Bob and the Beatles

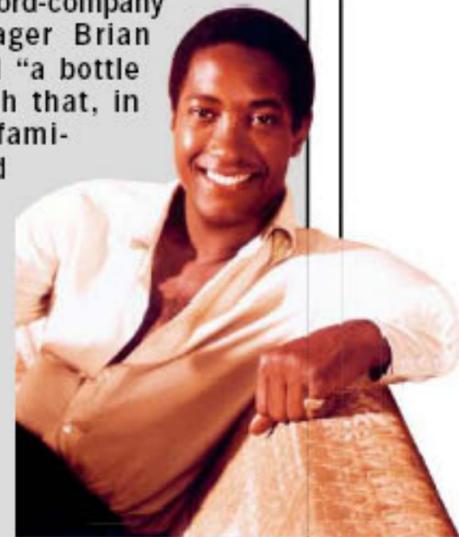
All the research in the world does not guarantee empathy for a biographical subject. But the finesse and scope of several recent biographies give dimension and voice to our musical legends.

Sam Cooke's influence on our culture may be less evident than Elvis's, but Peter Guralnick's *Dream Boogie* resurrects this troubled, benevolent, ambitious man, and no matter what your feelings are about Cooke's music, it makes for an essential, thrilling read. Guralnick doesn't shy away from the profane contradictions of the gospel world or from those of Cooke's private life: His home was a disaster, his epic extramarital carousing leaving a resentful wife and abandoned children adrift. Guralnick plays it as it lays, neither lionizing nor vilifying the star but rendering him gloriously.

Bob Spitz's biography *The Beatles* is frank and authoritative, though somewhat clinical compared with Guralnick's soulful feel. In this big book, the little things shine. After the Beatles' first record-company audition, manager Brian Epstein ordered "a bottle of wine, a touch that, in most of their families, was reserved for funerals." This deft detail demarcates the band's past from its future.

One of the most reluctant participants in the Beatles' story has long been Lennon's first wife, Cynthia. Her perspective on John is refreshing here: The growth of the band happens in the background while she mollifies his stern Aunt Mimi and sets up an apartment for the couple's trysts. By the time of "She Loves You," there's real feeling when she writes, "I loved that song: It reminded me of John's first Christmas card to me—'I love you yes, yes, yes.'"

Bob Dylan's autobiography, *Chronicles: Volume One*, is surprisingly open and readable. Dylan wins our affection: "Kennedy, King, Malcolm X...I didn't see them as leaders being shot down but rather as fathers whose families had been left wounded." Pleasantly shambling in its narrative structure, *Volume One* is like a jigsaw-puzzle piece that may help form an expansive picture but also stands alone as a beautiful self-portrait. —Robert Gordon



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Rare Beauty

A new car company takes the road less traveled—at a swift 202 mph

EVER SHOW UP at a party wearing the same cocktail dress as another guest? Neither have we. But we have seen drivers show up on the highway in the same model car as our own. The horror! Starting this spring, Danish-born Henrik Fisker will offer car buyers options that are striking and, most important, unique. Fisker, who designed the Z8 for BMW and the DB9 for Aston Martin, has revived 1930s-era custom coach building with his new company, Fisker Coachbuild. The cars begin their life as a Mercedes or a BMW; Fisker's team then strips and refits them with super-high-end embellishments on the interior, exterior and power train. The result is a Fisker Coachbuilt automobile, with a Fisker logo on the sharklike nose, certified by the original manufacturer. Pictured above left is the 2006 Latigo CS coupe (\$198,000, fiskercb.com) with BMW 650ci architecture. Under the hood is a 4.8-liter V8 that kicks out 360 hp. Above right and inset: the Tramonto (starting at \$254,000), a Mercedes-Benz SL55 AMG lavishly restyled, with a 610 hp V8. Zero to 60 flies by in a mind-boggling 3.6 seconds, and the top speed is 202 miles an hour, putting this souped-up roadster well into Ferrari-land. We tested the Tramonto on the Pacific Coast Highway and found the steering and handling crisp, the acceleration hair-raising. Fisker will make only 150 of each car annually, so you won't see yourself coming and going. All you'll see is heads turning your way.

This Month by the Numbers

 **March Madness (beginning on the 14th):** 21 days, 13 cities, some \$2.4 billion wagered worldwide. Now that's a tournament. **St. Patrick's Day (17th):** City authorities use 40 pounds of vegetable dye to turn the Chicago River green. South Boston's Blackthorn pub will serve around 40 kegs of Guinness at the Southie parade. **The vernal equinox (20th):** On this day, because of gravitational pull and the position of earth in the cosmos, legend has it you can balance an egg on its end. What this has to do with numbers, we have no idea. **Benito Juárez's birthday (21st):** 2006 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Mexico's greatest (and only Native American) president. **Women's History Month:** Celebrate by paying a visit to PLAYBOY's 634th Playmate, Monica Leigh. She's waiting for you on page 82.

Monster Head

SPEAKING OF DRIVING, spring is upon us. The fairways beckon. Nike's newish SasQuatch 460 driver (\$360, nikegolf.com) has an almost human-size titanium head—460 cc, the legal limit on the tour. It's designed for maximum distance with the broadest possible sweet spot. Does it swing? Our test driver bet cash on his game, and he hit the green in more ways than one.



Marrakech Express

A FEW MILES from here, the dark alleys and frenzied thoroughfares of Marrakech teem with snake charmers, jewelry and bronze hagglers, and the aroma of exotic spices. But at Ksar Char-Bagh you can bathe in the unique ambience of Moroccan luxury. The French owners of this boutique hotel constructed their version of a 14th century Moorish palace with all the modern touches, sparing no expense. It's a one-of-a-kind romantic hideaway, situated in a date-palm oasis known as the Palmeraie, surrounded by the snow-capped Atlas Mountains. The French-Moroccan dining is unforgettable, and the lavish treasure-filled suites (each has a private garden or terrace) will make you want to shake your couscous until dawn. Spend the day in the city, hunting for the ghost of Paul Bowles. By dusk, you're poolside. Suites start at \$650 a night (ksarcharbagh.com).



A Real Hard Case

WE MISS THE GOLDEN AGE of air travel, when you dressed your best, quaffed quality cocktails in roomy seats and stowed your clothes in stylish hard-case luggage. Bring a little jet-age magic into your house with Maybe Design's Sitbag (\$1,370, 8gon.com), a chair made by setting a classically styled suitcase on steel legs. When you sit, you'll think it's 1969, minus Dick Nixon and all that brown acid.

About Time

IMAGINE IF HUMAN SKIN were see-through. Would your dream girl look any hotter than, say, John Madden? This much we know: The guts of Breguet's Classique Grande Complication Openwork Tourbillon & Perpetual Calendar (\$189,200, breguet.com) are mesmerizing. Every part of this Swiss-made mechanical time-piece is crafted by hand. The case is platinum, and the hands are blue steel. It's pictured here with a black alligator strap.





Pretty Amped

OUR PLAYBACK GIZMOS keep shrinking, while the rest of our stereo has remained the same size. Until now. The iMP (\$525, impamp.com) is the world's smallest tube amplifier, marrying the warmth of analog sound and the convenience of digital music (or whatever else you play through it). Small enough to fit in your hand, the iMP can fill a room with plenty of volume, and it has a dual monoblock design for superb separation.

Wooden You Like to Know

BACK IN 2004 JVC used a new wood-cone speaker technology in some of its bookshelf systems. Wood's stiffness confers excellent acoustic properties (think of an acoustic guitar), but engineers couldn't make it work in speakers until one had the idea of soaking the cones in sake. (We've had meetings like that too.) The results are spectacular—and now available in the floor-standing SX-WD10s (\$1,700 a pair, jvc.com).



Future Perfect

YOU WANT THE ADVANTAGES of digital music (the selection, the flexibility), but you don't want to hook up unorthodox gear to your stereo (the formats, the agita). Olive's Musica system (\$1,100, olive.us) is built like a conventional stereo component, but inside it has a 160-gigabyte hard drive and an Ethernet port for home networking and Net radio, along with a CD drive that will rip your new discs. It doesn't just play your library; it *is* your library. Can we get an amen?



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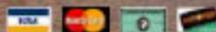
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The Playboy Advisor

My husband has been staying up late to look at porn on the computer. He says he can't fall asleep otherwise. I tell him he can always wake me, but he says he doesn't look at the sites because he wants sex. Do many men use porn to fall asleep?—J.P., Virginia Beach, Virginia

Many men use masturbation to fall asleep. That's fine as long as it doesn't affect the sex life you share. Online porn is easier for a quick release than waking the wife, and we've never felt that every orgasm has to involve a conversation. That goes both ways.

Three months ago I took up golf. I visit the driving range or course twice a week, but I am getting blisters on my thumbs. Am I holding the clubs too tightly? Would it help to wear gloves on both hands?—M.T., Sacramento, California

Holding your clubs with a death grip is a common beginner's mistake. Have the club pro take a look—and soon, before you ingrain any bad habits. But even if you have a perfect swing, expect blisters if you don't play every day. One study found that a golfer must pull the grip of a driver with more than 100 pounds of force during a fast swing to keep from falling forward. A slow swing requires 30 to 40 pounds. That causes some wear and tear. "When you shake hands with tour players, their hands feel like sandpaper," says Shawn Humphries, who works with many pros as director of instruction at Cowboys Golf Club near Dallas. "Yet they still fear blisters. Tiger Woods often puts medical tape on a finger or pinkie because he doesn't want his hands to split, especially in cold weather. Lee Trevino always wore a glove with tape on the outside around his thumb. If a golfer stays the course, he'll get calluses. In the meantime there's nothing wrong with using two gloves, although it may be enough just to tape your thumbs."

A reader who had started a relationship with a woman online asked in November if it is possible to fall in love with someone you've never met. You said, "Yes, it's possible. But being in love and being lovers are two different things." Three months ago I met a woman through an online sex board that allowed us to express our desires up front. (When you advertise on a standard dating site, you can't come out and say, "Anally fixated man seeks anally fixated woman who likes bondage and masochism." Well, you can, but it never leads to anything serious.) Things clicked between us, and she bought an airline ticket. Even before she arrived, we had decided to marry. We spent eight glorious days together, during which we agreed to rely on each other for love, support and as many spankings as we can handle. The tricky part is moving. We are starting fresh in a new state so neither of us has a home-field advan-



tage. I would tell the reader who wrote in November that if he has any dark perversions, he should get them in the open while he and this woman still know each other only online. It's much easier to dispose of a virtual relationship than a physical one. Based on my past experiences I guarantee unhappiness if truths are not revealed prior to your first physical encounter.—B.W., Hilo, Hawaii

That's good advice. It's often easier to write what one can't say. Glad it worked out.

Inherited my grandfather's fedoras. Growing up, I always liked his hats and thought he looked good in them. But when I wear them, people laugh or make comments such as "Hey, Indiana Jones!" Should I give up on them? What would you do?—A.R., San Diego, California

If the fedoras fit your sense of style, persevere. People making such comments are likely challenged by selecting a baseball cap.

You missed the call when responding in November to the woman who refused her husband's request for a blow job because he was playing a video game. As selfish as it may be, guys love spur-of-the-moment BJs. His wife's offer to come back after he finished the game made it an appointment, and the fantasy evaporated.—S.P., Indianapolis, Indiana

It must be a treat to receive so many blow jobs that you start to categorize them.

In November you advised a young lady that her partner is reluctant to call her his girlfriend because he hopes someone better will come along. While this may be the case, it's also possible that he refuses to label the relationship because he

is dealing with intimacy or commitment issues. Perhaps she should evaluate why she wants this label, and they can come up with something that meets both of their needs.—J.S., Tucson, Arizona

You mean like fuck buddies? Rebounders? Someday-maybes? You may be correct about his issues, but he should work them out on his own time rather than wasting hers. Labels may be confining, but after three months "girlfriend" threatens no man.

Is there any way to get out of an auto lease early?—G.J., Detroit, Michigan

Just ask the dealer nicely. No go? You can post an ad online and hope someone will assume the payments. The two major sites for unloading leases are Swapalease.com, founded in 1999 by a chain of Cincinnati dealerships hoping to turn lessees into buyers, and LeaseTrader.com, created in 1998 by a Miami businessman who didn't want to forfeit \$14,000 to dump his Beemer. The services charge \$40 to \$50 for a basic listing, plus \$95 to \$150 if you make a transfer. It may help to offer an additional cash incentive or to be unloading a sports car—the five most traded vehicles on LeaseTrader are the BMW 325i, the Audi A4, the Mercedes C230, the Porsche Boxster and the BMW X5. The finance company must approve the deal, but that's usually a rubber stamp. If you're lucky, your freedom will cost only a couple hundred dollars. Another option is a site such as Un-Lease.com, which will buy your lease at a discount to resell.

In October the Advisor implied men would be willing to give birth if they could have multiple orgasms. Obviously the Advisor has never given birth. I am sure most women would give up multiple climaxes in a heartbeat.—K.B., Greenville, Kentucky

We'd take that bet. The pain of childbirth lasts a day, while multiple orgasms continue for a lifetime. Notably, while it may be impossible for a man to get pregnant, it is conceivable that he could be pregnant. There have been cases of an embryo floating out of the fallopian tube into a woman's abdominal cavity and attaching to her pelvic wall. The baby developed normally before delivery by cesarean section. Presumably an embryo could be attached the same way inside a male, as long as he receives progesterone and other hormones. The implantation would likely occur in the peritoneum, the lining of tissue that holds organs in place, according to Dr. Ronald Magness, director of perinatal research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. For a glimpse at what might someday be, visit the art project posted at malepregnancy.com.

My friend just picked up his first bespoke suit—a midnight-blue three-piece. Of course I am happy for him, although with its four-button jacket, vest and

pleats it's not exactly fashion-forward. When I suggested that he shouldn't wear sneakers with it, as he does with his other suits, he replied that in fact this is "all the rage" in our hometown of London. Are my senses failing me? Please tell me it's still a faux pas to wear \$100 Nikes with a \$4,000 suit.—T.R., Hollywood, Florida

Like so much of fashion—and life—it depends on the context. Does a midnight-blue suit with sneakers work in a Miami or London disco? Sure. Will it make a good impression at a business lunch or while meeting the queen? No. If your friend finds dress shoes uncomfortable, there is a middle ground—classier shoes that wear like sneakers, such as selections from Ferragamo, Geox or Cole Haan, which has a line of oxfords with Nike Air technology.

Twice during the past month my wife has had my erection so far back in her throat that when she tries to swallow she aspirates semen into her nasal passages. It hasn't affected her enthusiasm, but any tips to prevent this would be appreciated.—M.W., Little Rock, Arkansas

Your wife should pay close attention to your breathing to more accurately predict when you're going to come. That will allow her to back you up an inch as you ejaculate. In the meantime, grunt twice or tug her ear.

The Advisor claims "there is no question that meat grilled over charcoal tastes better." Who says? Charcoal, like gas, is just fuel. The grilled flavor comes from the smoke that rises when the juices and marinade drip onto the briquettes. Gas grills approximate this with bars or rocks. I am an experienced griller and can taste no difference. However, the convenience of gas can't be beat. It also allows you to grill in the winter.—R.G., Lake in the Hills, Illinois

In 2000 a research firm hired by Kingsford charcoal gave a blind taste test to 796 adults in four cities and found that around 65 percent preferred chicken and hamburgers cooked over charcoal—by someone else, notably. But Weber, which makes both types of grill, says it has conducted repeated surveys in which people report they can't tell the difference. As one griller puts it, a lot depends on whether you're into the journey or the destination. Some people compromise—gas during the week, charcoal on the weekend. Others, like the Advisor, simply follow the party.

Your November response about open relationships needs clarification. One reason people often reject polyamory is that it is misrepresented as swinging. Polyamory is having committed relationships with more than one person. Swinging is recreational and often involves replacement sex, i.e., something is lacking, so a couple agrees to experiment without addressing the root conflict. Most polyamorists believe that humans are not naturally monogamous and that jealousy is a social construct derived from insecurity and a misguided right of possession. Humans

can only benefit from a gene pool that includes some old-fashioned competition. The point is, I've never seen any relationship work if the participants—whether two or more—are not honest with each other. The Advisor writes that open relationships don't work for most people, but monogamous relationships don't seem to work for most people either.—C.A., Los Angeles, California

They can both be a challenge. The difficulty for most people, after a point, isn't being honest; it's what to do when their partner doesn't want to play.

Are there any sex toys that a man and woman can both use at the same time?—H.N., Montreal, Quebec

Besides lube? You might enjoy the Blue Dolphin or the Diving Dolphin, available from Babeland.com. These are jelly penis rings with two tiny vibrators attached like guns in a holster. One points up to stimulate her clitoris during penetration while the other points down to tickle his balls. Babeland also sells a variety of cock rings with vibrators attached to stimulate the clit during intercourse.

I used to hang out with this guy once in a while only because I liked to have someone to drink or shoot hoops with. Now I have a girlfriend, but he still calls. Any advice?—B.D., New York, New York

In other words, how do you break up with a guy? Tell him you're busy and you'll call when things are less hectic. You can only hope he takes the hint, although your new girlfriend should be a big clue. Your priorities have changed, but he's in the same place.

Pro baseball player Rafael Palmeiro has said that a B12 shot given to him by a teammate may have caused him to test positive for steroids. What does this vitamin do for you? Any side effects? Should I be taking it?—J.M., New York, New York

We can say it won't make you test positive for steroids. B12 helps maintain nerve and red blood cells and releases energy from food. It is found in fish, meat, poultry and dairy. When you shoot up hundreds of times the recommended daily dose, it supposedly gives you a few days or weeks of increased energy, restful sleep and sharpened senses. That's what makes it popular with athletes, performers and busy professionals. According to one of her former assistants, Margaret Thatcher had regular injections in her backside when she served as prime minister of Britain. But megadoses have not been extensively researched, so it's hard to say how much of the rush is a placebo effect. Traditionally the vitamin shots have been used to treat depression, chronic fatigue and other conditions in people with B12 deficiencies, not as boosters for the well-adjusted. Healthy adult men need only about 2.4 micrograms of B12 a day. (A cup of yogurt has 1.4.)

My boyfriend takes about 30 minutes to climax after extensive foreplay. He attributes his stamina to the fact that he's getting older. (He's 29.) He says he didn't

have this problem before we met, but he also hadn't had sex in seven years. Is there something we can do to shorten the experience for both of us?—A.C., Brooklyn, New York

A variety of things can cause delayed ejaculation, but in this case it may be that your boyfriend masturbated for years without any female intervention. He may have conditioned himself to respond only to a specific type of stimulation. A number of drugs, including Prozac and other antidepressants, can also impair ejaculation. And there's the off chance that he has neurological damage, although that can be discounted if he can come relatively quickly by masturbating. He needs to test his reflexes, and you need to watch. Resolving this may be as simple as having him describe and show you what feels best on his cock.

The last member of our group of 20 college friends is getting married, so we are planning a bachelor party. We have been all over the world for previous send-offs—Amsterdam, Las Vegas, South Beach, Daytona, Fort Lauderdale, New York, Los Angeles, D.C. and London. We are debating either going to Montreal, where none of us has been, or returning to Vegas. Thoughts?—M.A., Washington, D.C.

*Montreal is an excellent choice. It has great restaurants, the Casino de Montréal and full-contact, all-nude strip clubs filled with gorgeous women. You will want to stay within a few blocks of Crescent and Ste. Catherine, and it's probably wise to hire a company such as MontrealVIP (montrealvip.com or 800-371-1224) to make arrangements and offer advice. Marc Tadros, one of the company's partners, says the dancers in Montreal aren't as aggressive as those in the States; you have to ask them for a private lap dance, which typically costs about U.S. \$7.50 a song, with no tip required. (The girls keep everything they make.) The only thing you can't touch is her vulva. Tadros says most groups number about a dozen guys, but he has arranged trips for as few as four and as many as 50. You can't go wrong with Las Vegas as a plan B, says James Oliver Cury, author of *The Playboy Guide to Bachelor Parties*. "Because the city is growing so fast, there's no way you can exhaust everything in one visit," he says. "If you go back, you can hit all new clubs and restaurants." The new Scores is gaining a reputation as the best strip club in town. In Europe, Cury suggests Dublin, which is where Londoners play and host their own stag parties.*

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented 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.



THE PLAYBOY FORUM

CHINA SYNDROME

THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF CHINA IS AS MUCH A THREAT TO THAT COUNTRY AS IT IS TO THE U.S.

BY ANDREW ROSS

How does a father explain globalization to his children? In his recent book, *The World Is Flat*, Thomas L. Friedman, the apostle of free trade, describes his effort: "When I was growing up my parents used to say to me, 'Tom, finish your dinner. People in China and India are starving.' I say to my girls, 'Girls, finish your homework. People in China and India are starving for your jobs.'" Friedman wants us to remark on the contrast between his comments and those of his parents. But what's more striking is how little has changed: In both cases it's about how affluent folks in the global north have to monopolize resources—food or knowledge—lest the not so fortunate in the global south make off with them. If workers in the developing countries win, Friedman's daughters and their peers lose.

Is there any alternative to this thinly veiled social Darwinism? Corporate America would have us believe that the only option is to adapt to free-trade rules written explicitly to exploit distrust between people on different sides of the globe. In the past 10 years liberalization in both China and India has given corporate investors access to hundreds of millions of new workers. Economists call it global labor arbitrage. Another euphemism they like is *knowledge transfer*, which is used by corporations to refer to the outsourcing of skilled labor. Both terms are just fancy names for what New York garment workers once called runaway shops. In the old days they ran to New Jersey or North Carolina; now they flee to Guangdong or Dhaka. How we create a climate for fair labor in these circumstances is one of the great challenges of our time.

Take China. Most of us are still inclined to see it as a threat. For political hawks the menace is a military one. For environmentalists it is the impact of China's breakneck growth on global energy supplies and other natural resources. For national policy makers the specter comes in the form of lopsided trade balances between China and more-developed countries. And for workers in industries and services vulnerable to offshore outsourcing, it is the loss of their livelihoods that

has raised the alarm. Scaremongers have been stoking "yellow peril" fears for the past century and a half. The recent uptick shows the sentiment for China bashing is far from exhausted—it persists at the AFL-CIO as well as in the right wing of the Republican Party.

Most readers are probably unaware that China has lost many more millions of jobs in the past decade than the United States has, whether from the closure or restructuring of state-owned enterprises or from the pressure of World Trade Organization requirements on farmers. In fact, China's job losses are just as much the result of neoliberal privatization as are job losses in the U.S. In addition, there are now about 150 million "floating" unemployed who pose the same kind of threat to Chinese trying to hold on to their jobs as corporate offshoring does to U.S. breadwinners. While they are the presumed beneficiaries of job transfers from the West, employees in China's developed coastal zones are being squeezed hard by the prospect of their jobs being moved to the inland and western provinces, already earmarked as the next frontier for buccaneering foreign investors.

I recently completed a year of field research among Chinese workers in the Yangtze river delta. The anxieties and insecurities I found among factory and office employees were depressingly familiar. Job pressure offshore is not very different from what we have seen onshore. Distrust and disloyalty are rife, job hopping is a national pastime, and investors' flightiness results everywhere in the shredding of economic and social security. Foreign-owned companies

are still a novelty in China's private sector, so it is dispiriting to come across the same complaints and fears in Shanghai as one finds in Taipei, Singapore, London, São Paulo and San José. Everyone everywhere is working longer and harder. Fewer and fewer workers, whether skilled or unskilled, expect their current employer to be their boss for long.

In other developing countries with free-trade zones, we have seen the same kind of instability. Why is the China



PHOTO BY EDWARD SHUTTSKY

HANDS OFF MY GENES

WHO'S LOOKING AT YOUR DNA?

By Lori Andrews

case so alarming? The answer lies not just in the jumbo scale of industrial operations but also in their all-encompassing spread. China is moving so fast up the technology curve that it attracts the highest-level investments—in product design and R&D—from global corporations. No industrializing country in history has been able to compete for high-skill jobs at the same time it absorbs those at the bottom of the production chain. To command this spread—from the lowest assembly platform work to the upper reaches of industry and services—is to be in a position to set the global norm for employee standards at minimal levels.

No doubt this is a threat to livelihoods everywhere, but it is not one hatched in Beijing. If China did not provide the most profitable current mix of authoritarian governance, cheap, abundant labor and investor-friendly policies, it would be sought out elsewhere. Though this arrangement would not exist without government cooperation, the primary beneficiaries are global corporations. They stand to profit most from the normalization of an environment where jobs and capital can be transferred at a moment's notice.

Protectionism is a natural response and has been unfairly vilified. Surely every community has the right to protect the livelihood of its members. But this is not the only nor always the best way. All too often it brings out the ugly side of economic nationalism rather than holding corporations accountable for paying third-world wages and asking first-world prices. Let us remember that there are alternatives to free-trade fundamentalism. They are equally global in scope and are based on the principles of fair trade, sustainable economics, internationally recognized labor and human rights, and socially conscious investment, rather than on short-term profit and plunder.

I have a few years before I'll decide what to say to my own daughter, but I know my message will be different from Friedman's. A two-year-old during the time we spent in Shanghai, she was the only foreigner in the neighborhood nursery school. She had to learn Mandarin, even some Shanghaiese, to get by on a daily basis. Ever since our return to New York, she has been seeing little bits of China in the streets and in the media landscape. For her, China has always been a way of life, as it soon will be for all of us.

Ross's Fast Boat to China: Corporate Flight and the Consequences of Free Trade will be published in April by Pantheon.

After Chicago Bulls center Eddy Curry showed signs of an irregular heartbeat last season before a game against the Charlotte Bobcats, the Bulls refused to sign him to a long-term contract. The team instead offered him a one-year contract at \$5.1 million, with the requirement that he undergo a genetic test to see if he had a predisposition to heart disease. Curry balked at the testing; cardiologists he'd consulted had declared him fit to play. Even if a test indicated a genetic concern, many men with a genetic marker linked to cardiac disease never develop heart problems.

Before Curry could take the Bulls to arbitration to escape the test, he was traded to the New York Knicks. Although the Knicks won't require the genetic analysis, the issue of testing without consent is far from resolved. David Stern, commissioner of the National Basketball Association, suggested that all potential rookies submit to DNA testing prior to the league draft.

Even if you aren't a professional athlete, your potential employers or insurers—or even the cops—may still want a peek inside your genes. Some seek it for identification—to match DNA to crime-scene evidence or to finger a father through a paternity test. Others, such as employers and insurers, want to save money by turning away healthy people who may later develop costly diseases. According to a 2004 survey by the American Management Association, 63 percent of companies obtain medical information about employees. Some even admit they use the results of genetic tests for sickle-cell anemia or Huntington's disease as a basis for hiring and promotion decisions. But genetic tests

are no crystal ball. A woman who is denied health insurance because she has a genetic mutation supposedly linked to breast cancer still has a 50 percent chance of never developing the disease; even more surprising, 90 percent of women who get breast cancer pass the genetic test.

Yet another group—researchers and biotech companies—wants access to people's DNA to search for lucrative genes for research and patenting. In one case, a group of families donated money and body tissue over

the course of a decade to identify the fatal gene that had killed their offspring. They were shocked to discover that researchers had patented the gene. The families objected because the patent increased the cost of the test and allowed the patent holder to forbid anyone else from offering that genetic test or undertaking research on the gene. A genetic test without a patent

royalty can cost \$100 or less. With a patent royalty attached, the cost to the patient can rise to 10 times that. As a result of gene patents, one in four laboratories has stopped performing certain genetic tests. Half have not developed a test for fear they will run afoul of patent law.

The technology is available to use a simple blood sample to sequence a person's complete genome, the 30,000 genes in the body. Affymetrix, a biotech company, already markets the technology. The test itself would be affordable, but imagine the royalty fees if the test for each gene required a \$1,000 royalty. Who could afford the \$30 million price tag to learn his or her genetic makeup? Even if your doctor were willing to ignore the patents and create a CD-ROM of your personal gene



sequence, you'd be violating multiple patents by putting that CD in your computer to check if you had a predisposition to a particular cancer. No wonder the American College of Human Genetics and the College of American Pathologists oppose gene patents.

In our society the law gives extensive protection to our bodies; court cases hold that touching a person without consent is battery and that people have a right to refuse medical intervention and to forbid research on their body. Under constitutional law, people have liberty interests in what is done with their body—including saying yes or no to contraception and abortion—and privacy interests in controlling the dissemination of information about themselves. Yet the law currently fails to protect what is done with DNA.

The need to protect genetic privacy and liberty is great because DNA is so accessible. If you have a blood test or biopsy at a hospital, your DNA may end up in commercial research and product development. New York City's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center gave access to cancer biopsies from patients to a biotech company. If you leave dental floss in the garbage, someone could grab the DNA from your gum tissue: Multimillionaire Steven Bing's discarded floss was pilfered for a paternity test. If you agree to give blood for a certain type of research, scientists may use it for unrelated genetic research projects. That's what happened to members of the Havasupai tribe who live in a remote area of the Grand Canyon accessible only by horseback, foot or helicopter. Such isolation is the reason certain genetic diseases occur more often among the Havasupai than in the general population; the tribe has one of the highest incidences of type 2 diabetes anywhere in the world. The Havasupai consented to have diabetes-related research done on their blood samples, but researchers undertook additional unauthorized genetic research on them regarding schizophrenia, inbreeding and population migration. The Havasupai assert that the research on schizophrenia and inbreeding stigmatized them and insist they would not have authorized the migration research because it conflicts with their religious beliefs about their origins.

The legal rights in each of these situations are slim reeds. Only one court—the Ninth Circuit, a federal appellate court in California—has taken genetic rights seriously. In the case, an employer used blood from routine physicals to test African American employees secretly for

the sickle-cell-anemia gene mutation. The court ruled in the employees' favor, saying, "One can think of few subject areas more personal and more likely to implicate privacy interests than that of one's health or genetic makeup."

But not all courts are as protective of genetic rights. In 2005 a federal court ruled against the Havasupai's claims that researchers had acted fraudulently and violated the tribe's right of informed consent by conducting additional research.



When other patients whose genes and cell lines had been patented went to court to claim that their "property"—their DNA—had been taken without their consent, the courts ruled that patients could not have a property right in their DNA but that researchers could.

Since courts fall short of protecting genetic rights, advocates of genetic privacy and liberty have turned to the legislatures. As a result, various states have laws that prevent insurers from discriminating against people based on the results of a genetic test. But most states have loopholes that allow insurers to col-

lect genetic information in other ways. Plus, those state laws don't protect the 55 percent to 65 percent of employees who work for companies that self-insure. The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act provides protections against losing your insurance if you change jobs, but it doesn't protect people in individual plans.

The federal Americans With Disabilities Act prohibits employers from discriminating against people based on a medical condition unrelated to the person's ability to do the job at issue. But the law allows the potential employer (such as an NBA team) to require genetic testing, and it would be difficult to prove a person didn't get a job because of a glitch in his genes rather than because the winning applicant had more education or a better jump shot.

Only seven states have laws requiring a person to give written informed consent before he or she is genetically tested. In six of these states police can access blood samples without such consent. Five of the seven states allow research on a person's genes without consent as long as the individual's name is taken off the blood sample. Yet people may object to certain research even if their name were to be unattached—such as research in which genes are patented.

In a South Carolina case, an ex-husband in a custody dispute convinced a judge to order genetic testing on his healthy ex-wife to see if she would die at a younger-than-average age. This case may foreshadow genetic battles in all custody cases in which divorcing spouses seek genetic testing on each other in order to predict which one is less likely to get cancer or heart disease.

Do we really want to see a society in which our ability to work, get insurance or even maintain custody of our children is based on a genetic test? In which our genes enter the research and commerce arena without our consent? We should retain our right to reject mandatory genetic tests, genetic discrimination and the patenting of our genes. Whenever a third-party institution—an employer, an insurer or the police—tries to subject you to a DNA test, refuse until you can assess your legal protections. And if you provide blood for medical testing, make sure to find out what will be done with it—and dictate the restrictions you want. Only by being conscientious objectors in the DNA draft can we get policy makers to pay attention.

Andrews, a professor at Chicago-Kent College of Law, chaired the federal ethics advisory committee to the Human Genome Project.

THE GENETIC BILL OF RIGHTS



- You should have the right to refuse genetic testing and not to disclose genetic information, except in criminal cases in which there is individualized suspicion.

- You should not be discriminated against by insurers, employers, schools, courts, mortgage lenders or other institutions based on genetic tests.

- If you undergo genetic testing, you should have the right to control who receives the results.

- Your genes should not be used in research without your consent, even if your tissue sample has been made anonymous.

- Your genes should not be patented.

READER RESPONSE

SOUTH PARK: THE PREQUEL

Marty Beckerman ("We Want Bush," December) is only 22, so when he fails to challenge Brian Anderson's statement that today's college Republicans "wouldn't be recognized by those who campaigned for Ronald Reagan," he has the excuse of not having been there. I was there; I campaigned for Reagan in 1984. Plenty of hard-partying conservative and Republican college students who voted for Reagan drank to excess and slept around. One college Republican group was banned from a hotel for poor behavior during a convention but was invited back after someone pulled strings with the hotel owner. *South Park* conservatives aren't new.

Anthony Argyriou
Oakland, California



Reagan supporters?

GUN FIGHT

Thank you for Pat Jordan's commentary ("Stand and Fire," December). I appreciate his pointing out that a segment of the population believes the Second Amendment ought to be interpreted as loosely as the First. Though I am not a card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union or the National Rifle Association, I think both are valuable in protecting our constitutional rights. I agree with both groups' stance on the amendments they protect.

Bryan Waller
Sanford, Florida

I think Jordan is a little misleading when he takes a portion of the Stand Your Ground law out of context. The law doesn't allow blanket immunity from prosecution and civil liability regardless of the circumstances. It prevents the arrest and prosecution of someone if no evidence exists that the person acted contrary to the law. This part of the bill

came about because police would arrest innocent victims at the scene of a shooting and sort out the facts later through depositions and court hearings. That practice in effect took away the presumption of innocence, which this part of the law restores.

Rob Keeton
Lynn Haven, Florida

I recently purchased my first firearm and would not hesitate to use it if confronted by someone intent on harming me or my family. I consider it a huge responsibility that is not to be taken lightly. I suspect my fellow licensed gun owners feel the same way and will continue to act responsibly, as they have since the passage of our conceal-and-carry law in 1987. I am equally certain that the bad guys will not.

Brian Smith
Oviedo, Florida

ANGEL IN THE CENTERFOLD

What a sad commentary on the state of religious affairs in 21st century America that the *Playboy Forum* had to reach back more than 100 years to find a public figure with the intelligence—and guts—to explicate what the Constitution says regarding the separation of church and state ("God and Washington," December). Not only is there no person of Robert Ingersoll's stature in this country today, but if Ingersoll were alive he would be under strict surveillance by the FBI, the CIA and the Department of Homeland Security as a subversive threat to the moral and religious "values" without which, we are told, our beloved nation under God would be doomed.

Don Oakley
Gainesville, Virginia

It is refreshing to read "God and Washington." With the voice of the religious right dominating so much of the media these days, we need to hear more from the free-thought point of view.

David Overman
Fenton, Michigan

As a longtime subscriber and avid *PLAYBOY* fan, I always find it distressing when your magazine bashes Christianity in its *Forum* section. I am not ashamed to say I am a Christian and a *PLAYBOY* reader. There is no conflict in that.

Michael Contakis
Ellington, Connecticut



Welcome to the Sunshine State.

Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Ishmael Reed, Thomas Friedman and other writers have gotten quite a negative response from your conservative readers. Have these liberal-knocking readers admitted to their religious-fanatic friends that they read *PLAYBOY*? Conservatives want to believe they are taking the high road in this country, and they are willing to send 2,000 young Americans to their death fighting religious fundamentalists. Yet we elect a born-again Christian to follow through with a war against religious rule. Are agnostics the ones who strap on bombs to kill people? Was it an agnostic organization that hid hundreds of child molesters? Conservatives don't understand why the moderates in this country can't identify with them but are more than willing to criticize. The conservative



Separation anxiety on Capitol Hill.

connection to hypocritical religious fanatics just makes me want to be a Democrat.

George Kraus
Avon, Ohio

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

DON'T DRINK THE WATER

PHARMACEUTICALS IN OUR WATER CAUSE INVOLUNTARY SEX CHANGES

By Matt Bivens

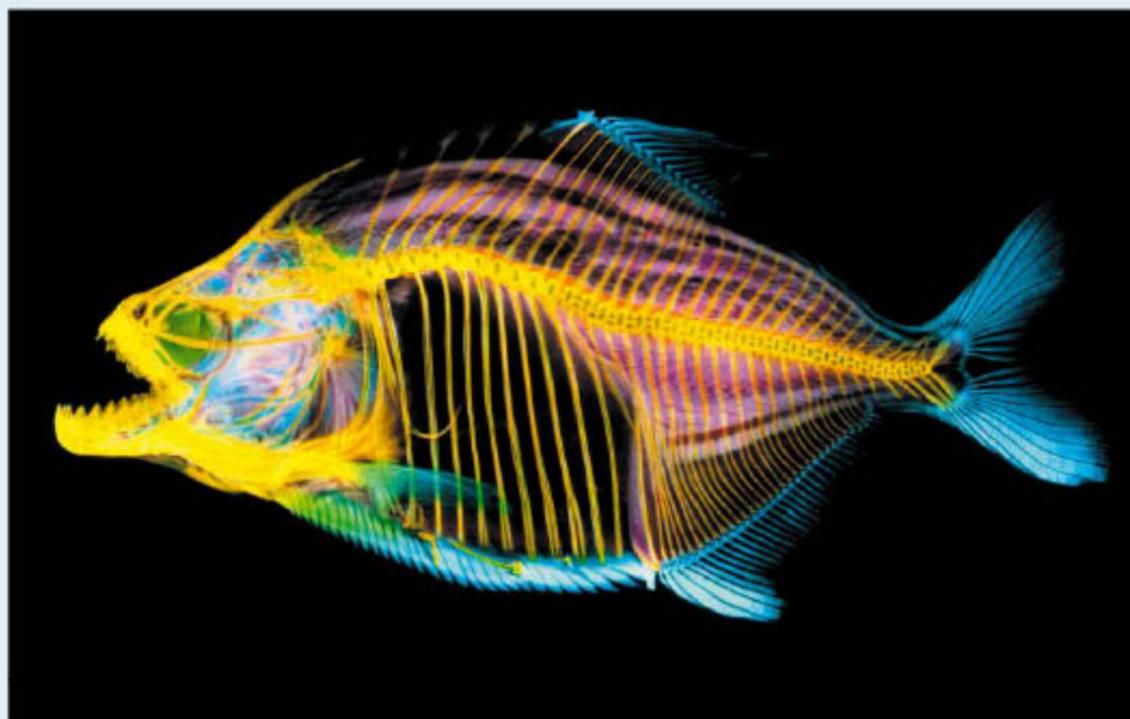
When forensic scientists want hard evidence of cocaine use, they test a suspect's urine for benzoylecgonine, a metabolite created in a user's body. European scientists recently took this to the next level. They tested for cocaine in Italy's urine. More precisely, they sampled the Po, the country's longest river. Turns out the Po is brimming with coke and its by-products—about four kilos a day flows out of locals and into its waters, representing an annual street value of about \$150 million.

Advances in chemistry now allow scientists to analyze water for the tiniest amount of chemicals, in parts per billion or even trillion. Until recently, conventional wisdom held that this was not worth doing: Even if one did find a tiny trace of a particular chemical in some lake or stream, it would be a mere curiosity. That view is eroding. In 2002 the U.S. Geological Survey released a survey of rivers and streams across America. Of the 139 water-

ways examined, 80 percent tested positive for things that shouldn't have been there: steroids, caffeine, antidepressants, painkillers, antibiotics and more. And while the concentrations are usually minuscule, laboratory work suggests that even the tiniest doses of some substances can affect aquatic life. Rebecca Klaper, a biochemist with the Great Lakes Wisconsin Aquatic Technology and Environmental Research Institute, kept minnows in aquarium water containing the tiniest trace—on the order of a part per billion—of a common cholesterol-regulating medication. "We found that the fish's movement decreased," she says. "They're normally active swimmers, but these guys were just sitting at the bottom of the tank." A control group was unaffected. Peter Fong, a biologist at Gettysburg

College, has exposed various shellfish to low doses of antidepressants. He says certain kinds of clams and mussels start spawning like mad when exposed to Prozac or Paxil. He also cites research by others that suggests a whiff of antidepressant in the water has a mellowing effect on crayfish: Males on Prozac can't be bothered to adopt dominant postures.

The real question is not what a tiny dose of cocaine does to a fish; it's what the overall effect is of constant tiny doses of medications. The search for the answer to that question is growing in urgency. The U.K. Environment Agency, the equivalent of our EPA,



recently completed a 20-year survey of Britain's waterways. A third of male fish sampled in 42 U.K. rivers were suffering an involuntary sex change: shrinking testes, ovaries growing alongside those testes, even male fish packed with eggs. Closer to home, 60 percent of male smallmouth bass examined last year from the Potomac River near Washington, D.C. had been similarly chemically castrated.

The tentative consensus in both Europe and America blames these fish feminizations on endocrine disrupters, chemicals that, however different from one another, all mess with an organism's hormonal system. Endocrine disrupters are turning up everywhere, from plastics to pesticides. Still, finding them in river water is one thing; what about tap water? In Milan, Ettore Zuccato, who

headed the team that searched the Po for cocaine, has turned up traces of pharmaceuticals in tap water. So have researchers in Germany.

But isn't our tap water cleaned—chlorinated, for example? Yes, but as noted in a study by the Southern Nevada Water Authority, chlorine doesn't remove caffeine, some common pharmaceuticals or progesterone and testosterone. So our waterways might be emasculating more than just the fish. Endocrine disrupters have been blamed for the poorly understood collapse in sperm counts across the industrialized world. This summer the British Association of

Plastic Surgeons reported that twice as many men last year sought breast-reduction surgeries as in the previous year.

Even if you don't need a mamsiere, your body is still probably laden with chemicals. A 2002 study by Mount Sinai's School of Medicine in New York found its subjects had soaked up at least 90 industrial compounds,

including many that are poisonous, carcinogenic or the cause of birth or developmental defects. Evidence of this so-called body burden of chemical invaders has also been collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recently reported on a random survey of thousands of Americans' blood and urine. The CDC findings suggest more than 90 percent of U.S. residents carry a mixture of pesticides and other pollutants in their bodies. This past summer, the Washington, D.C.-based Environmental Working Group upped the ante: It analyzed the umbilical-cord blood of 10 newborns. "The babies averaged 200 contaminants in their blood," the study reports, "including mercury, fire retardants, pesticides and the Teflon chemical PFOA."

THREE SHADES OF SEXY



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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: KANYE WEST

A candid conversation with the record of the year contender about his Katrina controversy, hip-hop homophobia and his addictions to porn and sex

"White people, this is your only chance to use the word 'nigger,'" Kanye West shouts to the Theater at Madison Square Garden crowd roaring the words to "Gold Digger," the biggest rap hit of the past year. "Take advantage of it."

That snapshot from West's recent tour sums up the wit and audacity of the 28-year-old rapper and producer. The chorus of the song—"I ain't saying she a gold digger/But she ain't messing with no broke niggers"—is not only as catchy as bird flu, it's also a provocative comment about money, race and sex. A one-man smash factory who has produced songs for Alicia Keys, Mariah Carey, Janet Jackson, Ludacris, Talib Kweli, John Legend, Common, Cam'ron and Jay-Z, West doesn't back down from any topic—or from the spotlight.

Last September, during NBC's live broadcast of a benefit concert for Hurricane Katrina victims, West burst the apolitical cue-card solemnity, denouncing the media for referring to black New Orleanians as looters and alleging that the government had been slow to respond because those in need were mostly black. His digression was full of pauses and incomplete sentences, and co-presenter Mike Myers stood by in silent panic. After Myers interjected a few lines from the Teleprompter, West distilled his argument to its pith: "George Bush doesn't care about black people." NBC

instantly cut away and excised the dangerous moment from a rebroadcast later that night on the West Coast, but the clip was kept alive on the Internet, where bloggers called West everything from a racist to a hero to a self-promoting profiteer.

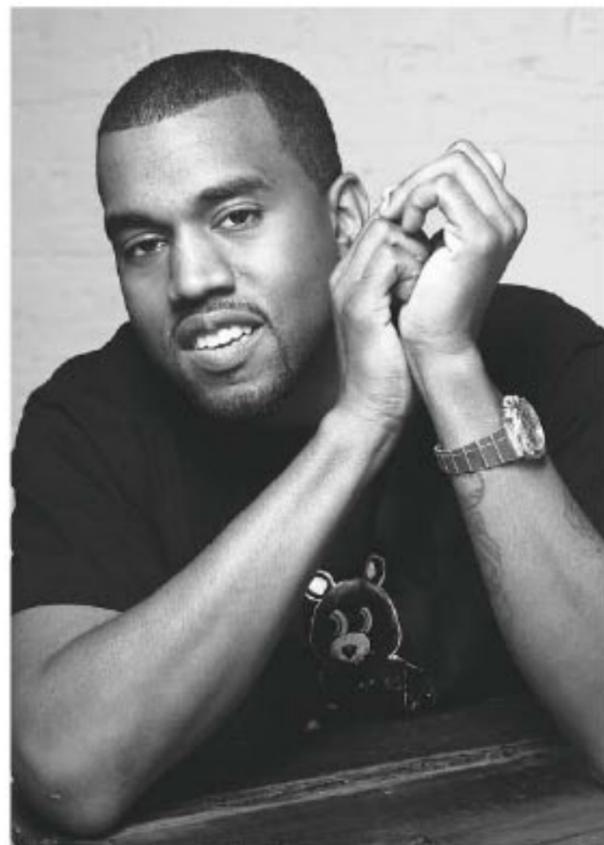
His name, pronounced KAHN-yay, means "the only one" in Swahili, and he's the lone child of Donda West, who recently retired as chair of the English department at Chicago State University, and Ray West, a photographer and former Black Panther who is now a Christian counselor. When Kanye was three, his parents split up. He was raised primarily by his doting mother, and his father has said Kanye "displayed his charisma even in day care."

*He first wrote rhymes in third grade and four years later began to make beats, the produced tracks rappers rhyme over. He won an art scholarship but dropped out of college, lived at home and continued to struggle until 2001, the year of his personal tipping point: Jay-Z picked five West tracks for his CD *The Blueprint*, including "Izzo (H.O.V.A.)," which used a Jackson 5 sample to (over)popularize the phrase "fo' shizzle my nizzle."*

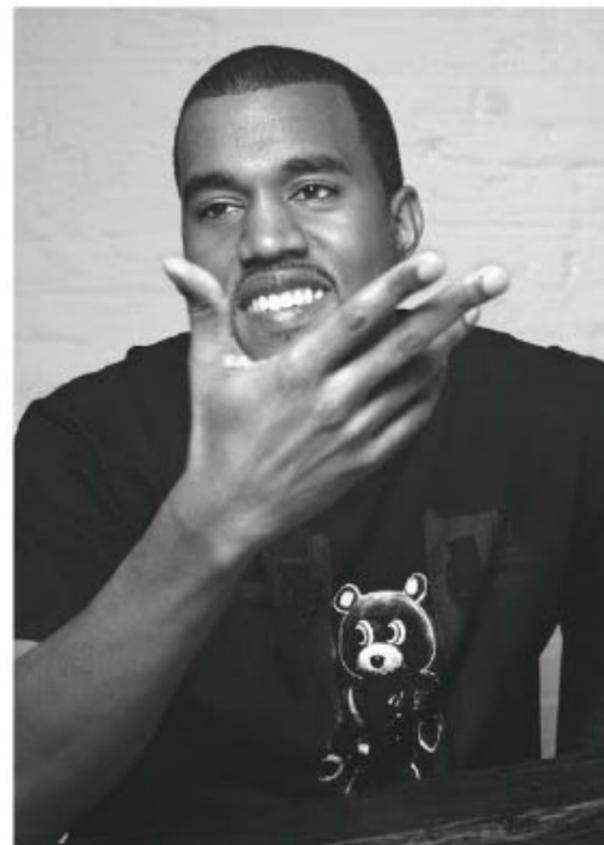
West's beats were vivid and brassy, and he helped even the dullest rappers get on the radio. But when he told Jay-Z and other decision makers at Roc-A-Fella Records that he wanted

to rap, they snickered with reverse class snobbery. West came from a comfortable background and had no firsthand knowledge of drug dealing or weaponry; he was cute, wore pastel polo shirts with the collars turned up and couldn't have been more the opposite of 50 Cent, rap's biggest star of the past few years.

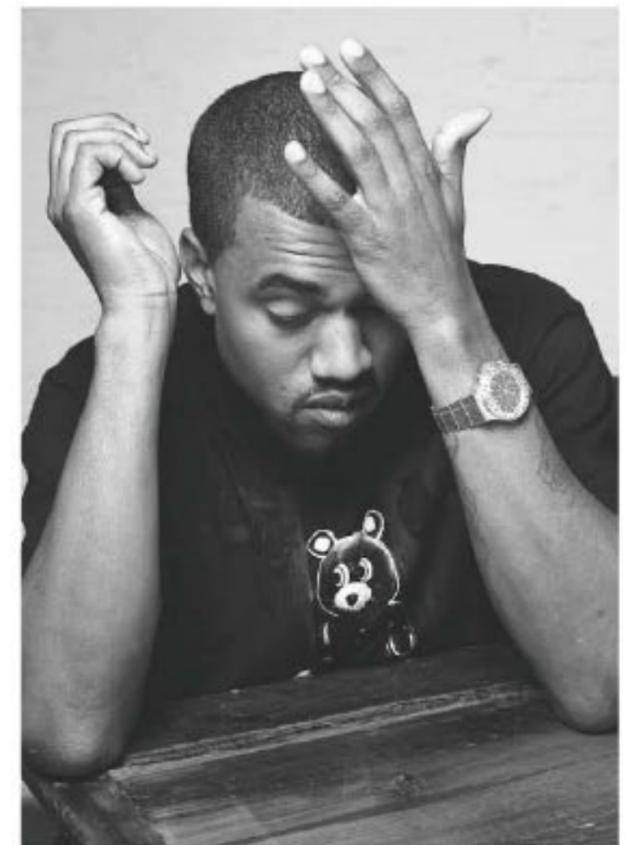
*The record label finally relented, and West began to work with his customary industriousness. Driving from a studio one night in October 2002, he fell asleep and crashed his car, fracturing his jaw. With his mouth still wired shut, he recorded "Through the Wire," one of four hit singles on his first CD, *The College Dropout*. They are songs of celebration and mourning, with comedy as the lone constant; in "Slow Jamz" he talks about using old soul records to seduce women and drops a great joke at Michael Jackson's expense. But the album has as many wise cracks as wisecracks. In "Jesus Walks," West confesses both his sins and his devotion to Jesus, and "All Falls Down" traces young blacks' appetites for expensive sneakers and gold-heavy watches to insecurity: "We all self-conscious/I'm just the first to admit it." As it turned out, there was a big market for a rapper who'd never sold drugs. The best-reviewed album of 2004, *The College Dropout* sold 3 million copies and earned 10 Grammy nominations. The*



"You know, when Marvin Gaye made 'Sexual Healing,' it was a fun song, but he really did have a problem with sex. And I think I might have a problem, a sexual addiction. I have porn on me at all times."



"'Gold Digger' is straight poetry. It uses profanity, and it's fucked-up and funny. It's so perfect and out of the park. I'd like to state this, and fuck whoever tells me I can't word it out loud: 'Gold Digger' is one of the biggest songs of our lifetime."



"I might have some cockiness. It's always a conflict: Maybe I'm more self-conscious than I am self-confident, and self-consciousness is what makes me ask 30 different people for their opinions. I overcompensate for my anxieties."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID ROSE

world suddenly gave West as much adulation as he said he deserved.

For *Late Registration*, released in August 2005, West added a co-producer, Jon Brion, a white Angeleno best known for working with Fiona Apple. No other rapper would have risked such an audacious move, and it paid off with even more raves. "There's never been hip-hop so complex and subtle musically," wrote *The Village Voice*, while *The New Yorker* claimed the album "encompasses decades of African American music." *Late Registration* broke West fully into the mainstream—from the cover of *Time* magazine to a place among Barbara Walters's 10 Most Fascinating People of 2005.

While West was on tour, PLAYBOY sent writer Rob Tannenbaum to interview him; the two began their discussion backstage at a De Kalb, Illinois concert hall, then continued it later at a Manhattan studio. Tannenbaum reports, "West's mind leaps around unpredictably, so in the course of our conversations he told me about the suede jacket he was wearing ('It's Yves Saint Laurent'), the music video he was editing with animator Bill Plympton and his 2,700-square-foot loft in SoHo, which has a 16-foot walk-in closet and a 12-foot bathroom sink.

"He says some pretty outrageous things, usually about how great he is, but it's a welcome antidote to the false modesty most stars put across. And it's clear he subscribes to the playful theory of Muhammad Ali: 'It's not bragging if you can back it up.'

"But it's also clear how seriously he takes his work. 'I really study rap,' he said, and he can keenly analyze changing trends in the arcane field of rhyming couplets. And he played at shatteringly high volume a new beat he'd written for Jay-Z, a simple, monstrous thing with a resounding cymbal. 'That beat is killing,' he said. 'Just think of that with Jay on it.' Along the way, he announced he had lured Jay-Z out of retirement. And no wonder: West really is that great. Just ask him."

PLAYBOY: Let's start with the seven words that made national headlines: "George Bush doesn't care about black people." Had you planned on saying that, or was it an ad-lib?

WEST: I've never been asked this question before, but I totally didn't plan to say it. I planned the bullet points about the media portraying black people as looters and how it took the government so long to go down there to help. Bad news is great news, and I felt like CNN, NBC and all these stations were capitalizing on the tragedy.

PLAYBOY: Describe what led to your making that statement.

WEST: Tim McGraw did a song, and it was really emotional, showing all the imagery from New Orleans. When I went up to read the Teleprompter, I just thought what was

on it wasn't heartfelt enough. They wanted me to read some random point about the levees. Mike Myers and I talked about how we had a problem with that word. He said, "I just don't want to mispronounce levees." That was his main goal when we went up there. He was already nervous, and I told him, "Yo, I might stray off the Teleprompter a little bit." I told him I was going to ad-lib. I was talking to him backstage, and I saw Chris Tucker. I remember telling Chris, "Get ready for live TV."

PLAYBOY: Did Myers say anything when you got off camera?

WEST: He shook my hand and said, "It is what it is."

PLAYBOY: What kind of greeting did you get backstage?



My mother told me to shut the fuck up—in like a nice English-professor way.

WEST: The Red Cross and the NBC execs didn't say anything to me. They acted like I wasn't even in the building. Before that, it was all VIP.

PLAYBOY: How did the day end?

WEST: At the bar, taking shots of Patrón. [laughs] You know, if you go up and hit the class bully in his face, you're like, "What am I going to do tomorrow?" I still live in a country that George Bush controls.

PLAYBOY: When NBC broadcast the telethon on the West Coast, it cut your comment about the president.

WEST: I thought that was great because it proved my point about the media. It let America know that the media still censors us and monitors us and brainwashes us. For them to chop it, everybody in Amer-

ica was like, "Oh shit, they still do that? I thought this was America." Yeah, this is America. *This is America.*

PLAYBOY: Did the reaction surprise you?

WEST: A lot of people feel that Bush doesn't care about poor people. It's a common opinion.

PLAYBOY: But you didn't say he doesn't care about poor people; you said he doesn't care about black people. There's a difference.

WEST: There just happen to be way more poor black people. If you pick at the statement, I'm sure you could find something wrong, but that was the overall feeling of America at the time.

PLAYBOY: Entertainers don't often really speak their mind, especially not on live TV.

WEST: And entertainers who would say what they're thinking wouldn't be given that opportunity on live TV. Networks are more apt to put a five-second delay on me now. They didn't really listen to "All Falls Down" and "Jesus Walks" and "Crack Music." They just heard the hooks. They didn't hear what I was saying about social issues. With my polo collars popped, they never saw me coming.

PLAYBOY: There's an element of social awareness to your music but also a party element. They probably thought they were going to get the second guy.

WEST: I bet they wouldn't have put Dave Chappelle up there. But that's who I am: I'm like the rap version of Chappelle.

PLAYBOY: What's the similarity?

WEST: He talks about serious things, but he makes you laugh to keep from crying. The humor is the honey in the medicine.

PLAYBOY: Actually Chappelle's been doing a joke about you: "I gotta give props to my man Kanye West because he said some real shit. That took a lot of bravery and a lot of strength. I'm proud of Kanye. And I'm gonna miss him so much."

WEST: [Laughs] Oh shit. That's why we were popping Patrón that night.

PLAYBOY: Laura Bush denounced your comment as disgusting, and Bill O'Reilly said it was "simply nutty" and called you a "dopey little rapper." Did any of the criticism bother you?

WEST: I didn't even know that until now. I care as much about Bill O'Reilly as I care about somebody at my show who goes to the bathroom during "Jesus Walks." I'm not going to stop the song; I'm not going to stop my show. Matter of fact, I need to never say his name again, because I'm making him too hot right now.

PLAYBOY: He does love to pick on rappers.

WEST: He can't pick on us. He picks at us.

We're like statues. He picks at pop-culture icons, which is what we rappers are right now, like modern-day royalty.

PLAYBOY: Did anything about the coverage of your comments bother you?

WEST: People kept misquoting me and using incorrect English: [*in an exaggerated dialect*] "George Bush don't be carin' 'bout no black people." And I'm like, "I didn't say that."

PLAYBOY: Has the comment hurt you in any way? It seems you got a lot of publicity from it.

WEST: I wouldn't say it was the smartest business move. At this point I'm not going to say any more things that could be harmful to me.

PLAYBOY: So we shouldn't ask for your position on the war in Iraq or Supreme Court nominees?

WEST: I'm not into politics at all. I can't even name the people in politics. That's not what I do. I've learned from this how powerful my voice is. It's like going to your bank to take out \$20 and seeing \$1 million in your account. You're like, "Oh shit, what am I gonna do with this?" Now I know my voice is powerful, and I just try to use it wisely.

PLAYBOY: During the telethon, you announced you were going to donate "the biggest amount I can give." So how much did you donate?

WEST: I would never tell you that. I called my business manager, and I was like, "Yo, what's the most I can give?" And that's what we gave.

PLAYBOY: You won't name an amount?

WEST: I'll just say it's way more than I would have made in a year if I'd gone to college and gotten my doctorate.

PLAYBOY: Before your career as a rapper, you were one of the biggest producers in hip-hop. How good a rapper are you? *The New Yorker* described you as "merely average," and *Entertainment Weekly* said you have a "clunky flow."

WEST: I'm nowhere near as good as Jay-Z, Eminem or Nas. So I compensate.

PLAYBOY: How do you compensate?

WEST: With star power, sheer energy, entertainment, videos, really good outfits and overwhelmingly, ridiculously dope tracks. Justin Timberlake isn't the best singer, but he's a true star, the entire package. The main thing I use to make up for my lack of rapping skills is my content, my subject matter.

PLAYBOY: What's an example?

WEST: I'll use words or rhymes no other rapper has used. [*raps*] "Take your diamonds and throw 'em up like you're bulimic/Yeah, the beat cold, but the flow is anemic." Damn, nobody would ever rhyme those two words together. When they come up with a hip-hop curriculum, I want my raps to be in the textbooks.

PLAYBOY: Some people say you just rap about clothes and brand names.

WEST: How could someone possibly say all I do is rap about brands, when my biggest songs don't even really mention them? If

Drop Out U

West shares the same non-alma mater with some good company



Bill Gates

Expected class: Harvard 1977. He dropped out in his second year after writing a programming language with Paul Allen. **Since:** Chairman of Microsoft and the richest man in the world, with an estimated \$51 billion. **Lesson learned:** "I realized the error of my ways and decided I could make do with a high school diploma."



Karl Rove

Expected class: Utah 1973. He left school in 1971 to work for the College Republicans. **Since:** The architect of the Bush presidency. **Lesson learned:** "As people do better, they start voting like Republicans—unless they have too much education and vote Democratic, which proves there can be too much of a good thing."



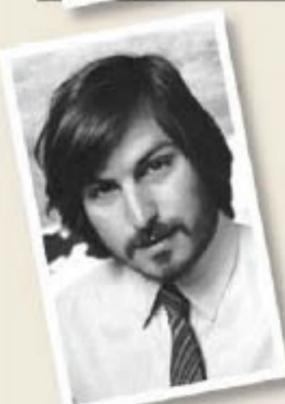
David Geffen

Expected class: Texas at Austin 1965. He dropped out in his freshman year. Later he went to work in the mail room of the William Morris Agency. **Since:** He founded Geffen Records, Geffen Film Company and co-founded DreamWorks SKG. **Lesson learned:** "I was a lousy student. At Morris I said I'd graduated because a degree was a requirement."



Ted Turner

Expected class: Brown 1960. In his fourth year Turner was asked to leave. **Since:** He founded CNN and TBS. Turner also owned the Atlanta Braves and is America's largest private landowner, with 1.8 million acres. **Lesson learned:** "I got suspended twice—the first time for having a girl in my room. And the second time, I don't remember."



Steve Jobs

Expected class: Reed College 1976. He dropped out after six months; a calligraphy class inspired the clean typography in Apple computers. **Since:** He co-founded Apple and Pixar and is worth more than \$3 billion. **Lesson learned:** "I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and how college was going to help me figure it out."



Woody Allen

Expected class: NYU 1958. He was thrown out for poor grades after one semester. **Since:** One of the most prolific and inconsistent filmmakers of all time, he started as a comedy writer. **Lesson learned:** "I was thrown out of college for cheating on the metaphysics final. I looked within the soul of the boy sitting next to me." —Rocky Rakovic



someone says that, it's blatantly stupid, and I refuse to argue with a stupid person because from a distance you can't tell who's who.

PLAYBOY: If you're trying to raise people up with your music, why use so many brand names?

WEST: I really do care about the music itself, but I also care about superficial consumer shit. I really like Atlanta strippers—like, a lot. I really like Louis Vuitton. I have multicolor trunks stacked up in my loft in New York.

PLAYBOY: Fine, you have Louis Vuitton in your apartment. But why put it in your songs?

WEST: What is it they say? "Great art is met with mediocre initial response." It's the same. If I throw some Gucci and Louis on top of a song that means something, I get your attention. And it comes from the heart. It hurt to be at the Gucci store with a girlfriend, acting like I was going to try on something, and she was busting me because I didn't have enough money for it. [raps] "Back when Gucci was the shit to rock/Back when Slick Rick got the shit to pop/I'd do anything to say I got it/Damn, them new loafers hurt my pocket." Any person who loves clothes is going to hear that and be like, "Yo, I feel him." Like when I say, "We're all self-conscious/I'm just the first to admit it," many people relate to it.

PLAYBOY: 50 Cent says you owe your success to him because people wanted a rapper who didn't wear a bulletproof jacket and have bullet scars.

WEST: There was no successful black artist who was like a regular person and also liked cars and clothes. That was my niche. On *The College Dropout*, the songs offer melody and message. That's the main goal. I saw it as a simple math project: If I can rap 70 to 80 percent as good as the beats are, I'll be successful.

PLAYBOY: Why are your songs so much more successful than other rap songs?

WEST: Choruses and hooks. That's why the Black Eyed Peas' "My Humps" is a killer. That song is just constant hooks all the way. See, people think a chorus is the only hook, but "Gold Digger" has so many hooks in it. Jamie's intro, that's a hook. The drum intro, that's a hook. "I ain't sayin' she a gold digger"; that's a hook. The entire second verse is a hook: "18 years, 18 years." That could be a chorus! "We want prenup"; that's a hook. And the white-girl line? That's why I get the big bucks. That's bottom of the ninth, bases loaded, World Series. That's gold.

PLAYBOY: At the end of "Gold Digger," you say, "When you get on, he'll leave your ass for a white girl."

WEST: It uses profanity, and it's shocking and controversial and fucked-up and funny. It's so perfect and out of the park. It touches on social anxieties and over-compensation and racial tension. Black people say, "Yeah, that does happen." At one of my concerts I saw white girls with

T-shirts that read HE'LL LEAVE YOUR ASS FOR A WHITE GIRL. Like, "Yay!" They're very happy about that line.

PLAYBOY: So the combination of hooks and provocation made "Gold Digger" one of the biggest songs of 2005?

WEST: God wanted me to have "Gold Digger." You know, I made that song for someone else; I wrote it for Shawna from Disturbing tha Peace, but she had problems clearing the sample and had to turn her album in. At the end of the day—all bullshit aside, all the shit I talk aside—God hands me these records. And Jon Brion, he was a dope-ass producer, a guy who could just sit there and check my lyrics.

PLAYBOY: Wait. You took advice about rapping from a white piano player? Most rappers would have thrown him out of the studio.

WEST: Right. And that's why so many people make inadequate music. I beg for criticism. I'll get 30 opinions on what's wrong with a song and fix all of those things. So when it comes out, you can't tell me shit. You can't learn anything from a compliment. I also had a poetry

I always wanted to make raps that could be respected in the barbershop but that an old white lady could also understand. So I'm Jadakiss meets Will Smith.

instructor. She was on *Def Poetry Jam* with me, and I was like, Yo, she is so much better than me at this. If I could apply this, I could be like a Bob Dylan, a Bob Marley, a Stevie Wonder, a Prince, a John Lennon. "Gold Digger" is straight poetry. I'd like to state this, and fuck whoever tells me I can't word it out loud: "Gold Digger" is one of the biggest songs of our lifetime. It'll be there with "In da Club" and "When Doves Cry."

PLAYBOY: Do you expect to win the Grammy for record of the year on February 8?

WEST: For all I know, I'm not going to win one Grammy this year. You know, I talked a lot of shit last year. When I got the 10 nominations for the 2005 awards, I said, "I'm the face of the Grammys." I thought that was really funny. But it was true at the end of the day. The older voters might have been like—What's my boy's name from the *L.A. Times*? Bill? Bob?

PLAYBOY: Robert Hilburn. He was the *Los Angeles Times* music critic for 35 years.

WEST: Yeah. He wrote this dope article, saying, "Grammy credibility, for the second year in a row, revolves around a single artist: Kanye West." For the 2006

awards the only people I would accept defeating me for album of the year would be System of a Down, and they didn't get nominated. I made a really good album, but how do I word this? I'm not trying to dis people, but there weren't that many really, really good albums. You know, if you're a championship team, it feels better if the series goes seven games, but this year it's a straight four-game blowout. What albums would be up against me?

PLAYBOY: If you had Grammy voters right here, what would you say to them about why you deserve album of the year?

WEST: First thing I'd say is "Don't worry about all the things I say in the media. They're just true." [laughs]

PLAYBOY: Having gone to a few of your concerts, we've noticed you have more white fans than most rappers.

WEST: I always wanted to make raps that could be respected in the barbershop but that an old white lady could also understand. So I'm Jadakiss meets Will Smith.

PLAYBOY: Does your having pop hits make it harder for some people to take your music seriously?

WEST: You know, I'm still thinking about the whole Grammy thing. Like, my mother told me I should stop talking, but I wasn't going to stop saying I should win album of the year just so I could win album of the year. I even make it harder for myself by talking so much shit. There was a TV poll asking, "Do you think West's comment on NBC will hurt his chances at the Grammys?" And people said, "No, but the way he acted at the awards show last year will hurt his chances." [laughs]

PLAYBOY: What did your mom say to you?

WEST: She told me to shut the fuck up—in like a nice English-professor way.

PLAYBOY: When your mom tells you to shut the fuck up, maybe it's time to shut the fuck up.

WEST: Put it like this: The Grammy award is great. Everybody celebrates you, you get endorsements, and everybody looks at you like, yo, this is a really quality artist. But I celebrate awards every day by talking shit, by saying I'm going to win. Think about that. I didn't win the most Grammys last year, so I would have done myself a disservice not to talk shit when I had the most nominations. That'd be like getting a fucking star in *Super Mario Bros.* and just walking at a regular pace instead of running around. When you get that star, go and kill as many mushrooms as possible.

PLAYBOY: Still, having pop hits must have drawbacks.

WEST: I want my music to be as real as possible. With the Black Eyed Peas, I feel their music is pure and honest, but I don't think it's perceived as that.

PLAYBOY: That's the second time you've said something good about the Black Eyed Peas.

WEST: I love the Black Eyed Peas!

PLAYBOY: We've always wondered what rapper would risk his reputation to defend them.

WEST: You know, I speak up about whatever I'm feeling, whether it's a common opinion or not. I think they're talented, and I argue with people about them all the time. Well, see, I didn't need to say I have to argue with people, because now they'll read this and feel a little bad about it. It's like when people come up to me in an airport and say, "Yo, man, I argue with people all the time. I try to tell them you not no bitch-ass nigga."

PLAYBOY: How do you reply to that?

WEST: I say, "Thank you, I appreciate that. Thank you for telling me you have to argue with people *all the time*." [laughs] You don't want to hear that at eight o'clock in the morning. It implies that everybody's saying bad stuff about me. They'll say, "Well, I thought you were arrogant because I read some article about you."

PLAYBOY: Why would people think you are arrogant?

WEST: Because of how the media portrays me.

PLAYBOY: Come on, Kanye. If people think you're arrogant, it's not only because of how the media portrays you. You've got some arrogance in you.

WEST: Nah, I might have some cockiness. It's always a conflict: Maybe I'm more self-conscious than I am self-confident, and self-consciousness is what makes me ask 30 different people for their opinions. I overcompensate for my anxieties.

PLAYBOY: But you even refer to yourself as "the international asshole" in one song.

WEST: That's just playing into what people believe. Like, okay, people have this perception; let's fuck with it a little bit. Here is a statement that will come off as arrogant: I almost wish I could not be me for a day, just so I could be entertained by the shit I say. [laughs] You know, that's a good beginning for a rap. It even rhymes. I need to put that in a rap.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about your background. Describe the street you grew up on.

WEST: All over the world, actually. I stayed in China an entire year when I was in fifth grade. I stayed in different places growing up in Chicago, all the way from the inner-city South Side, which was gang-populated, to the suburbs, which were gang-populated, to even further suburbs, also gang-populated. In Chicago you're not getting away from the gangs.

PLAYBOY: Were you in gangs?

WEST: No. I was always focused on something creative. It would seem like I was in my own world. I'm sure you'd say I was special.

PLAYBOY: In what way were you special?

WEST: Well, I grew up to become me.

PLAYBOY: Okay, but what was special about you at the age of 10?

WEST: I was a performer and a ham and just wanted to entertain. I would always ask questions; I was never good with "Because I told you so." And I hate when parents try to stop their kids from asking questions. Kids should ask as

many questions as possible. Whenever I'm around somebody I admire, I question them to death.

PLAYBOY: Were you funny-looking? Didn't you have braces?

WEST: Not until high school. People in my family would act like my teeth were okay, but whenever we were talking about each other, that would be the main joke. I went to a girlfriend's house, and her neighbor's sister said, "Your teeth are big and white just like horse teeth." I said, "Fuck this." When I got braces, the orthodontist had to remove eight teeth. And I've got a big mouth! So imagine how big my teeth were.

PLAYBOY: You're very close to your mother. Would it be fair to say you were a mama's boy?

WEST: Yeah, I'd say so. My dad had a lot of influence too.

PLAYBOY: He was a Black Panther, and to a lot of people that means a militant, Afrocentric separatist.

WEST: He wasn't a separatist. We lived in an all-white neighborhood. It's funny. He was like, "I don't want anybody to know I'm a Black Panther." He was a military brat, so he was raised around white people, but they didn't like him because he was black. Then he'd go around black people, and they didn't like him because he talked white. It was hard for him, and he was always looking for a home or a movement, something to be part of.

PLAYBOY: It sounds as if you had a happy childhood even though your parents divorced.

WEST: Yeah, I used that to my advantage. I'd ask Mom for something, then ask Dad for something.

PLAYBOY: Were you a spoiled only child?

WEST: I was taught a lot about morals and values. My father or stepfather would have me cutting the grass while everybody else was playing basketball. Or my mother would buy me only two pairs of shoes a year when she could afford to buy a pair of shoes every month. That made me appreciate stuff. And it made me feel a want or a need for stuff. So now when I buy clothes, I really do feel fulfilled. Like a little kid who always wanted to go to Disney World: You go to Disney World, and it's great. So Gucci is like Disney World for me.

PLAYBOY: But there must have been something bothering you as a kid, because you were a bed wetter.

WEST: Yeah, I don't want to talk about that.

PLAYBOY: Why not? You even mention it in a song.

WEST: [Silence, shakes head]

PLAYBOY: Okay, so tell us about your grandfather Portwood Williams. He was involved in the civil-rights movement in Oklahoma in 1958, which you refer to in "Never Let Me Down."

WEST: He's just a great figure in Oklahoma City. He's got monuments and

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GOOD OR
BAD THING.
DISCUSS.



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stuff. Yeah, he's the number-one stunner. He'll start off a sentence by saying, "I am the master," the same way other people would say "Hello" or "How are you?" He loves having me as a grandson. He'll be like, "Yo, my grandson is Kanye."

PLAYBOY: It's easy to see where you got your confidence.

WEST: But he's way more eloquent. People say I'm a good speaker for a rapper, but I fall short. I can't talk after Barack Obama or Oprah Winfrey. Ninety percent of the time I fall short of my goal. I want my concert to be as stunning as U2's or Michael Jackson's. People say my show is great, but I know it's not as good as that Talking Heads DVD I just saw, *Stop Making Sense*. See, I threw out that Talking Heads reference to sound like I know a lot about music.

PLAYBOY: You keep revising many of your songs until the last possible second. Isn't that a difficult way to work?

WEST: I envy people who settle for mediocrity. Right when *Late Registration* was about to come out, I was driving myself crazy. The years I'm losing off my life stressing out about a drum sound are the reason people can go to the store and purchase albums of the caliber of *Late Registration*. My pain is everyone else's pleasure. Everything I worry about is a gift I give to the world. I can't say I perfected my album, but any song that's perfect would be bad because imperfection is a quality people relate to.

PLAYBOY: Is that why you sing on your records?

WEST: Are you asking me if I sing to make my records worse? *[laughs]* Yeah. I was singing on the original version of "Heard 'Em Say," and I felt like it was making it *too* "worse." I used incorrect English on purpose—just put *worse* in quotation marks.

PLAYBOY: In "Drive Slow" you talk about being a teenage virgin. How old were you when you lost your virginity?

WEST: *[To girlfriend]* Can you please leave the room? *[she leaves]* I was 17, which is remarkably late by our standards. I think my game was wack.

PLAYBOY: So who took your virginity?

WEST: She was my girlfriend, and she had great titties, even by my standards today. She had a bit of a gut, though. I wouldn't fuck with that now. She was short, like five-foot-four, with 36Ds. And the nipples were almost the same color as the skin. I used to love those fucking titties. I'd stare at them.

PLAYBOY: Your game has gotten a lot better in the past few years. Are you taking advantage of your fame?

WEST: In between having a girlfriend, sure, but I don't really wild out. I'll show you some of my girlfriends' pictures on a website as long as you don't print the name of it. If I were to tell you, "Yo, I did this and this," it might be a little bit tasteless coming from me.

PLAYBOY: You graduated from high school in 1995, and your breakthrough was Jay-Z's *The Blueprint*, which came out in 2001. What were you doing in between those years?

WEST: I went to college for a year and a half. I worked a telemarketing job, selling insurance to people who bought stuff with a Montgomery Ward credit card. I was way better than most of the people there. I could sit around and draw pictures, basically do other shit while I was reading the Teleprompter. *[laughs]* Even back then I would stray from the Teleprompter.

PLAYBOY: You've also been producing since you were in seventh grade. Were you able to sell the tracks you made?

WEST: I was hustling beats, selling them to local drug dealers for \$200 or \$250. I had a platinum plaque when I was 19 for working on Jermaine Dupri's first album. I was making \$60,000 or \$70,000 a year by the age of 20 or 21.

PLAYBOY: But you had a lot of frustration, too. Your career stalled.

WEST: I couldn't make ends meet. You're chasing dreams, you want something so

*People say I'm a good
speaker for a rapper, but
I can't talk after Barack
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bad, you're so close to it. I remember me and Just Blaze would have beats on the same album, and six months later he'd have 20 more beats sold and I'd have one beat sold. And it hurt. Like, damn, I thought we were the same caliber. But he could buy whatever he wanted, and I wasn't sure I could pay the rent.

PLAYBOY: Even though you couldn't pay the rent, you were telling people you'd be bigger than Michael Jackson.

WEST: I didn't say that *all* the time, but I remember telling executives at Sony that.

PLAYBOY: That's awfully cocky for a guy who had nothing.

WEST: Hey, you gotta dream big. What's the point in saying, "I'm gonna be bigger than Tito Jackson"?

PLAYBOY: For a guy with that much confidence, it must have been a shock to struggle at selling your music.

WEST: I had one nervous breakdown I talk about on "Touch the Sky," when I busted out crying. My girlfriend and I were in a room together, listening to the first Lil' Kim CD, *Hard Core*. I would listen to Lil' Kim, then listen to my beat—another Lil' Kim song, then my beat. It

sounded like the same caliber to me, but I couldn't sell a fucking beat. And I just stood next to that stereo and busted out crying and shaking. I didn't have control of my body, didn't have control of my emotions. It didn't make any sense. If I could have sold even one beat, that \$7,500 would have meant so much to me. I was living in New York, 600 miles from home, and had \$300 in my bank account. You should never have less in your account than how far you are from your crib.

PLAYBOY: Once you were established as a producer, what kind of response did you get when you told people you wanted to rap, too?

WEST: So many people thought I was wack.

PLAYBOY: Well, rappers are supposed to be from the hood. You grew up middle-class in the suburbs. Jay-Z says he didn't believe in you because you weren't ghetto.

WEST: Yeah, but also my raps were trying to *be* ghetto. They didn't believe that, coming from me. I had to figure out my niche.

PLAYBOY: Can we hear one of your ghetto rhymes?

WEST: It was something like "I got the platinum chain to show you what my stacks is about/And a platinum gat to back up what I'm rapping about." It was good wordplay. Some people believed in me. They thought the shit was pretty hot. People always talk about how bad my raps were, but if you go back and listen to them, they're better than a lot of shit that's out today.

PLAYBOY: So when did people start to believe in you?

WEST: With "Slow Jamz," when you heard the line "She got a light-skinned friend look like Michael Jackson/Got a dark-skinned friend look like Michael Jackson," you all knew you were dealing with a star. That is one of the greatest punch lines in rap history.

PLAYBOY: Let's talk about your car accident. You fell asleep at the wheel when you were making *The College Dropout*.

WEST: Okay. Damn, there *is* a lot of interesting stuff that happened to me.

PLAYBOY: When you came to, what did you see in the mirror?

WEST: I saw my mouth getting bigger and bigger, like in a horror movie. My jaw was separated, and inside it was broken open. I was in the car for like 10 minutes before anybody got there, and I called my girlfriend and my mother to apologize for hurting myself. I didn't know if I was going to be able to rap again. I'd been working so hard to do this album—I already had "All Falls Down" and "Jesus Walks."

PLAYBOY: What happened when you got to the emergency room?

WEST: Man, that was a bad experience. The things they had to do to support my jaw were just hurting it worse. This one lady kept on talking to me. I said, "Why are you

(continued on page 132)

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

OCEANS LASH OUR COASTS. DESERTS BURN. THE SKY PROVIDES NO SHELTER. TURMOIL OF BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS THREATENS NOT JUST OUR WEATHER BUT LIFE ITSELF. GLOBAL WARMING IS UPON US

In the final days of 2004 the cities of the world received some astonishing news: Beginning at its northern tip, Antarctica was turning green. Antarctic hair grass (*Deschampsia antarctica*) is one of just two kinds of higher plants that occur south of the 56th degree of latitude. Hitherto it had barely eked out a living as sparse tussocks crouched behind the north face of a boulder or some other sheltered spot. Over the southern summer of 2004, however, great green swards of the stuff began to appear, forming extensive meadows in what was once the home of the blizzard.

Climate change is a breaking story. Just over 30 years ago climatologists were at loggerheads about whether the earth was warming or cooling, unable to decide whether an icehouse or a greenhouse future was on the way. By 1975, however,

THE EMISSION OF GREENHOUSE GASES...

IS CAUSING GLOBAL WARMING AT A RATE THAT BEGAN AS SIGNIFICANT, HAS BECOME ALARMING AND IS SIMPLY UNSUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG TERM. AND BY LONG TERM I DO NOT MEAN CENTURIES AHEAD. I MEAN WITHIN THE LIFETIME OF MY CHILDREN, CERTAINLY, AND POSSIBLY MY OWN. AND BY UNSUSTAINABLE I DO NOT MEAN A PHENOMENON CAUSING PROBLEMS OF ADJUSTMENT. I MEAN A CHALLENGE SO FAR-REACHING IN ITS IMPACT AND IRREVERSIBLE IN ITS DESTRUCTIVE POWER THAT IT ALTERS RADICALLY HUMAN EXISTENCE....

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW.

—U.K. PRIME MINISTER TONY BLAIR

BY TIM FLANNERY





In the shadow of an iceberg, a crabeater seal hunts for plankton off the Antarctic coast. According to the National Snow and Ice Data Center, 150 miles of Antarctic coastline have changed dramatically during the past 16 years. The most notable shift occurred in 2002 with the collapse of the Larsen B ice shelf, an area of surface ice almost the size of Rhode Island, on the eastern edge of the continent.

the first sophisticated computer models were suggesting that a doubling of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere would lead to an increase in global temperature of around five degrees Fahrenheit. Still, concern among scientists was not significant. There was even a period of optimism when some researchers believed that extra CO₂ in the atmosphere would fertilize the world's croplands and produce a bonanza for farmers. But by 1988 climate scientists had become sufficiently worried about CO₂ to establish a panel staffed with the world's leading experts to report twice each decade on the issue. Their third report, issued in 2001, sounded a note of sober alarm, yet many governments and industry leaders were slow to take an interest. Even today the general public is unaware of the increasing number of danger signs that are harbingers of the monumental changes looming in our planet's near future.

What follows is a concise survey of just some of these monumental changes: the melting of ice near the poles, which has the potential to disrupt aquatic food chains and lead to the extinction of polar bears, penguins, seals and whales; an elevation of temperatures in other regions, which could lead to the extinction of perhaps half the species of animal life; and an increase in ocean temperatures, which will bring greater rainfall and flooding to some regions and an increase in the number and ferocity of hurricanes in others. These changes will cause loss of life, an impoverishment of our natural heritage, economic disruption and social disorder. New Orleans after Katrina will be just the start.

DISAPPEARING ICE

It's hard to imagine anything more emblematic of the transformations occurring at the ends of our earth than the greening of Antarctica. Climate change is occurring now at the poles at twice the rate seen anywhere else. Yet terrestrial

changes pale into insignificance when compared with those occurring at sea, for the sea ice is disappearing.

The subantarctic seas are some of the richest on earth, and there is a genuine paradox here because that richness exists despite an almost total absence of the nutrient iron. The presence of sea ice somehow compensates for this. The semifrozen edge between the saltwater and floating ice promotes remarkable growth of the microscopic plankton that is the base of the food chain. Despite months of winter darkness, plankton thrives under the ice, allowing the krill that feed on it to complete their seven-year life cycle. And wherever krill are in abundance, penguins, seals and great whales are likely to be present. Indeed, so miraculous is the influence of sea ice on plankton—and therefore on krill and the creatures they feed—that there is almost as much difference between the ice-covered and ice-free portions of the Southern Ocean as there is between the sea and the near-sterile Antarctic continent itself.

Angus Atkinson of the British Antarctic Survey is deeply interested in the relationship between plankton, krill and the mammals that feed on them. Atkinson and his colleagues examined records of krill catches from the research vessels of eight countries working in the southwest Atlantic sector of the Southern Ocean. This is the true home of the krill; more than half their total southern hemisphere population resides here. Atkinson and his colleagues found a significant decline in krill numbers since the late 1970s, at a rate of nearly 40 percent a decade. As Atkinson and his colleagues tell us, "This is not a localized, short-term effect; it relates to around 50 percent of the [krill] stock, and the data span 1926 to 2003."

Year-to-year population appeared to fluctuate with the extent of sea ice the previous winter; extensive sea ice meant plenty of winter food for the krill. Research reveals that the extent of sea ice was stable from 1840 to 1950 but has sharply decreased to such an extent that the northern boundary of the ice has shifted southward, from latitude 59.3 degrees south to 60.8 degrees south. This corresponds to a 20 percent decrease in sea ice extent. The reduction in krill numbers, plus the link between krill abundance and winter sea ice cover, suggests that climate change is threatening the world's most enigmatic ocean and the unique creatures that exist and feed there.

Already there are signs that some Antarctic fauna are feeling the pinch. The emperor penguin population is half what it was 30 years ago, while the number of Adélie penguins has declined by 70 percent. Such studies suggest that in the near future a point will be reached at which one krill-dependant species after another will be unable to feed. The humpbacks that traverse the world's oceans likewise will no longer be able to fill their capacious bellies nor will the innumerable seals and penguins that cavort in southern seas. Instead we'll have an ocean full of jellylike salps (a nutrient-poor species thriving in the wake of disappearing plankton), the ultimate inheritors of a defrosting cryosphere.

THE LAST OF THE POLAR BEARS

The Arctic is a region that is almost a mirror image of the south, for while the Antarctic is a frozen continent surrounded by an immensely rich ocean, the Arctic is a frozen ocean almost entirely surrounded by land. It's also home to 4 million people, which means it is better studied. Most of the Arctic's inhabitants live on its fringe, and there, in places such as southern Alaska, winters are 4°F to 5°F warmer than they were just 30 years ago.



A light-blue plankton bloom appears in the southern Atlantic (above). The size of the plankton population is linked to the amount of sea ice in the Southern Ocean. As plankton declines, so does the quantity of the nutrient-rich krill (bottom) that feed on it, a trend that threatens krill-dependent species such as penguins, seals and whales. Meanwhile the ice cap at the north pole has been receding rapidly. Below, satellite images from 1979 and 2003.





Fossil-fuel-fired power plants release CO₂ into the atmosphere (above). As CO₂ increases, so does the amount of moisture in the air, which then traps radiant heat. This phenomenon is only partially offset by the cooling effect of sunlight-reflecting cumulus clouds.

If anything symbolizes the Arctic, it is surely *nanuk*, the great white bear. He is a wanderer, a hunter and a fair match for man in the white infinity of his polar world. Every inch of the Arctic lies within his grasp: *Nanuk* has been sighted 1.2 miles up on the Greenland ice cap; he has been found denning at the bottom of the Hudson Bay, at a latitude of just 53 degrees north, and purposefully striding the ice within 100 miles of the true pole itself. "I used to think the land would stop them," remarked Canadian polar bear biologist Ray Schweinsburg, "but I think they can cross any terrain. The only thing that stops them is a place where there is no food." And for polar bears, having sufficient food to live means having lots of sea ice.

Polar bears, it's true, will deign to catch lemmings or scavenge dead birds if the opportunity presents itself, but sea ice and *netsik*, the ringed seal that lives and breeds there, are at the core of the creature's economy.

The plight of the harp seals (*Pagophili groenlandici*) living in the Gulf of St. Lawrence gives us a clear idea of the shape of things to come. Like the ringed seal, the harp seal can raise no pups when little or no sea ice is present—which happened in 1967, 1981, 2000, 2001 and 2002. The run of pupless years that opened this century is worrying. When the run of ice-free years exceeds the reproductive life of a female ringed seal—perhaps a dozen years at most—the Gulf of St. Lawrence population, which is genetically separate from the rest of the species, will become extinct. Ringed, ribbon and bearded seals also give birth and nurse

on the sea ice. Even the mighty walrus lives under the spell of the frozen sea, for the highly productive ice edge is its prime habitat.

The great bears are slowly starving as each winter becomes warmer than the one before. A long-term study of 1,200 bears living in the south of their range around the Hudson Bay reveals that they are already 15 percent skinnier on average than they were a few decades ago. The feeding season has become too short for the bears to find enough food, and 15 percent is a lot of body fat to lose before hibernation. With each year, starving females give birth to fewer cubs. Some decades ago triplets were common; they are now unheard of. And back then around half the cubs were weaned and feeding themselves at 18 months; today the number is fewer than one in 20. Even females that successfully give birth face dangers unknown in times past. Increasing winter rains in some areas may collapse birthing dens, killing the mother and cubs sleeping within, and the early breakup of the ice can separate denning and feeding areas. When young cubs cannot swim the distances required to find food, they will simply starve to death.

As Schweinsburg says, the only thing that stops *nanuk* is a place where there is no food. And in creating an Arctic with dwindling sea ice, we are creating a monotony of open water and dry land where, for *nanuk* at least, there is no food. Without a thick fall of snow, he has nowhere to make his winter den, and without ice, snow and *nanuk*, what will it mean to be Inuit—the people who named him and who understand him like no other? When *nanuk* is fit and well fed he will strip the blubber from a fat seal, leaving the rest to a retinue of camp followers including the arctic fox, the raven, and the ivory and glaucous Thayer's gulls. At certain times and places many of these creatures depend on *nanuk*, for there is no other giver of bounty in this forbidding land. As the Arctic fills with hungry white bears, what will become of these lesser creatures? Some, such as the ivory gull and little auk, also depend on sea ice. Indeed the ivory gull has already declined by 90 percent in Canada in the past 20 years and will not see out the century if that rate continues. It looks as if the loss of *nanuk* may mark the beginning of the collapse of the entire Arctic ecosystem.

If nothing is done to limit greenhouse gas emissions, it seems certain that sometime this century a day will dawn when no summer ice will be seen in the Arctic—just a vast, dark, turbulent sea. My guess is that the world will not have to wait even that long to be done with *nanuk*, for before the last ice melts, the bears will (continued on page 68)



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"Care to take a ride...?"



WILLA FORD

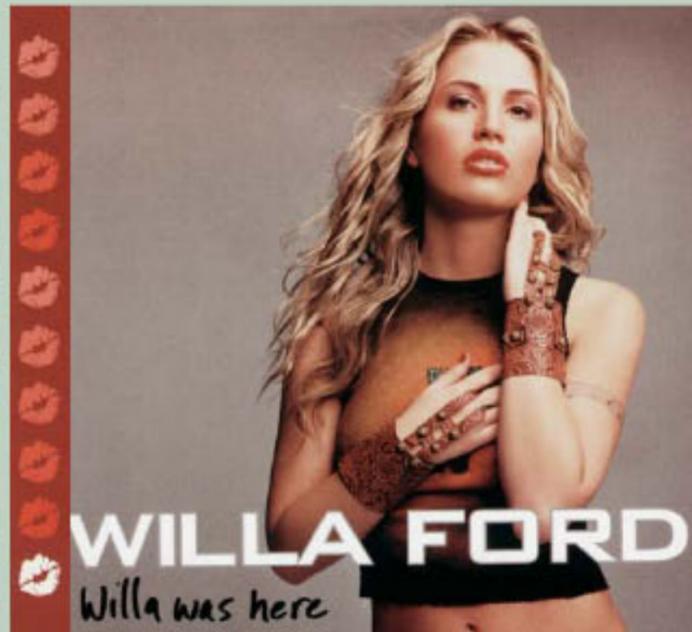
LOOKS
AS GOOD
AS SHE SOUNDS



by Dave Itzkoff

So how did you spend your Super Bowl halftime? Were you watching the Rolling Stones through your fingers, hoping with all your might that this year's spectacle wouldn't end in another wardrobe malfunction? Or were you glued to the sight of Willa Ford and her beautiful friends playing full-contact football in their panties? In case you foolishly fumbled the chance to witness the unmistakably buff 25-year-old playing quarterback in the annual pay-per-view celebration known as *Lingerie Bowl*, we'll let Willa herself let you know how to recognize her more easily in future contests. "A lot of the other girls go out there to smile and be cute," she says. "I'm always the one with war paint on."

Feats of athleticism come naturally to the intensely driven, no-holds-barred Florida native. A lifelong tomboy and an amateur boxer to boot, Willa hosted the first season of *The Ultimate Fighter*, a reality-TV competition in which amateurs compete for a contract with the Ultimate Fighting Championship. She considers herself the first female UFC personality sufficiently qualified to analyze the bloody battles of the Octagon for devoted home viewers. "In the past they'd hired Lisa Dergan and Carmen Electra, and the fans basically chewed them up and spit them out," she says. "I live and breathe the sport, so I know what I'm talking about." Growing up in the rural town of Ruskin, near Tampa, Willa came of age playing softball and riding go-karts, but at the age of 11 she was recruited into the same Florida teen-pop farm system that would also yield Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and Mandy Moore. By the time she was 20, Willa had already racked up an album, *Willa Was Here*, a hit debut single, (text concluded on page 131)



From left: Talk about a talented lineup (clockwise from left)—Willa Ford, Jenny McCarthy, Amber Smith and Adrienne Curry at the *Lingerie Bowl III* press conference. Willa's album, *Willa Was Here*. "I had so much more fun taking my clothes off for PLAYBOY than I ever had sitting in a studio writing a song," she says. Willa with Ultimate Fighting Championship president Dana White and Willa's sometime boyfriend, Chuck "the Iceman" Liddell.









See more of Willa at cyber.playboy.com.

BAD WEATHER (continued from page 60)

In a few decades' time there will be no glaciers left in America's Glacier National Park.

have lost their constellation of den sites, feeding grounds and migration corridors, without which they cannot breed. Perhaps a cohort of elderly bears will linger on, each year becoming thinner than they were the previous. Or perhaps a dreadful summer will arrive when the denning seals are nowhere to be found. A few ingenious hunters may eke out a living on a diet of lemming, carrion and sea-caught seals, but they'll be so thin that they will not wake from winter's sleep.

GLACIAL MELT

The changes we're witnessing at the poles are of the runaway type, meaning that unless greenhouse gases can be limited—and quickly—there will be no winners among the fauna and flora unique to the region. Instead we should expect that the realm of the polar bear, narwhal and walrus will simply be replaced by the largest habitat on earth—the great temperate forests of the taiga and the cold, ice-free oceans of the north. In areas where forest does not take over, increasing temperatures (and thus increasing evaporation) will give rise to polar deserts, for surprisingly large areas of the Arctic receive very little precipitation.

All that remains of the great northern hemisphere ice caps today is the Greenland ice sheet, the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean and a few continental glaciers, and some signs suggest these 8,000-year-old remnants are beginning to melt away. Alaska's spectacular Columbia Glacier has retreated 7.5 miles in the past 20 years, and in a few decades' time there will be no glaciers left in America's Glacier National Park. In summer 2002 the Greenland ice cap, along with the Arctic ice cap, shrank by more than 386,000 square miles, the largest decrease ever recorded. Two years later it was discovered that Greenland's glaciers were melting 10 times faster than previously thought.

The greatest extent of ice in the northern hemisphere is the sea ice covering the polar sea, and since 1979 its extent in summer has contracted by 20 percent. Furthermore the remaining ice has greatly thinned. Measurements taken using submarines reveal that it is only 60 percent as thick as it was four decades earlier. This prodigious melting, however, does not result in rising seas any more than a melting ice cube raises the level of liquid in a glass of scotch.

Although the melting of the sea ice has no direct effect on sea levels, its indirect effects are important. At its current rate of decline, little if any of the Arctic ice cap will be left by the end of this century, and this will significantly change the earth's albedo, the rate at which it reflects light. One third of the sun's rays falling on earth are reflected back to space. Ice, particularly at the poles, is responsible for much of that albedo, for ice reflects into space up to 90 percent of the sunlight hitting it. Water, in contrast, is a poor reflector. When the sun is overhead, water reflects a mere five to 10 percent of light back to space, though as you may have noticed while watching a sunset by the sea, the amount increases as the sun approaches the horizon. Replacing Arctic ice with a dark ocean will result in a lot more of the sun's rays being absorbed at the earth's surface and reradiated as heat, creating local warming that, in a classic example of a positive feedback loop, will hasten the melting of the remaining continental ice.

PEOPLE IN GREENHOUSES

If you want a visceral understanding of how greenhouse gases work, visit New York City in August. It's a time of year when the heat and humidity leave those who still trudge the streets in a lather. Trapped in a crowded, built-up environment of concrete, hard edges, parched asphalt and sticky human bodies, the heat feels so unhealthful that it is almost insupportable. And the worst of it comes at night, when humidity and a thick layer of clouds lock in the heat.

Suddenly you'll long to be in a dry, clear desert where no matter how hot the day, the clear skies at night bring blessed relief. The difference between a desert and New York City at night is a single greenhouse gas, the most powerful of them all: water vapor.

It's testimony to human ignorance that as recently as 30 years ago, less than half the greenhouse gases had been identified and scientists were still divided about whether the earth was warming or cooling. Yet without these gas molecules our planet would be dead cold, a frigid sphere with an average surface temperature of -4°F . But we *have* known for some time that these gases have been accumulating. Scientists now recognize the indisputable fact that since 1950 the temperature of the earth has increased by 1°F , and it will continue to rise.

Carbon dioxide is the most abundant of the "trace" greenhouse gases, and it's produced whenever we burn something or when things decompose. In the 1950s a climatologist named Charles Keeling climbed Mauna Loa in Hawaii to record CO_2 concentrations in the atmosphere. From this study he created a graph known as the Keeling curve, which is one of the most wonderful things I've ever seen. In it you can see our planet breathing. During every northern spring, as the sprouting greenery extracts CO_2 from our atmosphere, the great aerial ocean, our earth begins a massive inspiration, which is recorded on Keeling's graph as a fall in CO_2 concentration. Then in the northern autumn, as decomposition generates CO_2 , there is an exhalation that enriches the air with the gas. But Keeling's work revealed another trend. He discovered that each exhalation left a little more CO_2 in the atmosphere than the one before. This innocent perkiness in the Keeling curve was the first definitive sign that the great aerial ocean might prove to be the Achilles' heel of our fossil-fuel-addicted civilization. Looking back I see that graph as the *Silent Spring*—the best-selling book that helped kick-start the grassroots environmental movement—of climate change. One need do nothing more than trace the graph's trajectory forward in time to realize that the 21st century would see a doubling of CO_2 in the atmosphere, from the three atoms per 10,000 that existed in the early 20th century to six. And that increase has the potential to heat our planet by around 5°F and perhaps by as much as 11°F .

When scientists first realized that levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere were linked to climate change, some were puzzled. They knew that CO_2 absorbs radiation only at wavelengths longer than about 12 microns (a human hair is around 70 microns thick) and that a small amount of the gas captured all the radiation available at those bandwidths. In experiments, increasing its concentration seemed to cause no real difference in the amount of heat trapped. Besides, there was so little of the gas it seemed inconceivable that CO_2 could change the climate of the entire planet. What scientists did not commonly realize then is that at very low temperatures—such as those found over the poles and high in the atmosphere—more heat travels at the bandwidths where CO_2 is most effective. Most important, they discovered that rather than being the sole agent responsible for climate change, CO_2 acts as a trigger for that potent greenhouse gas, water vapor. It does this

(continued on page 134)



"Could you call back? I can't seem to locate her right now."



2005 PLAYBOY
MUSIC AWARDS

READERS, YOU HAVE VOTED. NOW IT'S TIME TO REVEAL YOUR CHOICES. WE'VE ENSHRINED YOUR FAVORITES HERE, BUT BEFORE WE GET TO THAT, WE THOUGHT WE'D CONSIDER THE YEAR OF MUSIC GONE BY. WELCOME RETURNS, EXCITING DEBUTS, CHAOTIC SHIFTS IN TECHNOLOGY—THE SHIT WAS B-A-N-A-N-A-S IN 2005

Music in 2005 reached a new nadir with the devastation of the Crescent City music scene and the astonishingly dumb decision by Sony BMG to implant its XCP antipiracy software on consumers' computers. But despite the techno hype—the chatter about spyware, the potential for ring tones to eclipse “real” music, the thrill of telephones that play music and iPods that play video—2005 was in many ways a year of familiar old faces. As music videos started to move through the iTunes store, many top sellers were friendly classics. Madonna and Mariah Carey made near-miraculous returns to form, both blazing back onto the dance floor and avoiding the soft sound that had made them strictly chick music for the past few years. Gwen Stefani—fast becoming a latter-day Madonna, able to jump between genres and engage men and women alike—provided a playground chant for us all, creating a pleasingly nostalgic feeling of togetherness (“B-A-N-A-N-A-S!”) even as the music market continued to splinter into millions of auto-

nomous earbud-wearing podcasters of one. Foo Fighters, Coldplay, the White Stripes, the Rolling Stones, Franz Ferdinand and Beck all released new albums, all pretty good. That was a relief, given the way these follow-ups dominated the year in rock. EMI shareholders could breathe a sigh of relief too, since in addition to Coldplay's successful return, Gorillaz also managed a spectacular sophomore album, offering a multicultural mélange of electronics, hip-hop and indie rock able to bring wary listeners to electronica by transforming it into eclectica. In hip-hop, things weren't much different, with Kanye West's second album standing like a colossus over all else. Fear not, early adopters; some new trends had turntables spinning. Biggest of all was the emergence of Houston as a hip-hop hot spot, its slow beats turning the tide against frenetic crunk. There were signs of a revival in Nashville. And the readers' poll favorite in the best breakout artist category, My Chemical Romance, proves that new rock remains a vital part of the musical spectrum.

A COUNTRY-FRIED CROONOGRAPHY



MAINSTREAM COUNTRY RADIO HAS BLED THE LIFE OUT OF THE GENRE, AND HAYSEED DIVAS DOMINATED THE GRAMMY NOMINATIONS AGAIN. BUT IF YOU GET OFF THE DIAL, OLD-TIMERS AND UPSTARTS ARE SPARKING A REVOLT OF THE RED-BLOODED MALE

Country radio, long the bastion of beer-swilling roughnecks, is now marketed to women between the ages of 35 and 54. Instead of Waylon and Willie, you get Stepford divas like Martina McBride, Faith Hill and Trisha Yearwood, who embody what a listener dreams she can be in her less flustered moments. Of course country music didn't always target women. The shift



TOBY KEITH

began in 1996 when the government increased the number of radio stations a company could own in a market. Broadcasters aimed to maximize their ad revenue by delivering sharply focused audiences to advertisers. Stations once awash in testosterone were emasculated as country radio sought neutered Ken-doll heartthrobs. Take Keith Urban: He's a mind-bending guitarist, but in today's mainstream country world he's noted primarily for his hair. These days, if you sell laundry detergent, diet plans or mac and cheese, country radio is the place to advertise. Jason Aldean's rebel yell is about as rough-edged as tea and biscuits. Even Montgomery Gentry—on the surface a pair of rockers—sounds distressingly like a boy band. What self-respecting man would have that in his pickup? There are some whose music walks the line between XX and XY: Texas gentleman George Strait, traditionalist Alan Jackson, good-time beach bum

Kenny Chesney, clever picker Brad Paisley (who lobs the occasional classic, such as "Whiskey Lullaby"), wild-eyed Tim McGraw and wizened icons like Merle Haggard. You may even hear Toby Keith on the radio, hoisting his fist-first patriotism like a cold beer. Get off the dial, though, and there's plenty of reason to believe in the power of whiskey and neon. Look only to Shooter Jennings, Waylon's son, to find the flicker of the outlaw pilot light. Ragged in all the right places, with a slightly nasal bray, Shooter fronts while the backbeat thumps. Or Cross Canadian Ragweed, the outsider country equivalent of a jam band. Trace Adkins takes construction-site humor and laces it with blue-collar testimonials. And the established names who have jettisoned the radio game—like Dwight Yoakam, whose *Blame the Vain* is a retro romp so jagged it verges on punk—are making some of the most vital, authentic music of their careers.



KENNY CHESNEY



BRAD PAISLEY

THICK, SLOW BEATS BUBBLE IN OILTOWN



MIKE JONES

Houston is hip-hop's newest boomtown. With local heroes Mike Jones, Paul Wall and Slim Thug catapulting to gold and platinum success in 2005, Houston grabbed the spotlight from Atlanta, the Dirty South's previous hot spot. But the city is no Johnny-come-lately to the hip-hop landscape. "Man, Houston's always been hot," says Jones. "It just took some time for y'all to notice us." The third coast got its start more than a decade ago. In 1991 the Geto Boys scored a hit with "Mind Playing Tricks

ONE CITY WAXES AND ANOTHER WANES AS THE NEW CENTER OF HIP-HOP INTRODUCES A TWISTED SOUND—AND COMPANION COCKTAIL—TO THE WORLD

on Me." Though they became superstars in their hometown and one member, Scarface, went on to have a string of regional hits, they failed to get traction at the national level with subsequent releases. Houston's rap honor roll also includes the duo UGK—short for Underground Kingz—made up of Bernard "Bun B" Freeman and Chad "Pimp C" Butler. UGK highlighted Houston's unique culture: candy-painted cars, iced-out grilles and, perhaps most important of all, drinking what's referred to there as sizzurp, or lean, a cocktail of alcohol, soda and codeine-infused cough syrup. These are still the staples of Houston rhymes. "I'm glad the things that me and Pimp C rapped about back in the day are the same things the new H-Town generation is talking about," Bun B says. Houston's signature sip has influenced its signature sound—the superslow, reverb-heavy productions known as chopped and screwed. These days this sound is so popular that artists like Ying Yang Twins release entire chopped-and-screwed versions of their hit albums.

No wonder the most influential Houston rap icon is the late Robert Earl Davis Jr., known as DJ Screw. To make tracks more conducive to sipping syrup, DJ Screw would slow down records with the turntable's pitch control. "Without DJ Screw there's no such thing as chopped and screwed," says Aztek, a rising Houston MC signed to Jay-Z's Roc La Familia label. "As Houston rappers, we have to pay homage to Screw." DJ Screw's influence is huge for another reason, too. His entrepreneurial streak created a strong do-it-yourself ethic in the Houston underground. He sold tens of thousands of records from his car and later through a storefront headquarters. "Mix tapes got us going," reports Jones. "I sold three underground albums before I ever came out on a major

label." Venturing into business deals is part of the package now. Paul Wall is part owner of a jewelry store specializing in custom diamond grilles, Lil' Flip markets his own liquor, and Jones has started his own Ice Age record label. Screw would be proud.



PAUL WALL



THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM	DISTRIBUTING LABEL
1	1	#1 10 WKS "SHE SHALL ANNEX MY HEART TONIGHT"	KAISER WILHELM	HUNK OF JUNKER	DEAD DESPOT RECORDS
2	-	HOT ENTRY! "B.O. (FUNKY DRUMMER)"	SMELLY	HOOBASTINKONIA	DIRTY SMELLY SOUTH RECORDINGS
3	4	"(GONNA STICK MY) BOZAK IN YA CABOOSE"	SIR BUST-A-NUT	AIRTIGHT LOVE JAMS, VOL. 1: I'LL BE GENTLE	SACK-O-NUTS RECORDS
4	13	"PLEA BARGAIN"	DEATH CITY MURDERERS	TOUR CANCELED	ROAD CREW RECORDS
5	8	"MI RANA LOCA"	TRES CAJONES	ESPAÑOL DE HIGH SCHOOL A CLEVELAND	CROSSOVER RECORDINGS
6	19	BIG MOVER "SICK OF HAVING MONEY"	THE WANKS	ENDLESS SLUMMER	INDIE CRED/SONY
7	-	"I SAY I SAY"	ENGLISH FOPS	FOPPERY	ME WOT?/BACKLASH ENTERTAINMENT
8	5	"STILL SUCKING"	NSYNC	GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS	JIVE
9	7	"HOW THE JEWS MADE EASTER"	WHITE SABBATH	REVERENCE	AGENDA RECORDS
10	10	"TRANSPARENT AIRPLANE FLAG (BUGS)"	CREOSOTE	USED TO BE ALT-COUNTRY	NOW ARTY
11	14	"HEY HEY, WE'RE THE PUNKEES"	BACKSTREET 01'S	THE PASSION OF BOZAK AND LUKE DUKE	TEEN ANGST INC.
12	-	"PRETTY HAPPY CRY KITTY"	SUSHI GIRLS	HELLO AMERICA MAN, NOW!!	ASIAN FETISH
13	12	"TOUCH IT"	MICHAEL JACKSON & THE VIENNA BOYS' CHOIR	DIFFERENT LAWS OVER THERE	FOUND INNOCENT RECORDS
14	-	"MARRIAGE IS BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN"	CODY DON DONNIE	IF INTOLERANCE IS WRONG... HOLIER THAN YOU	
15	-	"T.H.E.M.E. FROM JAILBAIT SISTA"	JAILBAIT SISTA	JUST LOOK AT MY ASS	EYE CANDY UNTALENTED
16	16	"BEEF MI BEEF PATTY"	BIG DADDY BEEF PATTY	I LOVE BEEF PATTY	BEEF PATTY/ISLAND
17	9	"FRUITY GOSPEL NOODLING (RADIO EDIT)"	DJ MBA	MUSIC TO SELL CARS WITH	BOZAKS ON WAX
18	2	NOT GOOD "WE AIN'T POLES"	DYZLEKSKI	MIZZPELLED ON PURPOSE	GENIUS/NOT REALLY
19	18	"HELP ME OUT, YOUNGSTER"	GRAHAM NASH & FRED DURST	MADE SOME BAD INVESTMENTS, NEED CASH	SANTANA INC.
20	-	"SHAKE YOUR BREASTS (NOW CAN I SEE YOUR NIPPLES?)"	MC OBVIOUS	IN IT FOR THE GROUPIES	INTERSCOPE

NEW ORLEANS SEEKS TO RE-ROOT ITS MUSICAL TRADITION

BY ROBERT GORDON

The woman's placard was drawn by hand: PICKLED PIG LIPS 60 CENTS. The jar was large and less than half full of brine covering a mess of—having never seen them detached from the animal before, I took a while to discern their shape—yes, pig lips. I was in one of New Orleans's impoverished neighborhoods, in front of a screen door leading to the H&R Bar—a small room with a concrete floor, where Thunderbird is the house wine. Until I approached the woman at the folding table outside, I'd never known you could eat pig lips.

Much of New Orleans's most famous culture began as a creative solution amid poverty. Jambalaya, an oft-imitated fish-and-meat stew served in elegant restaurants around the world, was originally made from scraps. Red beans and rice is traditionally served on Mondays because that was all that could be found when the pantry was scraped after the weekend. The dregs have been made a delicacy.

That goes for the city's music, too. The beating of the drums in Congo Square began a few decades after the Declaration of Independence was signed, not long after the Louisiana Purchase. The defiant rhythms of the city thickened like a roux. Blacks, enslaved and freed alike, established a market of their own, commingling with Choctaw, Creoles and locals of distant origin. In 1819 a European observed them "ornamented with a number of tails of the smaller wild beasts, with fringes, ribbons, little bells, and shells and balls, jingling and flirting about the performers' legs and arms." And so it goes: The martial music of French



LOUIS ARMSTRONG

where cities shouldn't be—where there's not enough and too much water. Defying mother nature, they are refuges for extremes of human nature. A nation needs a place where its people can retreat, repair, release or review, a place of indulgence and tolerance—and the glitz of Vegas doesn't suit everyone.

New Orleans, the "inevitable city on an impossible site," according to geographer Peirce Lewis, approaches its tercentennial as a testament to human ingenuity. Until recently the levees have held back the inexorable sea, creating a tenuous fortress of independence. Just a few hairs below the Bible Belt, the Crescent City is brazen, the freedom in Louis Armstrong's clarion call drawing people who seemed out of place elsewhere. Staunchly Roman Catholic in a sea of Southern Baptists, it's a city that celebrates naked public dancing and that embraced homosexuality long before other places even tolerated it. Suspended disbelief is the city's sine qua non: Just before the St. Charles Avenue streetcar begins its run along the miles of genteel and breathtaking Victorian homes uptown and in the Garden District, just where it rounds a bend in front



THE SOUND OF SILENCE: KATRINA ALSO DEVASTATED THE NEW ORLEANS MUSIC SCENE.

brass bands blends with the syncopation of Africans in America (plus a few Spanish trills). Buddy Bolden blows the cornet; the beat starts to swing.

Little Richard came to New Orleans to express the whop bop in his soul. The city produced Allen Toussaint, Fats Domino, Dr. John, the Neville Brothers, the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Master P—there's no point in making a list. We'd have modern music without New Orleans, but it wouldn't beat as we know it.

What do Las Vegas and New Orleans have in common? America's two sin cities are built

of the Camellia Grill (I've yet to have a better pecan waffle anywhere), the cars rumble within feet of the grassy wall that holds back the mighty Mississippi River. Self-preservation makes us think, Water can't be on the other side of that stack of dirt. But we know it is.

Music in New Orleans has cooked slowly, over centuries. And as the simmering resumes, the flavors are already changing. African Americans, long the backbone for manual labor, could never afford to leave the city. For some, Katrina has been a ticket out, an opportunity; for others, (concluded on page 128)



GIVIN IT UP

ROCK STARS WERE VIRGINS ONCE TOO! TRUE STORIES OF LOVE, LOSS AND PARADISE BY THE DASHBOARD LIGHT

BONING, BALLING, BONKING. THE FIRST TIME IS A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE. TO PROVE IT WE TRACKED DOWN A RANGE OF MUSIC PERSONALITIES TO ASK THEM ABOUT THEIR FIRST TIME AND WHAT THEY WERE LISTENING TO. WHETHER IT WAS WITH A COED, IN A CLUB BATHROOM OR WITH A CHICK IN A VAN PARKED AROUND THE CORNER FROM SCHOOL, EVEN ELEMENTS OF THIS OVERSEXED SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION REMEMBER THEIR FIRST ROLL IN THE CABBAGE LIKE IT WAS FIVE MINUTES AGO

YELLOWCARD RYAN KEY: It's not an adventurous story, but it's a great one. My parents were out of town. I was in love with this chick. And as cheesy as it is, the song was Oasis's "Wonderwall." We were 16, it was our song, and it was part of the plan: "Let's put this record on and get it done." And to put the cap on the whole thing—swear to God—it was Valentine's Day. I got to do it in my own bed. Totally rad. The whole experience was amazing because it wasn't like I lost it to some 25-year-old babysitter who was horny and just wanted to do it with me because I was 16. I know it'll never be that rad again.

INTERPOL CARLOS D.: It was in Trenton, New Jersey. I was 16, one month from turning 17. It was at somebody's apartment. The girl was as white trash as can be. I liked her a lot. She was the textbook definition of the headbanging chick—didn't give a shit about anything. She was a year or two older than me, and even though I went to a different school, I knew I wanted to hang out with this crazy older rock-and-roll chick who didn't give a shit. Back then I had cheesy metal guitars. I was shredding, copying Steve Vai solos. This was at the dusk of the late-1980s metal movement, right before the tornado of grunge swept past and irrevocably changed the musical landscape. I was the last of the old guard. I was into Black Sabbath, Metallica—Iron Maiden was my favorite group. But the time we first slept together there was no music. It was late, the lights were off, and we pretended to be going to sleep. I ended up going out with her because she let me sleep with her. I even smoked pot with her father. But she cheated on me a couple of weeks after we slept together.

A BAND OF BEES AARON FLETCHER: My first time was at a school disco. I did it to "Star Trekkin'" by the Firm.

KRIS BIRKIN: I'd like to say it was outside in the rain, listening to "Riders on the Storm" by the Doors, but it wasn't.

THE DOORS RAY MANZAREK: I lost my virginity at my house. My mother, father and brothers had taken a weekend drive, and my first girlfriend and I went back to the house and used my bed. This was during my first year of college. I had gone to an all-boys high school. That was tough. When I got to DePaul University I was like, Oh my God. The girls were so beautiful. My first girlfriend and I were each other's first sex partners. The music was a Chicago rhythm-and-blues station that I listened to all the time. The DJ in the afternoon was Al Benson, and he would play—this was the South Side of Chicago in the late 1950s—Muddy Waters's "I'm Your Hoochie Coochie Man," "Mannish Boy," "Got My Mojo Working," Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightnin'," Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker, Magic Sam, Slim Harpo. That's what we were listening to while we were fucking.

DEF LEPPARD PHIL COLLEN: I was 15 and desperate to get laid. It was September or October, and my birthday is in December. I was thinking, Shit, I've got to get laid before I'm 16. Two friends and I met this girl who was really up for it. So my first time there were four of us in a van in East London. It almost put me off sex for life, I've got to say. It was woeful. You don't know what the hell you're doing. You're just so grateful that someone is actually letting you do it. And we were like, Wow, this is so cool. The best thing was this girl had a friend. A few days later I ended up shagging her friend at lunchtime during school; she and I went around to her house when her mom was out.

YES CHRIS SQUIRE: I can tell you that my first experience was not terribly impressive. But the fact is I am a member of the Royal Society of English Bass Players, which is a rather monastic body. We aren't allowed to go into detail about such things. It's a very specialized society—Lemmy is a member, after all—and the conditions laid down in the pledge preclude my discussing, among other things, loss of virginity and penis size.

MIKE JONES Salt-N-Pepa's "Push It" was playing. When that came on, I was ready. We were at a party, and I was kicking it with a girl who was a friend of mine. When that song came on, it made the mood right.

TRINA It was during high school, in Miami, at my boyfriend's home. We had been out to the movies. Then we were walking and ended up going back to his place. His mom was out. We had a Janet Jackson CD on; Janet always makes beautiful, sexy music, very romantic and laid-back. I didn't really know it was going to be the right moment—just a girl's intuition. I was young, I was scared, I thought I was in love.

THE DANDY WARHOLS COURTNEY TAYLOR-TAYLOR: The first time I had sex was after high school. I was very stuck-up. The summer after I graduated I was at a party, getting drunk—the usual. Back then I was a total eyeliner-wearing Goth. The music that night was Tones on Tail, the band put together by members of Bauhaus, and we were drinking 40-ouncers of Olde English. A girl with a huge rack got me back into somebody's bedroom in this apartment in downtown Portland. So I'm making out with this chick, and the next thing I know she's got me on top of her. I was like, Wow. A few days later, though, it burned when I peed. I went to the downtown clinic—I didn't want my parents to know—and found out that while losing my virginity I'd picked up something called nongonococcal urethritis. It turned out to be no big deal, but it was a

(continued on page 128)

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE: A TIMELINE



MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

NAMED AFTER A BOOK BY *TRAINSPOTTING* AUTHOR IRVINE WELSH, THIS JERSEY QUINTET WENT FROM EMO OUTSIDERS TO PLATINUM VICTORS IN A YEAR

- **January 13, 2005:** Plays *Late Show With David Letterman*.
- **April 4, 2005:** Appears on *Jimmy Kimmel Live*.
- **April 15, 2005:** Begins 26-city tour opening for Green Day.
- **Summer 2005:** Travels with Vans Warped Tour for second summer in a row.
- **September 15, 2005:** Kicks off first headlining tour, in Columbus, Ohio.
- **October 18, 2005:** MCR's cover of the Misfits' "Astro Zombies" is released on *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland* soundtrack.
- **November 2, 2005:** MCR wins Woodie of the Year at mtvU's second annual Woodie Awards.
- **November 9, 2005:** Frontman for the Used, Bert McCracken—who duetted with MCR singer Gerard Way on a charity cover of "Under Pressure," originally by Queen and David Bowie—reports he has fallen out with his former friends in MCR. "We don't speak at all," he says.
- **November 26, 2005:** Gerard makes number 20 on the annual Cool List in British music bible *NME*. The magazine's definition of cool people? "People want to lick Nutella off their privates, and they never have to queue for drinks."
- **December 2, 2005:** SEG toys releases MCR action figures that stand five inches tall and have 16 points of articulation.

VIDEO GAMES ARE THE NEW COLLEGE RADIO



HOT NEW MUSIC IS A BIG PART OF GAMING

The days of MTV and corporate rock radio are over. Video games are the new frontier for music fans in search of fresh tunes. The stolen car you're driving in *Grand Theft Auto* has better radio stations on the dial than your real-life car, and the track list comes loaded with hot artists big and small. *SSX on Tour* features music from buzz bands LCD Soundsystem, Death From Above 1979 and Bloc Party. Artists are even using games as a way to break a song before it's on the radio: Green Day sneaked "American Idiot" onto the soundtrack of *Madden NFL 2005* before the song hit the streets, and 50 Cent laid down 13 exclusive tracks for his game, *50 Cent: Bulletproof*.



This year game makers recruited artists to record cover songs to fit the themes of their games. Fall Out Boy, My Chemical Romance, Rise Against and others recorded versions of classic punk tunes to be mixed into the 60-song soundtrack of *Tony Hawk's American Wasteland*. Hip bands such as the Walkmen,

the Raveonettes and Death Cab for Cutie recorded covers of 1950s rock-and-roll classics for the retro game *Stubbs the Zombie*.

"Some bands did it because they love games; some love the era of music," explains Zach Rener, creative program director at Aspyr Media, publisher of *Stubbs*. "Phantom Planet agreed to do it because the guys in the band love zombie movies."

When assembling the list of artists for *American Wasteland*, Tim Riley, worldwide executive for music at Activision, found he didn't have room for all the bands that were jumping to be included. "We wanted to do 12 songs but ended up with 14. Bands were fighting over Black Flag and Bad Brains. We could have done another 20 bands if we'd wanted."

Q+A THIRD TIME DUTTY

SEAN PAUL'S *TRINITY* IS A TASTY MUSICAL STEW MADE FROM THREE KEY INGREDIENTS: DANCEHALL, HIP-HOP AND REGGAE

PLAYBOY: You use a lot of Jamaican slang. Do people have trouble understanding you?

PAUL: People have trouble with almost everything I say. A few things on my album really trip people up. "Eye Deh a Mi Knee" is one. It's an old Jamaican saying that means "from when my eye was at my knee level," like when I was a little kid. I almost didn't put it on my album. People were like, "I dig this track, but what is this 'eye deh a mi knee'?"

PLAYBOY: You swam for Jamaica in international competitions. Did that help your music career?

PAUL: Swimmers usually have great rhythm. Plus it helped develop my lungs. Now I have big lungs, so I can let loose, like "Yo, man, yo!"

PLAYBOY: What city has the best weed?

PAUL: Los Angeles. The United States has some very nice weed. L.A. has been good to me.

PLAYBOY: Is Bob Marley taught in schools in Jamaica?

PAUL: No, but he should be. Everyone should have an appreciation for him. He's the only reason I'm here.



SEAN PAUL

PLAYBOY: You've worked with DMX and Busta Rhymes. Who is more insane?

PAUL: When I worked with DMX he had been filming a movie and took a flight straight to Jamaica. So he was pretty chilled out. Busta gets crazy in the studio. Everyone was drinking and chilling, smoking and toking. Ain't no joking, know what I mean? I had a good time with Busta.

PLAYBOY: What music do you listen to that might surprise people?

PAUL: Green Day, for sure. And Gorillaz.

PLAYBOY: What's the worst hangover you've had recently?

PAUL: I was in New York and drank a bottle of cognac. The next morning I had a meeting, and I was hurting. I tried to keep a straight face and listen to what they were saying, but it was the worst hangover. I remember thinking, I need to speak. I kept trying to talk but couldn't. I actually canceled some shit that day, and I'd never done that before. I don't drink cognac straight from the bottle anymore.

Q+A BURT AND EARNEST

WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW IS A KICK UP THE ARSE: BURT BACHARACH DELIVERS HIS FIRST POLITICAL LP



PLAYBOY: During Vietnam and Watergate, did you ever have an urge to write political songs?

BACHARACH: No, but I didn't like the things the Nixon administration did. I've always had a problem with people who lie, whether it's a girlfriend, an agent or leaders who don't tell the truth and can't admit when they're wrong, to quote one of the songs on the new album.

PLAYBOY: Can you pinpoint the moment you got so fed up you had to write about it in your music?

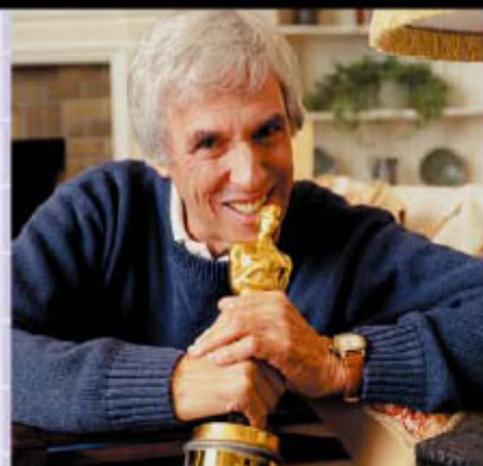
BACHARACH: The tip of the

iceberg is there on "Please Explain," the first song we did for this album. There's a dissatisfaction, a disillusionment with what's going on. As I continued to write, things kept getting worse. When Colin Powell made his statement to the United Nations about the weapons of mass destruction, I believed it and thought, Yeah, we've got to go in. So to find that the information looks to have been massaged? That got to me. I get angry when I see that list every night, names of the dead being rolled off. I also think about the

people coming back who weren't killed but whose lives as young people are over now because of a missing leg or some other wound.

PLAYBOY: How did you approach writing about politics?

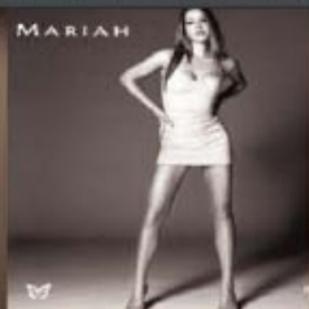
BACHARACH: I've been writing love songs all my life, but many of my love songs have to do with heartbreak: "Only Love Can Break a Heart," "Anyone Who Had a Heart." In a way, these new songs are still about having your heart broken—not by another person but by the war and what's happening to the country.



BURT BACHARACH

THE OBFUSCATION OF MIMI

MARIAH CAREY'S LUNGS ARE TREASURED AROUND THE GLOBE. HOW BEST TO DISPLAY THEM, HOWEVER, IS APPARENTLY SUBJECT TO CULTURAL DEBATE. THE TOP ROW OF ALBUM ART BELOW SHOWS U.S. VERSIONS OF HER ALBUMS. BENEATH ARE THE SAUDI ARABIAN COUNTERPARTS.



Q+A RADIO ACTIVITY

FALL OUT BOY, CHICAGO'S PREMIERE EMO PUNK POP OUTFIT (SAY THAT THREE TIMES FAST), CUTS RECORDS WITH A PLEASANTLY SARDONIC EDGE



PLAYBOY: Best shows you saw in 2005?

PETE WENTZ (lyricist, bassist): The Kanye West show I saw in Chicago at the UIC Pavilion was awesome, everything you'd expect. Also My Chemical Romance was fantastic on the Vans Warped Tour. And I saw Kelly Clarkson in Cleveland. She sang "Since U Been Gone," which is the best song anybody has ever written. Otherwise I was laughing most of the time—so many people were there to worship her because of *American Idol*.

PLAYBOY: You guys jump around a lot onstage. What was your worst wipeout?

WENTZ: Our guitar player, Joe Trohman, stage dived during the Warped Tour show in Boston but didn't make it to the crowd. He hit the barricade and fell down.

PLAYBOY: We've heard you guys used to haze Joe. What did that entail?

WENTZ: We really messed with him. He had his underwear ripped off him, got spit on, was left at rest stops. It has never ended, really.



FALL OUT BOY

PLAYBOY: You're known for your great song titles. What are some of the rejects?

WENTZ: My favorite is "I Liked You a Whole Lot Better Before You Became a Fucking MySpace Whore." And we had a B-side called "Snitches and Talkers Get Stitches and Walkers."

PLAYBOY: You have one called "Our Lawyer Made Us Change the Name of This Song So We Wouldn't Get Sued." What was the original name?

WENTZ: It was supposed to be called "My Name Is David Ruffin and These Are the Temptations."

PLAYBOY: You play fun intro music on tour. What are some of your favorites?

WENTZ: Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" and Sir Mix-A-Lot's "Baby Got Back." And some of the Jay-Z stuff we've used.

PLAYBOY: Jay-Z himself introduced you at your New York show, right?

WENTZ: Yep. And before he went onstage, he said, "There's a lot of people here. Don't fuck it up." He's been a big supporter—though he probably thinks we're strange little white dudes.



2005 PLAYBOY MUSIC AWARDS

SINCE DAY ONE jazz has held a special place at PLAYBOY. Last year, for the first time, we named our Playboy Jazz Artist of the Year, acknowledging the achievements of an exceptional artist, pianist Jason Moran. This year we honor another piano player, Andrew Hill. Long known as a link between the rigors of bebop and the discursiveness of free jazz, Hill is one of the genre's great composers. Over the course of a long career he has established



JZ

JAZZ ARTIST
ANDREW HILL

JAZZ ARTIST OF THE YEAR

himself as a profound innovator with his distinctively discontinuous style. Born in Chicago in 1937, he got his start playing with Charlie Parker at the Graystone Ballroom in Detroit. Through the 1960s he released a series of amazing albums for Blue Note. Hill's latest CD, *Time Lines* (also on Blue Note), shows him in top form, stretching his compositions with a restless lyricism. Like Earl Hines, Art Tatum and Thelonious Monk before him, Hill pushes jazz to new ground. "I've always looked at life as a situation you can grow in," he says, "if you don't take yourself too seriously."



R

best rock album
foo fighters

Some bands would rest on their laurels after a decade of platinum success, but Foo Fighters aren't like other bands. Ten years on, we're still getting the best of Foo with *In Your Honor*. The Grammy nomination committee agrees.



H

best hip-hop album
kanye west

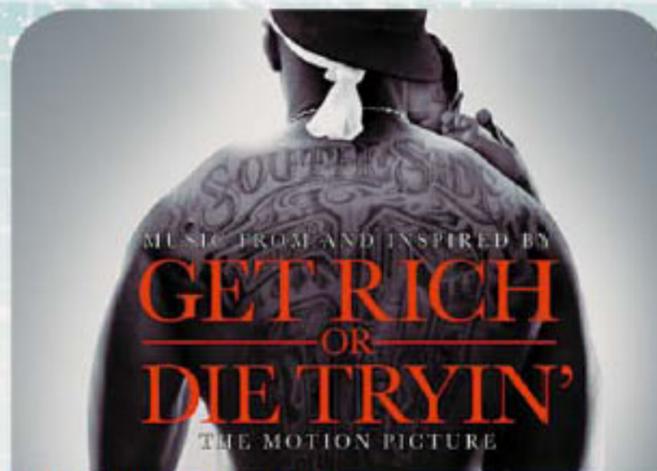
Despite West's ubiquity (some would say overexposure), we still can't get enough of Chitown's best-known dropout. *Late Registration* surprises us with its facile flow, but where would we be without "Drive Slow"?



JZ

best jazz album
john coltrane

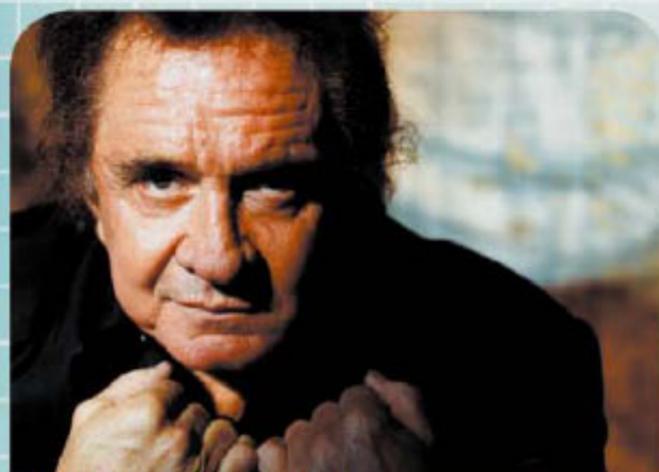
On John Coltrane's remarkable *One Down, One Up: Live at the Half Note* we hear his fabled quartet start to push the boundaries of jazz. Forty years later it still sounds as immediate and refreshing as if it happened yesterday.



S

best soundtrack album
get rich or die tryin'

So 50 loves himself, and his movie is something less than bulletproof. You still can't front on his flow. And with Young Buck, Lloyd Banks, Mobb Deep and others in tow, his soundtrack ran away with readers' hearts this year.



RI

best reissue
johnny cash

Big John Cash came out of the cotton fields of Arkansas to become one of the great American artists of the 20th century. Sony Legacy's boxed set *The Legend* surveys a career based on strength, compassion and integrity.



SG

best song
gwen stefani

The shit is bananas. And thanks to "Hollaback Girl," there's no doubt about the spelling. All together now: B-A-N-A-N-A-S! Gwen is so beautiful and talented, she managed to wrest the word from Chris Elliott. And that takes some moxie.



E best electronic album
gorillaz

The first Gorillaz album was catchy and wildly inventive, incorporating a kaleidoscopic set of global influences. *Demon Days?* Even better. Here in the U.S., Damon Albarn's cartoon hobby project has now outsold his "real" band, Blur.



C best country album
toby keith

There's an impressive artist beneath the big hat and the jingo bluster, as *Honkytonk University* shows. Keith can't catch a break from Nashville, but maybe that's according to plan. In his own way, he can carry on Waylon's outlaw tradition.



R PINK FLOYD

HALL OF FAME

In 1965, when Syd Barrett joined Roger Waters, Nick Mason and Richard Wright, who had played together previously, Pink Floyd was born. After a couple of left-field singles and an extraordinary album of acid rock, the band nearly imploded as Barrett's LSD use spun out of control, and he was replaced by David Gilmour. Confounding fans and critics who wrote Pink Floyd off at Barrett's departure, its next incarnation would not only equal the original lineup's success but go on to become one of the most hallowed acts in rock history. More so than with its early psychedelic space rock, this second Floyd (led by Waters and Gilmour) pushed musical boundaries with studio magic, lavish stage shows that transformed the concert business and a string of records, including concept albums such as *Dark Side of the Moon* and *The Wall*, that were unprecedented in their combined commercial and musical gravitas. Godfathers of acid and prog rock, ambient music and current cerebral heroes Radiohead and Coldplay, Pink Floyd is so integral to the fabric of modern rock and roll, it's hard to believe that once, before its music became a cultural keepsake, it was just a band. Respect.



W best world music album
sean paul

Sean Paul's rambunctious dancehall stylings are no longer so alien to the American mainstream, but *The Trinity* keeps Paul connected to his Jamaican origins. "We Be Burnin'" is a classic expression of Paul's energy and passion.



L best live act
u2

Liam Gallagher called them wankers, but U2 is making more exciting music after nearly 30 years than Oasis is after only 15. The best part of that history? You can sing along to several hours' worth of material at the band's epic shows.



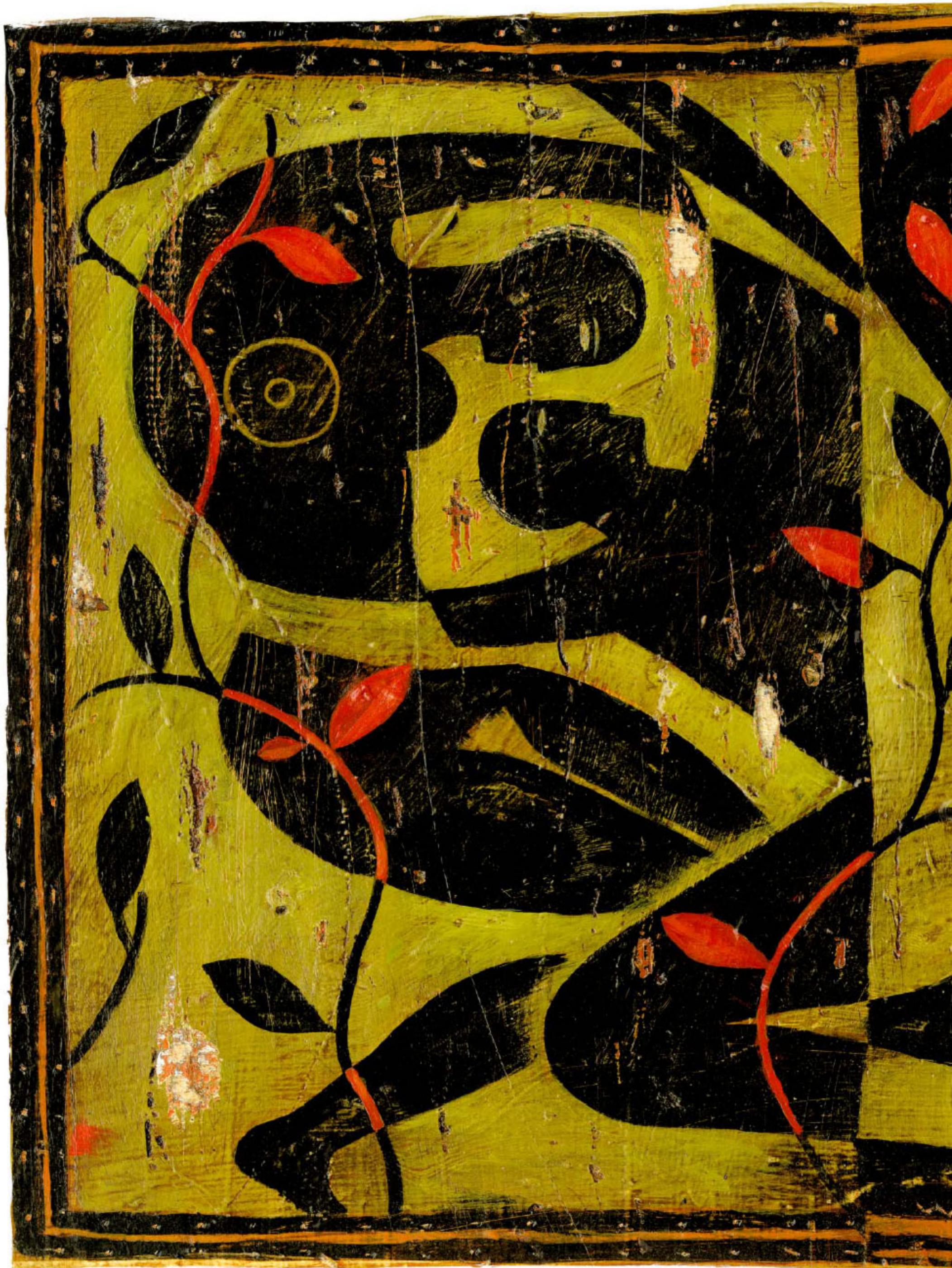
BA best breakout artist
my chemical romance

The runaway voting in favor of My Chemical Romance shows that new rock is not only alive but thriving, not yet ready to wither away into a niche category. And after flirting with metal acts like Marilyn Manson, Goth is back to form.



VS best video game soundtrack
tony hawk's american wasteland

The music in games is growing up as fast as the graphics. Of course, given the smash-and-burn bent of the tunes on your favorite game soundtrack, *growing up* seems to be a relative term. But the classic punk covers here rock.





Sogbo's Wife

ADAMA VISITS SOGBO'S HUT FOR A NEIGHBORLY MEAL BUT SOON FINDS HE'S NOT THE MASTER OF HIS APPETITES

Fiction by
TONY D'SOUZA

I remember a fight in the village. This was on a harvest night when the moon was full like a great silver coin, and the tall mask—the one on stilts—had appeared in the witch doctor's compound, fortune-telling for rice and change, then dancing to the young men's drums, turning and leaping on those stilts like a giant crane. I had been in the village for more than two and a half years, and even though I was the only white most of the community had seen, I was no longer a novelty. I was a hunter, and I could wind my way through the Worodougou's maze of customs with relative ease. I knew, for example, that when a man put on the mask to dance for the wellness of the people, he was no longer a man. He became the mask and the voice of the ancestors.

Later, after the second harvest was stored in the granaries and the hot and dry harmattan wind had begun to blow, the leopard and crocodile masks would moan in the night, crawling on their bellies in the light of the bonfire like beasts scenting the air for flesh. But this night the moon was round, the land was moist, the first rice and cassava had been gathered, and the tall mask had made everyone happy. There would be a short lull in the field work now, and the sense of ease and festivity was general.

Perhaps for this reason, Gaussou, my neighbor Bébé's arrogant older brother, thought to pay a visit to his third wife, the new one he'd taken as part of a debt settlement between his father and hers. Gaussou hadn't yet expressed much interest in the new girl. She was skinny as a chicken, her nose was thin, her eyes were nar-

row, and her teeth were set tightly in her mouth so her face resembled a beak. But the air of the times was light.

Long after everyone else had gone to bed, Gaussou roused himself, went and pushed on the door of her hut and was surprised to find it locked. He put his ear to the planks to hear if she was sleeping. He heard moans instead. His wife was giving pleasure to herself! With a carrot or slender sweet potato—women in need were rumored to do this. But what a waste of life energy, what an insult to the ancestors! If only he had known, he would have come to her hut more regularly. Yes, the girl was ugly. But what did beauty matter in the face of duty?

Gaussou listened more intently, grew aroused at the sounds his new wife was making. He imagined her writhing on her mat, the carrot between her legs and her plastic bridal beads white as cowries around her hips. In this way Gaussou finally understood the great beauty of his third wife's long thighs, supple belly. He parted his evening wrap, took his erection in his hand. Yes, this was a great sin too,

but listening to the girl moan, he could not help it. Suddenly he was on the verge of eruption. He shouldered in the door, stripped off his wrap and said, "Remove the carrot, wife! I am going to possess you."

In the darkness of her hut, he fell on her to mount her, thrust his penis vigorously between her legs. A male voice yelped: Gaussou was prodding the buttocks of the boy who was fucking his wife. All three tumbled apart, found their feet, ran out of the hut. For their part, the lovers, anxious in their hearts already, assumed they were under attack by a genie. Gaussou, for his part, understood instantly that his name had been ruined beyond repair: Not only had he been cuckolded, but his *mogo* had touched another man's anus. Naked, he began to beat the boy, and after taking a few blows, the boy began to fight back. He was the blacksmith's fourth son, and his arms were muscled from endless hours turning the bellows crank. The wife, Shwalimar, began to scream at the top of her lungs because, at times like these, everyone must do something.

We all ran out into the silver moonlight at the commotion. We were humbled, quieted, by the fury with which the men fought. How strange, how awesome to see the primal rage of two furious men who weren't wearing any clothes. Gaussou's brothers jumped in, hitting the boy repeatedly in the face until it leaked like a cracked melon. Then the blacksmith's sons arrived, and the fight was a general rumble of elbows and grunts, of locked forearms and teeth. In the moonlight, it was like looking at a living field of marble hoplites in battle. The night was punctuated with the root consonants of human language: chokes and shouts. The women of the two families scratched one

THE CHIEF'S SONS CAME RUNNING WITH BRAIDED CATTLE WHIPS. IT WAS PANDEMONIUM, PEOPLE RUNNING IN CIRCLES, THE WHIPS CRACKING LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD.

another's faces, pulled hair; soon men punched women, women leaped on and bit men. Even the dogs snarled and cursed.

The chief's sons came running with braided cattle whips, cracking them in the night, applying lashes liberally. It was pandemonium, people running in circles at three in the morning, the whips cracking like the end of the world. Then the chief himself arrived with his staff, his withered limbs. With a voice much louder than that body had a right to produce, he shouted, "*A bana! A man-yee! Dougoutigi a nah! A bana! An Allah a nua laka?*" It's finished! Evil people, your chief is before you. Would you open God's eyes onto us?

Of course there was a history to it, not between the boy and Gaussou per se but between this man and that, this old woman and her neighbor or the parents who had sold your true love to someone else for two chickens and a wicker hat. There were always lingering debts, festering for generations. It was life in the village.

In the end, the boy was driven into the forest then and there, naked as he was, banished to whatever village would take him for two years on pain of death. The girl was carried into the forest by her husband's women, her vagina stuffed with chili peppers. And Gaussou received kola nuts and a red hen from the blacksmith in compensation for his shame, though this would never be enough. When we'd see him walking to his hut in the evening, alone as all men are, Mamadou, my best friend and village guardian, would swallow a mouthful of rice and whisper, "Remove the carrot, wife."

This was my last year in Tégésó, a village of 700 people in the bush of northern Ivory Coast, and soon a war would ruin that place and separate me from it forever, but then, that time was my favorite. I spoke the language, and I lived in the village as a member of it. I'd grown my own fields, proven myself to the Worodougou in every way I thought I could. The reason I had come to the village—to find clean drinking water as a relief worker with Potable Water International—felt like an old and confusing dream. I had gone here and there with Mamadou and taught people about AIDS, promoted vaccinations and prenatal care, but really I was simply there, my heart beating, my lungs taking in air, growing older as the sun rose and fell. I thought about the

hookers I'd visited in Abidjan, and I wondered if I had AIDS. The stars looked so wonderful to me at night. One day, maybe soon, I would take my place among them.

One afternoon the witch doctor and I went hunting for mongoose, which we liked to eat. We crawled into a dense thicket in the forest where the leaf litter was a damp and warm humus, full of worms and grubs: what mongoose like to eat. We sat with our backs to an old termite mound, held our shotguns, waited. The hours turned toward evening, and nothing came. The sun set, and still we sat. Then in the dark of night, I heard the flick of his lighter, smelled the cigarette smoke. I lit one too.

"Adama, you've learned patience."

"Thank you, Father."

"Before, I could feel your heart beating like a drum. Now you are like the air."

"Adama, I am old now. Things have changed badly in the world. These days I like to come to the forest and simply look at it. The people come to me with their ailments, fears, and I gather those things from them and bring them here. I give them to the forest, and then I go home to the village. I like to look at the small children eating dirt. Sometimes I take a pinch of dirt and eat it too. You should go home, Adama, be with your people. You should sit in your village and look at your children. Gather your children's fears, take them to your forest, sit, marvel at the beauty."

"I will soon, Father," I told him. We crawled out of the thicket and followed the path home.

The first time I noticed Mariam was in her hut. Her husband was visiting the village from Abidjan, and like all visitors, what he wanted to do before anything else was meet the white man. His name was Sogbo, and he was nice enough. He worked in a plastics factory in the city's Adjamé quarter, punching out durable cups and bowls from a press. I didn't ask him about his life in the city, because I knew what it was like and didn't want to make him lie: He lived in a squalid shantytown like all village men there did. Here now, he'd brought soap and a new *pagne* for his wife, held his small son on his knee as (continued on page 143)

THE FULL

Miss March delivers
the whole package

MONICA



We predict an influx of tourists to Long Island, given the area's recent Playmate population increase. First came Miss April 2005, the fabulous Courtney Rachel Culkin. Now her long-time friend and sometime roommate Monica Leigh is showing us how they help keep New York beautiful.

"I grew up with Courtney, and we've been best friends since I was 13," Monica says. "As a teenager I was always hamming it up for the camera, jumping around in the background and making sure I was in every picture. And I've always loved being naked. I used to run around the house nude, being the exhibitionist. But I got a little shy about trying out for *PLAYBOY*. Courtney pushed me to do it because she loved it so much."

Monica has no regrets. Her long-standing fondness for flashbulbs has paid off. She landed the cover of our *College Girls* special edition and became December's Cyber Girl of the Month before Hef chose her as Miss March. Monica comes alive in front of the camera, and she does what it takes to get the perfect shot. Take the photo above, of her (right) and her sister Sheryl posing in front of the Statue of Liberty. "For that one shot we went back and forth to Ellis Island on the ferry about seven times. It was hilarious."

You'd better be laughing too, because this 24-year-old future dental hygienist is dying to see your choppers. "I am obsessed with teeth," she says, leaning in to dazzle us with her own majestic molars. "I look at everybody's smile. I can't say I would never date a guy with bad teeth,





but I'd have him get them fixed!" Speaking of men, Monica says, "I like a man who works hard and has an artistic side. He has to be a free spirit, adventurous like me, willing to get crazy and try new things." When we ask Miss March about her best date ever, it doesn't surprise us that it involved high speeds and free-falling. "I once told this guy that I wanted to try skydiving, so he took me," she says. "Once you jump, it is such a weird feeling—so beautiful and peaceful."

Down on earth Monica fulfills her need for speed by snowblading with pals but likes to slow things down when it

comes to her first love, singing. "I like to sing love ballads in the style of Celine Dion and Shania Twain," she says. "I'm going to try out for *Making the Band* if they do that show again." She pauses and stares at the heavens for a moment. "You know, I started looking at life differently after my mom passed away. She was a fighter, and she helped me realize that you can't just sit back. You have to go after the things you want, and you have to look on the bright side and stay positive. I should have been around in the 1960s because I feel like such a hippie. I just want to make people smile."

She's doing a good job, don't you think?











PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Monica Leigh

BUST: 36C WAIST: 24 HIPS: 36

HEIGHT: 5' 6" WEIGHT: 114 lbs

BIRTH DATE: 12/19/81 BIRTHPLACE: Long Island, New York

AMBITIONS: To pursue a career in singing, modeling and acting.

TURN-ONS: Someone who is successful and hard-working. A person who is very into health.

TURNOFFS: Bad breath, a negative attitude and someone who tries too hard to impress.

THE FIVE BEST SINGERS EVER: Celine Dion, Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, Sade and Tamia.

MY PETS: G.B., a little gray cat, and Jazzmond, a black cat.

MY EARLIEST MEMORY: I remember I was very young, and my mother took me to the park to see the swans and how beautiful they were. I was so excited until I started feeding them and one of them bit me really hard!

WHY I LOVE NEW YORK: It has an amazing spirit and such great energy.



me + my sister, 6 years old.



me + my cat Rusty, 11 years old.



Posing in my bikini, 18 years old.

MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH







Monica Leigh

MISS MARCH

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Monica Leigh

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

What did Cinderella do when she got to the ball? Choked.

One night a couple was lying in bed. The husband was feeling frisky, so he tapped his wife on the shoulder and started rubbing her arm to indicate that he wanted sex. The wife turned over and said, "I'm sorry, dear, but I have a gynecologist appointment tomorrow, and I want to stay fresh."

Dejected, the husband turned over and tried to sleep. A few minutes later he rolled back and whispered in her ear, "Do you have a dentist appointment, too?"



A man and his two friends were talking at a bar. His first friend said, "I think my wife is having sex with the electrician. The other day I came home and found wire cutters under our bed."

His second friend said, "I think my wife is having sex with the plumber. The other day I found a pipe wrench under the bed."

The man said, "That's nothing. I think my wife is having sex with a horse."

Both his friends looked at him in disbelief.

"I'm serious. The other day I came home and found a jockey under the bed."

A boy came home from school one day and said to his mom, "Guess what happened to me in school today. I had sex with my teacher!" His mom became very upset and screamed, "Go to your room! We'll tell your father what you did when he gets home."

When his father came home, the boy told him. "Way to go, son," the father replied. "Let's go buy you a new bicycle."

When they came out of the shop with a brand-new bike, the father asked, "Do you want to ride it home?"

"No," the boy replied. "My ass still hurts."

A man went to his optometrist to have his eyes examined. The doctor told him, "Listen, you've got to stop masturbating."

"Why, Doc?" the man asked. "Am I going blind?"

"No," said the optometrist. "But you're upsetting my other patients."

A man was looking for work at a blacksmith shop. The blacksmith asked him, "Can you shoe horses?"

"I'm not sure," the man said, "but I once told a donkey to fuck off."

A kid was sitting on his lawn with a box of newborn puppies when George W. Bush came by on his morning run. Bush asked the boy what the puppies were.

The boy said, "Republicans."

The president beamed, patted the boy on the head and said, "Thatta boy!"

A few weeks later Bush was jogging again, this time with Dick Cheney in tow. Bush stopped at the boy's house, winked at Dick and said, "Hey, kid, what kind of puppies are in the box?"

The boy said, "Democrats."

Bush looked crushed and said, "What happened? A few weeks ago they were Republicans."

"Well," the boy said, "that was before they opened their eyes."

In the beginning God created the earth and rested.

Then God created man and rested.

Then God created woman, and since then neither God nor man has rested.



A little boy watched, fascinated, as his mother gently rubbed cold cream on her face.

"Why are you rubbing that on your face, Mommy?" he asked.

"To make myself beautiful," said his mother.

A few minutes later she began removing the cream with a tissue. "What's the matter?" asked the little boy. "Giving up?"

Why don't women have brains? Because they don't have a penis to carry them in.

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 contributors whose submissions are selected.



MARTY
MURPHY

"Darlin'...you're home from the roundup already? Slim was showing me how to play Texas Hold 'Em!"

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

OUTFITTING THE ULTIMATE GAME ROOM

BY JOEL JOHNSON



● NASCAR Pinball

We love fast cars and racetracks—as long as we're the ones behind the wheel. That's why we get our racing fix playing pinball instead of watching TV. The race-track on this table uses magnets to send balls looping and features voice work from NBC racing commentator Allen Bestwick. \$4,995, sternpinball.com.



● Piranha II Razor Grip The shafts on these darts are precision-machined from tungsten alloy. Now you'll know the problem is you, not your darts. \$55 for three, blattbilliards.com.





● **TableHockey** This pucked-up little rig is crafted to emulate the quick movements of real hockey (if you've got the wrists of a pro). Small touches like better goalie control outclass the competition. \$895, tablehockey.com.

● **Wurlitzer Digital Jukebox** Wurlitzer is as American as apple pie and the iPod. It went digital a few years back, and its newest jukebox features a 120-gigabyte hard drive, 375 watts of amplification and Klipsch speakers. Nothing starts a party like 1,500 albums on tap and a built-in subwoofer. \$4,000, gibson.com.



● **Auto Part Chess Set** Armando Ramirez handcrafts these rustic warriors from polished car parts. If the bishops seem to have the most zip, perhaps it's because their heads are topped by spark plugs. \$210, novica.com.



● **King and Queen Dart Cabinet** The best dartboard on the market costs \$75 and looks...well, it looks like a dartboard. A game with this much put-your-eye-out potential deserves more. Dress up your board with a funky vintage-style cabinet. We like this pub house standard, which features a pair of moonlighting playing cards. \$225, blatbilliards.com.



● **The New Yorker Pool Table** Who says your table has to be green and brown? Brushed stainless steel makes this baby part pool table, part Chrysler Building. \$32,500 and up, blattbilliards.com.



● **Blatt Billiards Pool Cues** Skills take you only so far. To really hustle a pool table, you need a hand from the right equipment. Blatt's two-piece cues are fashioned from hard rock Canadian maple, so you can depend on them to strike hard and stay true. Ten different butt designs are available. \$225 to \$250, blattbilliards.com.



● **Rallystar Champion Tennis Table** It's not Ping-Pong, it's table tennis. How better to play than by using the proportions of a regulation tennis court? \$1,700, rallystartennis.com.



● **Three-Sided Dreamcade** Many modern video games lack a certain purity. Revisit the greats with Dream Arcades' retro system. It packs more than 100 classics, including *Pac-Man* and *Galaga*. The addition of a third and fourth controller lets you use its powerful built-in PC for more modern gaming. Don't feel like playing? It doubles as a coffee table. \$2,300, dreamarcades.com.



● **Hector Saxe Simulated Crocodile Backgammon Set** A good backgammon set is a lifetime investment. Don't skimp. This gem has faux-crocodile leather and a padded felt playing surface. \$1,950, gammonvillage.com.

● **Opus Foosball Table** The players on this wood, steel and glass beauty can be customized, so you can pit, say, 2005's Playmates against the 2004 lineup. \$45,000 and up, elevenforty.com.

● **Cuetech Cue Case** You've invested in cues; now treat them well. Blatt Billiards' stylish cases will get you noticed but won't make people suspect you have a colorful nickname. \$175 and \$225, blattbilliards.com.

● **American Beauties Poker Chips** The one thing most poker games are missing? Beautiful women. Take your game to the next level with this casino-quality chip set featuring the pinup art of Greg Hildebrandt. \$360 for 500 chips, nevadajacks.net.



“Don’t think of it as a porno, Janet. Think of it as reality TV.”

CENTERFOLDS ON SEX

ALL THE BUZZ

I love having sex after spending the day at the airport, and I can't get enough of vibrators. The last time I went to Puerto Rico I accidentally left mine in the hotel bed. I must have fallen asleep with it. When we got back home I rummaged through my luggage like crazy but couldn't find it. So I said, "I just need to go to the store really quickly," and I rushed to the sex shop in my flip-flops and nightie. I thought I'd be in and out really fast, but I couldn't find one I liked and got sidetracked. I started looking at sex toys for guys. I was looking at cock rings because I'd heard they're good, and I wanted one with a tickler on it but couldn't find the right one. I was a little frustrated at that point, so my boyfriend and I wound up watching a porno together.



Courtney Rachel Cutler

My man's a brainiac. I think girls like guys who are nerds. With my boyfriend I've become open to a lot of new things that I never imagined I would be. Now I'm like, "What's your fantasy? I'll do it." As for contraception, I prefer a condom because it makes my boyfriend's penis smaller. He's got a kickstand, let me put it that way, though the condoms start to irritate me about the third time around.





PARADA



JEREMY BLOOM CAN'T LOSE

HE'S A SKIER. HE'S A FOOTBALL PLAYER. HE'S A POP IDOL.
THE SAVVY MARKETING OF AN OLYMPIC STAR

BY PAT JORDAN

He has the kind of fame usually reserved for beautiful heiresses caught in flagrante delicto or for young men in second-rate boy bands who marry pop goddesses and feel greatly conflicted about it. Still, he refers to himself as a brand, as in “Being a brand benefits me and my sponsors.” He has two agents, who see him as a brand as well, although two different brands, as if they too are conflicted or at cross-purposes. He also has a publicist.

Identifying his brand is difficult, as Jeremy Bloom, 23, is many things to many people. To *CosmoGirl* he is eye candy, and he’s been called the It boy of 2005 and, according to a British journalist, a dish. He is five-nine and 175 pounds, with the physique of a male model and the bland, nonthreatening good looks that appeal to both teenage girls and older women. His mother says he is a sex symbol. “Older women ooh and aah over his abs,” she says. “I tell them they should be ashamed of themselves. They’re old enough to be his grandmother.” His attractiveness to women, however, doesn’t prevent him from continually asking his mother questions about his girlfriend. “He doesn’t understand her,” she says. He has been called a metrosexual who fusses over his looks, studiously musses his hair and maybe even shaves his chest. That annoys him. “Aw, come on,” he says. “That’s ridiculous.”

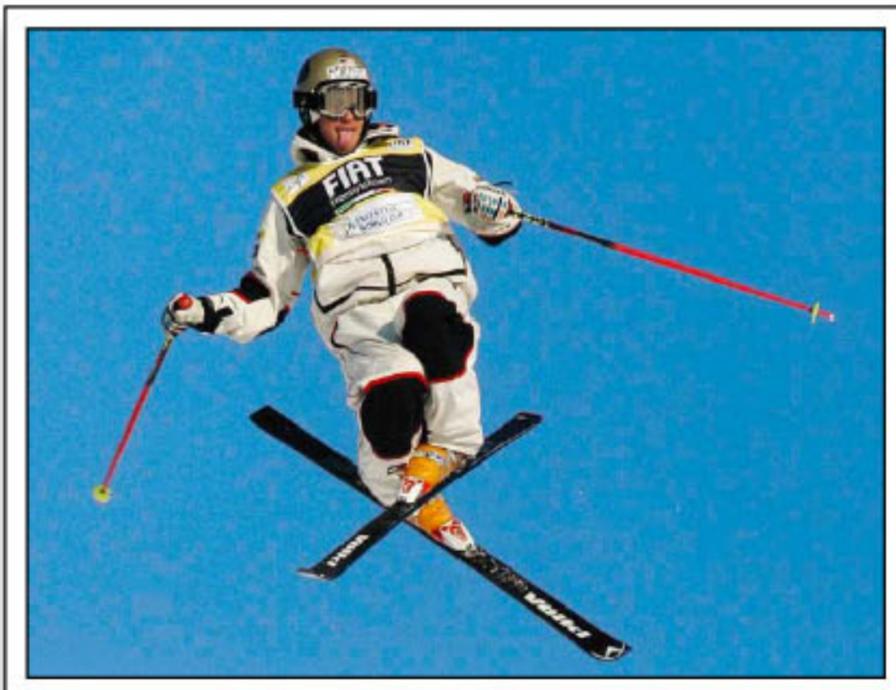
But his good looks are an important part of his brand. They have brought him endorsements for Under Armour and shirtless photo shoots for the Abercrombie & Fitch catalog. (Bloom’s abs are legendary, seemingly divorced from their possessor and with a fame of their own, requiring their own talent agent.) He has also been the subject of photo shoots for *Vanity Fair* and *GQ*, during which he posed with a topless female model in a hot tub. “It was a blast,” he says. “She was a stand-in for my girlfriend. People pay me an obscene amount of money to pose with beautiful women. I take advantage of open doors.”

Considered friendly *and* ambitious, Bloom has taken advantage of his studied amiability, which has garnered him red-carpet gigs for MTV, hosting duties on the network’s *Beach House* and possibly his current girlfriend, an MTV star from *The Real World: San Diego*. He has appeared on *Best Damn Sports Show Period*, with Tom Arnold, who jumped up and down on a trampoline with him, and on *McEnroe*, where the first question put to him was “Is it hard to get laid?” He was also a competitor on the 2003 *SuperStars*, which he won. In the 100-yard sprint—which he ran bare-chested, since our dish seems constitutionally unable to keep his shirt on—he beat NFL running backs Ahman Green and Charlie Garner. IMG, a sports agency that doesn’t even represent him, invited him to participate on *SuperStars* not merely because he is handsome and personable but because he once played football at the University of Colorado and, more important, is considered a world-class skier and America’s brightest hope for gold at the 2006 Olympics in Turin. In the sports world, he’s regarded as one of the most marketable skiers on the planet.

Which is why, according to his mother, being called a male model “bothers him.”

“People think they know you, and they don’t,” says Bloom. “I don’t want to be known as a male model or a pop idol. I consider myself a serious athlete.” Nonetheless, for \$8.99 on his website, he sells posters of himself wearing a backward baseball cap, camouflage pants and nothing else. He is turned slightly to his left to better accent his chiseled abs and obliques. “I do a lot of ab work for my sports,” he says.

Bloom has a lot in common with Hubbell, the character Robert Redford plays in *The Way We Were*. Blessed with golden good looks, Hubbell is a talented athlete and writer whose accomplishments seem so effortless that some disparage them and, more important, him. In one of his short stories, Hubbell



"SKIING IS ABOUT FREEDOM, AND FOOTBALL IS ABOUT DISCIPLINE AND ORDER," SAYS BLOOM. "YOU CAN'T WIN A FOOTBALL GAME BY YOURSELF."

writes of himself, "Things came easily to him, but at least he knew it."

"Are you saying things came easy to me?" Bloom snaps. "I got things by a lot of hard work." Yet many people work hard and aren't blessed with his success. "I don't take it for granted," he says. "And I don't indulge myself in the exterior world of how cool I am in a celebrity culture. I'm a competitive person. I used to want to conquer the world and be in every magazine." That's a strange

Char, was a housewife and skiing and snowboarding instructor. They were a kind of *Leave It to Beaver* family transported to the Rockies. They spent all their free time outdoors, skiing, snowboarding, water-skiing, hiking, mountain biking or tossing a football. "We'd throw a football around outside until it was dark," says Bloom, "then we'd throw it in the house." (Char says it's a miracle they never broke a window.) "If it was snowing, we skied. We were the

tion. When he was four, he was studying to get his black belt in karate. One day he started to cry because he didn't want to stop playing with his friends to go to karate class. I told him, 'Then don't go.' He said, 'I have to.' It took him eight years to get his black belt. It was the same with football. He was always the smallest. I used to scream, 'Get that big bully off my son!'"

Bloom first began to excel in skiing at the age of three, and by the time he reached 15 he was a world-class junior skier. But this didn't keep him from managing to cram as many activities as possible into his young life. He skied in competitions, competed in karate, football and track, and still managed to make the honor roll in high school for four years. Bloom would leave a ski event in, say, Finland or Norway, return to Loveland and then catch four touchdown passes in his high school team's state playoff game. His secret, his father says, "was that nothing bothered him. He was serene. He had a quiet brain. He was at peace before he competed." Char says, "He told me when he competed that his world went quiet and he just did it. Who Jeremy is comes out on the ski slopes. He becomes a performer."

When Bloom was 15 his idyllic life of personal accomplishment was briefly shattered when his parents divorced, but he adjusted quickly. "He handled it amazingly well," says Char. "Jeremy sees the positive in everything." Char says her son even sees the positive in her present boyfriend, Tom, who refers to him as "the demon stepson."

"The divorce was best for all of us," says Bloom. "We're all very close." Still, when I call Larry Bloom to interview him about his son, he says, "I didn't know Jeremy was going to be in PLAYBOY."

By the time Bloom graduated from high school he was confronted with a choice that (continued on page 124)

HIS GOOD LOOKS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF HIS BRAND. THEY HAVE BROUGHT HIM ENDORSEMENTS AND SHIRTLESS PHOTO SHOTS.

comment for an athlete: Athletes want to win every game; celebrities want to be in every magazine.

"My mother taught me I could be anything," Bloom says. "I never realized I couldn't be everything. I think I can." Bloom does not see the subtle difference between being anything and being everything, because he has the arrogance of youth. He sees life as an endless succession of fulfilled desires; for Bloom, life will always be more, never less. He can't imagine life could be a series of dreams destined to go unfulfilled. Which is why, in February, after the Olympic Games are over, he plans to attend the NFL scouting combine, a prelude to the draft, where he is sure he will be picked even though he hasn't played football in two years and is considered too small. "I've heard *small* all my life," he says. "I was always the smallest. It fuels my fire. It motivates me to work harder to stay on top."

Jeremy Bloom, his older brother, Jordan, and his sister, Molly, grew up in Loveland, Colorado, north of Denver. Their father, Larry, was a clinical psychologist, and their mother,

first ones on the lift. It was neurotic. No après-ski. My siblings were better than me, so I had to struggle to keep up. I loved to go fast."

It was an idyllic life centered around the outdoors, much like the life of surfer dudes in southern California, with a shirtless Jeremy skiing in shorts alongside girls in bikinis on sunny days after a snowfall. There are the requisite cute stories about wild animals: coyotes playing with dogs, foxes in the garden, deer in the backyard, mountain lions in the woods, hawks trying to capture a puppy, a brown bear in the driveway. As a boy, Bloom faced off against the bear. "Ma!" he screamed. "Ma! He's hungry!" Char called back, "Then stick out your arm, dear."

The Blooms never seemed to be at rest, and their youngest son was the most restless. "If he had nothing to do, he was lost," says Larry. "He made me throw him a thousand passes a day. Jeremy was born competitive." Char says, "Jeremy was always quiet and well mannered in school, but he was a little animal on the playground. He had to win. He was just gifted with determina-



"I don't have that much cash.... Can I make up the difference in office supplies?"

PLAYBOY
FASHION

ROCK

* Ambulance LTD

FASHION BY
**JOSEPH
DE ACETIS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MICK ROCK

PRODUCED BY
JENNIFER RYAN JONES

THE ERA WHEN ROCKERS HATED DISCO IS LONG GONE. THESE DAYS, DISCERNING MUSIC FANS LISTEN TO ROCK, RAP AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. CALL IT THE IPOD DIVIDEND: EVER MORE ECLECTIC MUSIC SOUNDTRACKS OUR LIVES. THE SAME GOES FOR STYLE. SUITS HAVE LEARNED A THING OR TWO FROM THE CLUBS, AND STREET-WISE RAPPERS AND GRIMY ROCKERS ALIKE ARE INTO COOL THREADS. SO CONSIDER THIS A PLAYLIST FOR YOUR WARDROBE. ABOVE: AMBULANCE LTD MAKES A BEAUTIFUL RACKET, WITH MELODIES AND VOCAL HARMONIES SWATHED IN WHITE NOISE. STANDING, GUITARIST BENJI LYSAGHT IS IN A SUIT (\$2,215) BY **DIOR HOMME BY HEDI SLIMANE** AND A SHIRT (\$330) BY **RICHMOND X**. AT LEFT IS DRUMMER DARREN BECKETT IN A BLAZER (\$178) AND PANTS (\$78) BY **CALVIN KLEIN**. IN THE MIDDLE IS FRONTMAN MARCUS CONGLETON IN A MILITARY JACKET (\$1,140), PANTS (\$440), SHIRT (\$480) AND LONG-SLEEVE T-SHIRT (\$290) BY **RICHMOND X**. AT RIGHT IS BASS PLAYER MATT DUBLIN IN A SUIT (\$850) AND SHIRT (\$135) BY **HUGO BY HUGO BOSS** AND A SWEATER (\$68) BY **CALVIN KLEIN**.

WHETHER YOU LISTEN
TO HIP-HOP OR INDIE
POP, YOU WANT TO
DRESS LIKE A ROCK
STAR. HERE'S HOW

ROCK/RAP



R
AP

* Corey Gunz

WHEN HIP-HOP WAS EMERGING THREE DECADES AGO, COREY WASN'T YET A TWINKLE IN DAD PETER GUNZ'S EYE, BUT HE WAS DESTINED TO BE AN MC. HE WAS BORN IN THE BRONX, THE BIRTHPLACE OF HIP-HOP. HIS FATHER HAILED THE BOROUGH ON A CLASSIC SINGLE, "DÉJÀ VU," TOGETHER WITH LORD TARIQ. NOW COREY IS THE NEW FACE OF NEW YORK, LOOKING TO CONTINUE THE FAMILY TRADITION OF PLATINUM

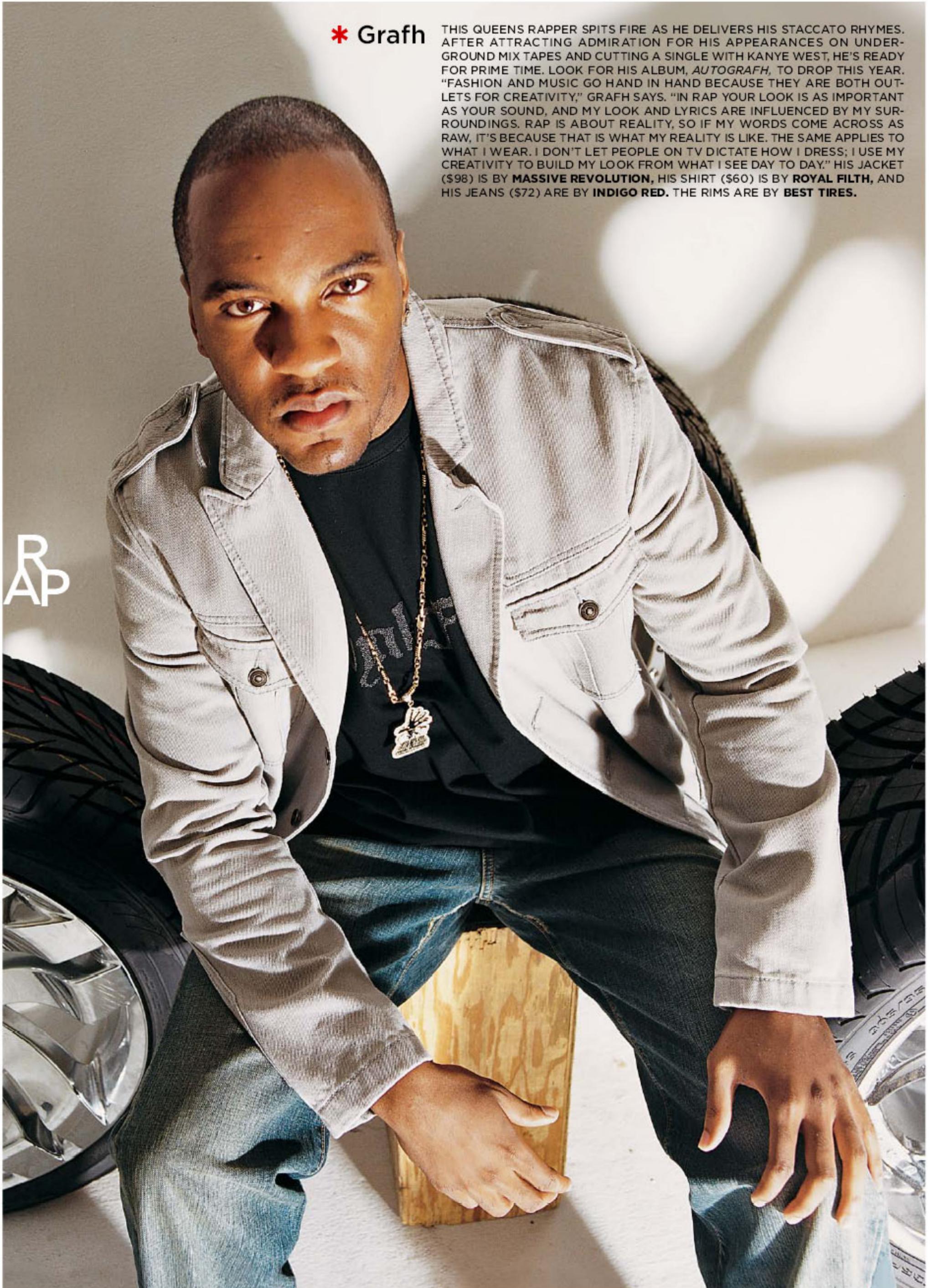
SALES. "MY SOUND IS UNIQUELY NEW YORK," GUNZ SAYS, "BUT I PICK UP MY STYLE EVERYWHERE. YOUR CLOTHES REPRESENT WHO YOU ARE. I'M A JEANS-AND-SNEAKERS GUY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO WEAR A SUIT TO LOOK GOOD; AS LONG AS WHAT YOU WEAR IS CRISP, YOU'RE SHOWING YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR APPEARANCE." HIS YELLOW JACKET (\$100) AND JEANS (\$95) ARE BY **MASSIVE REVOLUTION**. THE RHINESTONE T-SHIRT (\$35) IS BY **PLAYBOY FASHION**. THE BOOM BOXES ARE BY **JVC**.

/ FASHION

* **Grafh**

THIS QUEENS RAPPER SPITS FIRE AS HE DELIVERS HIS STACCATO RHYMES. AFTER ATTRACTING ADMIRATION FOR HIS APPEARANCES ON UNDERGROUND MIX TAPES AND CUTTING A SINGLE WITH KANYE WEST, HE'S READY FOR PRIME TIME. LOOK FOR HIS ALBUM, *AUTOGRAFH*, TO DROP THIS YEAR. "FASHION AND MUSIC GO HAND IN HAND BECAUSE THEY ARE BOTH OUTLETS FOR CREATIVITY," GRAFH SAYS. "IN RAP YOUR LOOK IS AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR SOUND, AND MY LOOK AND LYRICS ARE INFLUENCED BY MY SURROUNDINGS. RAP IS ABOUT REALITY, SO IF MY WORDS COME ACROSS AS RAW, IT'S BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT MY REALITY IS LIKE. THE SAME APPLIES TO WHAT I WEAR. I DON'T LET PEOPLE ON TV DICTATE HOW I DRESS; I USE MY CREATIVITY TO BUILD MY LOOK FROM WHAT I SEE DAY TO DAY." HIS JACKET (\$98) IS BY **MASSIVE REVOLUTION**, HIS SHIRT (\$60) IS BY **ROYAL FILTH**, AND HIS JEANS (\$72) ARE BY **INDIGO RED**. THE RIMS ARE BY **BEST TIRES**.

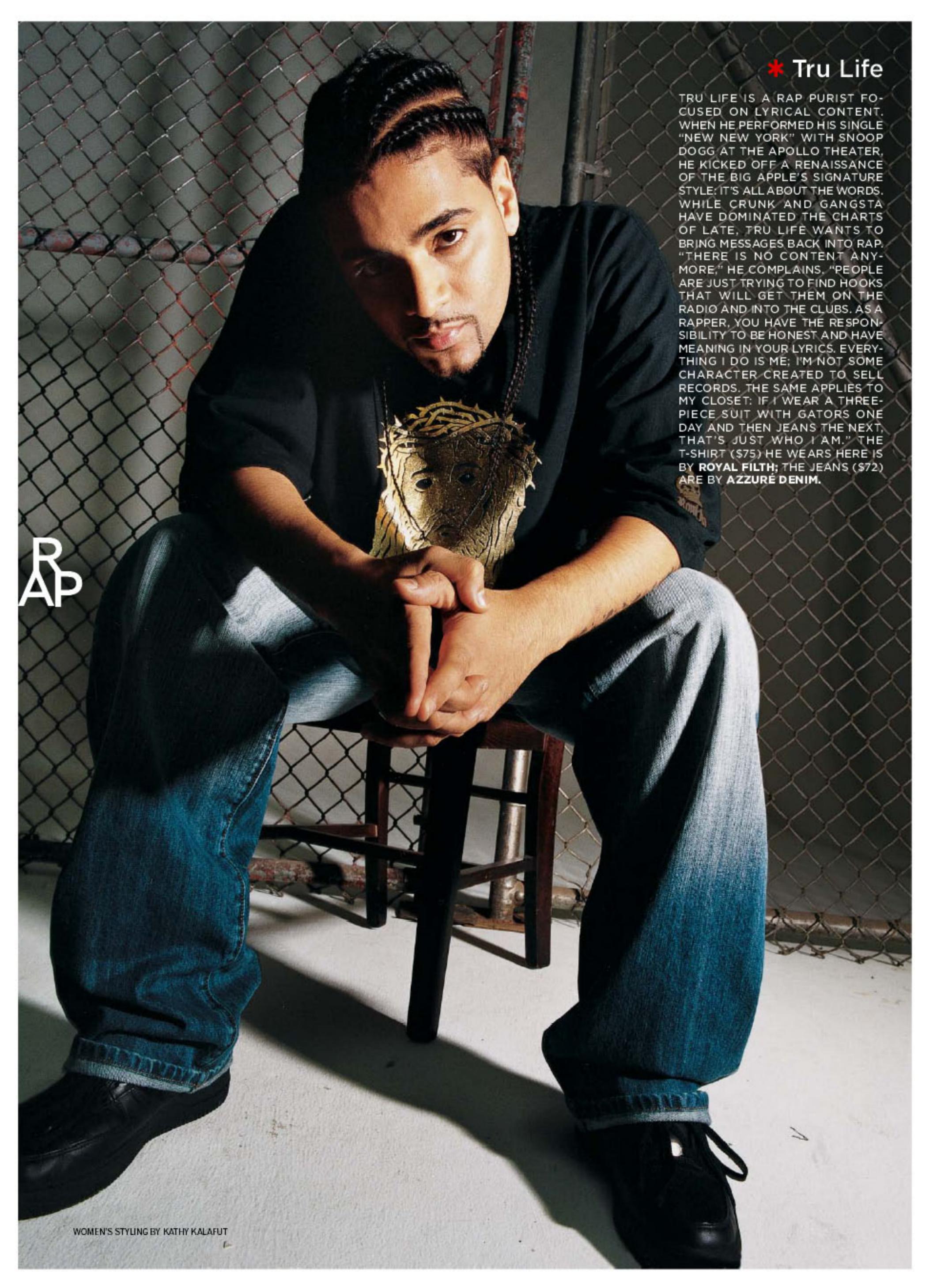
R
AP



ROCK

* Queens of the Stone Age

"NICOTINE, VALIUM, VICODIN, MARIJUANA, ECSTASY AND ALCOHOL" ALWAYS SEEMED LIKE A GOOD MANTRA TO US—EVEN MORE SO AFTER THE QUEENS MADE IT A CATCHY ROCK ANTHEM WITH "FEEL GOOD HIT OF THE SUMMER." WHILE THEIR ATTITUDE HAS REMAINED THE SAME, THEY HAVE NONETHELESS GARNERED ACCOLADES FROM EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE GRAMMY NOMINATION COMMITTEE THAT RECENTLY HONORED THEM FOR "LITTLE SISTER" FROM *LULLABIES TO PARALYZE*, THE FOLLOW-UP TO THEIR MULTIPLATINUM *SONGS FOR THE DEAF* LP. FROM LEFT: ALAIN JOHANNES IS IN A JACKET (\$190), GRAY SHIRT (\$92) AND BLACK T-SHIRT (\$60) BY **SALVAGE**. JOEY CASTILLO WEARS A PIN-STRIPED BLAZER (\$475), VEST (\$250) AND WHITE SHIRT (\$135) BY **J. LINDBERG**; HIS BLACK JEANS (\$150) ARE BY **SALVAGE**. EVIL GENIUS JOSH HOMME FORMED THE BAND FROM THE ASHES OF STONER-METAL PIONEERS KYUSS. (HE HAS ENERGY AND TUNES TO SPARE AND PUTS THEM TO USE WITH EAGLES OF DEATH METAL AND IN HIS ALL-STAR DESERT SESSIONS.) HERE HE WEARS A BLAZER (\$250) BY **CLIFT**; THE SHIRT (\$120) AND JEANS (\$155) ARE BY **SALVAGE**. AS FOR TROY VAN LEEUWEN, HE'S IN A PIN-STRIPED SINGLE-BUTTON JACKET (\$900) AND PANTS (\$250) BY **RICHMOND X**.



* Tru Life

TRU LIFE IS A RAP PURIST FOCUSED ON LYRICAL CONTENT. WHEN HE PERFORMED HIS SINGLE "NEW NEW YORK" WITH SNOOP DOGG AT THE APOLLO THEATER, HE KICKED OFF A RENAISSANCE OF THE BIG APPLE'S SIGNATURE STYLE: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE WORDS. WHILE CRUNK AND GANGSTA HAVE DOMINATED THE CHARTS OF LATE, TRU LIFE WANTS TO BRING MESSAGES BACK INTO RAP. "THERE IS NO CONTENT ANYMORE," HE COMPLAINS. "PEOPLE ARE JUST TRYING TO FIND HOOKS THAT WILL GET THEM ON THE RADIO AND INTO THE CLUBS. AS A RAPPER, YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO BE HONEST AND HAVE MEANING IN YOUR LYRICS. EVERYTHING I DO IS ME; I'M NOT SOME CHARACTER CREATED TO SELL RECORDS. THE SAME APPLIES TO MY CLOSET: IF I WEAR A THREE-PIECE SUIT WITH GATORS ONE DAY AND THEN JEANS THE NEXT, THAT'S JUST WHO I AM." THE T-SHIRT (\$75) HE WEARS HERE IS BY **ROYAL FILTH**; THE JEANS (\$72) ARE BY **AZZURÉ DENIM**.

R
AP

ROCK

* The Sounds

THANK GOD FOR SWEDEN. EVEN IF THE WOMEN WEREN'T ALL FAIR-HAIRED GODDESSES (THEY ARE), EVEN IF THE SUN SET ON SUMMER BEACH PARTIES (IT DOESN'T) AND EVEN IF THE COUNTRY'S DESIGN AESTHETIC HADN'T REVOLUTIONIZED THE LOOK OF MODERNITY (IT DID), WE'D STILL HAVE ALL THE BOISTEROUS SWEDISH ROCK AND ROLL THAT HAS SCREAMED ITS WAY INTO OUR HEARTS IN THE PAST DECADE. THE SOUNDS, FROM HELSINGBORG, ARE ONE OF THE BANDS MAKING ALL THAT WONDERFUL NOISE. THEIR SECOND ALBUM, *DYING TO SAY THIS TO YOU*, A HOOK-FILLED UPDATE OF CLASSIC NEW WAVE, COMES OUT THIS MONTH ON NEW LINE RECORDS. THINK MISSING PERSONS, BLONDIE OR EARLY BERLIN. FROM LEFT: KEYBOARD PLAYER JESPER ANDERBERG IS WEARING A SILVER JACKET (\$1,250), BLACK SHIRT (\$300) AND GRAY CORDUROY TROUSERS (\$650) BY **DUCKIE BROWN**. JOHAN BENGTTSSON, WHO PLAYS BASS, IS IN A NAVY PIN-STRIPED SUIT (\$250) BY **ORIGINAL PENGUIN** AND SILVER SNEAKERS (\$90) BY **ASICS**. SINGER MAJA IVARSSON IS IN A SILVER-AND-GOLD DRESS (\$1,085) BY **JUST CAVALLI**; HER SHOES (\$217) ARE BY **CLAUDIA CIUTI**, AND HER BRACELET (\$290) IS BY **VASS LUDACER**. GUITAR PLAYER FELIX RODRIGUEZ WEARS A JACQUARD-DETAIL JACKET (\$895) AND STRAIGHT-LEG JACQUARD-DETAIL TROUSERS (\$395) BY **JUST CAVALLI**. FREDRIK NILSSON MANS THE DRUM KIT; HERE HE'S WEARING A GRAY PIN-STRIPED SINGLE-BUTTON SUIT (\$1,320) BY **RICHMOND X**.

WHERE AND HOW TO BUY ON PAGE 131.



From left: Nick McCarthy, Paul Thomson,
Bob Hardy and Alex Kapranos.

FRANZ FERDINAND

ALEX KAPRANOS AND NICK MCCARTHY, THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE GRAMMY-NOMINATED, MILLION-SELLING BAND, REVEAL THE SECRET BACKWARD MESSAGES ON THEIR RECORDS, DISMISS GROUP HUGS AND BREAK DOWN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD CATCHY AND BAD CATCHY

Q1

PLAYBOY: In an industry known for unusual band names, yours stands out. How did you come up with it?

NICK: We were all sitting in Alex's flat, watching horse racing on the telly. We'd been talking about band names for ages and had lists and lists of terrible ones. A horse called the Archduke came into the race. We thought, Oh yeah, the Archduke; what was he called again? Then we started talking about the First World War and thought that was a good theme somehow, a historic theme, and we hit on Franz Ferdinand. This one guy's death changed the whole world. History changed in one moment. If you're in a band, you want to do that. You want to change everything. So we thought that would be a cool name.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Is it fair that we think the British are endlessly obsessed with the world wars and their victories over Germany?

NICK: The British never forget when they actually win something. You never hear the end of 1945 or 1966, when England beat Germany in the World Cup final. Ever since, "Two world wars and one

World Cup" has been the chant at football matches against German teams. The British are pretty narrow-minded sometimes.

ALEX: Among my contemporaries there is a lot of respect for Germany, particularly for Berlin and Hamburg. They're seen as great centers of creativity and a true bohemianism that's been lost in some areas of the U.K. I think Berlin may be the last truly bohemian city in Europe.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Are some song ideas so good that you recognize it immediately?

ALEX: I knew straightaway that "Do You Want To," on the new album, *You Could Have It So Much Better*, was a catchy tune. I was in my flat, and my girlfriend was humming it as well, so I thought, Right, it's probably catchy. But there's a difference between good catchy and bad catchy. There are those tunes you can't stop humming but would pay large amounts of money to be able to stop humming. So you have to make sure it's not one of them.

NICK: You kind of know right from the beginning, maybe not when writing a song on your own but when the four of us start playing it. With "Take Me Out," it was like, Wow, this is really good.

Then again, sometimes songs don't have that immediacy—like "Matinée," from the first album. That nearly didn't make the record. The producer hated it, but people thought it was amazing when we played it live. We ended up releasing it as a single in Britain, and people loved it.

Q4

PLAYBOY: Rumor has it a backward message is buried on your first album. True?

ALEX: When we were recording the first album we talked about old heavy metal records that had these heavily negative satanic messages telling you to go out and kill yourself and your family, all that bullshit. And we hit on an idea: Wouldn't it be amazing to put in a backward message that was mildly positive? The best one we could think of was "Call your mother. She's worried about you." It's in the middle of "Michael." So any mothers who have been receiving calls from wayward sons who are Franz Ferdinand fans may understand it now.

NICK: There's one on *You Could Have It So Much Better*, too. Of course, you have to play it backward; you can't really do that with a CD.

Q5

PLAYBOY: Do you remember the moment you learned your debut LP had gone platinum?

NICK: We were in L.A., rerecording "This Fire" for a single version, and we were totally out of it. We'd gone for three days with hardly any sleep, and then we had to rerecord the song. It was draining.

ALEX: Yeah, we'd flown to London from somewhere in Europe, then flown to L.A. for the session. We were completely exhausted. As soon as we put down the last chord, we just collapsed. Then the head of Domino records came in and said, "Hey, guys, you've sold a million albums." Everybody was so shattered that there was only a slight moan of recognition.

NICK: All these people came in with bottles of champagne, and we just fell asleep. It wasn't much of a party, I can tell you.

Q6

PLAYBOY: Do you ever get to enjoy your success?

ALEX: We won the Mercury Music Prize in the U.K., and the next day we flew to New York. Bob Hardy, our bass player, was sitting next to me. On those transatlantic flights everybody sits with a little television in front of them, and they always play the news. At one point I stood up to get something out of the overhead locker, and I could see everybody's TV set. The news was showing coverage of our winning the prize and Bob standing up at the awards show with a look of mild shock on his face. It was so strange to see hundreds of people with headphones on looking at a picture of Bob while he was sitting next to me. That was my most surreal moment of the year.

Q7

PLAYBOY: You're constantly on the road. How do you know what place to call home?

ALEX: I would say I live in Glasgow because that's where my record collection is.

Q8

PLAYBOY: Does that mean you're all Glaswegians?

ALEX: None of us is a true, unadulterated Glaswegian. Paul Thomson, our drummer, was born in Glasgow but grew up in Edinburgh. Nick moved to Glasgow only three and a half years ago, from Munich. Bob grew up in Bradford. Although I went to secondary school in Glasgow, I was born in England and have a Greek father. But the band formed in Glasgow. I've always thought that how you socialize and who you go out with influence you more than anything else. The ideas

exchanged over a couple of drinks in a pub are the ones that often form your character. And there are some good people to have a glass with in Glasgow.

Q9

PLAYBOY: What is it about Glasgow that makes it such fertile ground for music? The Jesus and Mary Chain, Primal Scream, Teenage Fanclub, Belle & Sebastian and many others have come from there.

NICK: It's cheap and easy to live in Glasgow. Artists and musicians can focus on their art instead of spending all their time working in bars, trying to make money to pay the rent, like the way it is in London.

ALEX: Glasgow is a major metropolitan city, yet it's so far away from London that people see themselves as independent of any scenes or trends that take place there. I've heard people talk about the miserable weather—you can't do anything outside, so you might as well stay inside and write some tunes. There's also the straight-talking nature of Glasgow, which has a lot to do with its working-class heritage. It tends not to tolerate much bullshit. At the same time, if someone is doing something interesting, people are very vocal about their appreciation. Any band that plays in Glasgow comes to terms with this very quickly because an audience will either go completely crazy for you or bottle you off the stage.

Q10

PLAYBOY: Were you able to live cheap and easy when you were starting out?

NICK: In Glasgow there are so many old industrial buildings no longer in use and a lot of illegal dance parties. Alex and I were walking around one day and saw an empty building. We went in and walked upstairs, and on the sixth floor was this amazing space with windows all around it. You could see the whole city. We called it the Château, because you felt like king of the world up there. We thought it was a great place to set up because the club scene seemed tired. Eventually we got all six floors. So a lot of artists started using it for studios and rehearsal rooms. We had an amazing concert room on the top floor. It was really cheap to rent and became our headquarters. It was brilliant—until the police arrived.

Q11

PLAYBOY: Did they kick you out?

NICK: We had to give it up because the police came again and again about the noise. We moved to an old, disused jail. We took that over in the same kind of way. That's also full of artist studios now. ALEX: But the Château is still in use. There's a huge community, 30 or 40 artists. It's a cool place—a very cool place in winter.

Q12

PLAYBOY: What about religious divisions and the violence between Catholics and Protestants that plagues Glasgow?

ALEX: I hate to say it, but the two big Glasgow football teams are at the heart of the sectarian problems. When I arrived at school everybody asked me straightaway if I was a Catholic or a Protestant—in other words, did I support Celtic or Rangers. I said, "I'm Greek Orthodox. What does that make me?" There wasn't a Greek Orthodox team. Still, it's nowhere near as bad as it used to be. It seems to be very much of the older generations. In fact, it bears a lot of similarities to racism. I'm sure you find in America that two or three generations ago racism was a lot more common than it is in ours.

Q13

PLAYBOY: Do you ever want to mix politics into your music?

ALEX: I feel slightly uncomfortable talking about politics because I never want to turn into one of those horrible, moralizing sods in a band who try to tell people how they should see the world. NICK: For us it's not the right place. I appreciate what Bob Geldof has done, though he's not doing it in his music. Not too many bands do it well. They may be doing it for a good cause, but you often have the idea they don't know what they're talking about.

Q14

PLAYBOY: Do you have a ritual to get ready for live performances?

ALEX: No. Once we were backstage at a festival and we saw a band—I won't say which—all huddled in a circle, doing a basketball-team group hug. We had a good laugh at them.

Q15

PLAYBOY: Does being on the road make writing new material difficult?

ALEX: It's strange to talk about touring as grueling. When we were writing the songs for the first record, we were working other jobs. At one stage Bob and I worked as chefs. If you're doing a split shift from 8:30 in the morning until three o'clock the next morning, that's a hell of a lot more grueling than having to play a show in San Francisco for some people who want to hear your music.

NICK: We had six or seven songs we'd already been playing live that we wanted to record for the new album, and we had loads and loads of ideas. But we wanted to be back home, able to relax and write songs the way we used to—hanging out, playing music to one another.

(concluded on page 142)

Circus Tricks



JUAN IVAREZ • JORGE G

25 playboy's sexiest celebrities

The stars
who light
up our
movies,
shows
and
magazines

When you turn on your TV, you see them. When the lights go out in the theater and the movie begins, there they are again. You see them on your computer screen when you're online and on the inside of your eyelids when you dream. We're talking about Angelina, Paris, Halle, Scarlett—the glorious female specimens who are the toast of pop culture. And for good reason. Physical beauty is skin-deep, but the kind of sexiness these women exude comes from somewhere else. It's a confidence, a talent, a curiosity. The secret to their success lies in part in their ability to move both men and women viscerally, to stir us. These eight pages celebrate our picks for the sexiest female celebrities. You'll find many of the usual suspects looking their hottest, plus a few surprises. At the top of the list: the lovely Jessica Alba. She was young enough to qualify as Lolita-esque when we first got to know her in 2000, on the hit series *Dark Angel*. But her performances in last year's *Sin City* and *Into the Blue* made it all too clear: This little angel is all grown up.



Sex Star of the Year
Jessica Alba





.....
Jaime Pressly From the trashy vixen in *Poison Ivy: The New Seduction* to the trashy vixen in *My Name Is Earl*—thank heaven for typecasting.

Jenny McCarthy She's returned to TV with *Party at the Palms*. No, not those palms. Ain't it a shame?

Halle Berry Here's a million-dollar idea: Invent a new berry. Call it halleberry. Sell halleberry ice cream by the bucket. Hell, we'd buy it.

Mariah Carey The comeback story of the year! Admit it. You like that single on the radio. You know you do.



Holly, Bridget and Kendra This is what downsizing looks like to Mr. Hefner, who went from seven girlfriends to three. Cue violin music.

Joanna Krupa How many Polish-born bikini models does it take to screw in a lightbulb? No idea, but we get to hold the ladder.

Eva Longoria June Cleaver she isn't. But like her predecessor, the hottest desperate housewife has a beaver that just can't stay out of trouble.

Angelina Jolie Who's your mommy? The Pitt-pilfering United Nations ambassador says she plans to adopt a third child.



.....
Pam Anderson With a hit sitcom and her *Comedy Central Roast*, our Miss February 1990 only gets hotter. Know how she cools off? Skinny-dipping with Denise Richards, that's how.

Tyra Banks She had a televised sonogram to prove her perfect chest is 100 percent real. Jeez, Tyra, just go ahead and rub it in our faces, why don't you. No, really, we'd like it if you did that.

Beyoncé Blog and Homer Simpson's *doh!* were recently added to the Oxford English Dictionary. What, no *bootylicious*? Guess those stuffy lexicographers still aren't ready for this jelly.

Denise Richards She did a hot lesbian scene with Neve Campbell in *Wild Things*. She was a Bond girl. But still, Denise never looked half as hot as she did in our December 2004 cover shoot.

Jennifer Garner As Sydney Bristow on *Alias* or Elektra Natchios in *Daredevil*, she would just as soon seduce you as kick your ass. Thank you, Jen. May we have another?



.....
Kelly Monaco She won *Dancing With the Stars* when all three judges scored her a 10. This wasn't exactly news to us—we gave her high marks as Miss April 1997.

Jenna Jameson Even in semiretirement, the first celebrity porn star is all about money shots. Revenue for ClubJenna, says *Forbes*, hit \$30 million in 2005, a 30 percent increase.

Ziyi Zhang She's been hitting fans of kung-fu movies where it counts since *Crouching Tiger*, but her sexy turn in *Memoirs of a Geisha* may just put Z.Z. over the top.

Paris Hilton This week's celebute is next week's burnout, but Paris endures. Scandal weathering is her science. She's smarter than she looks—and that's hot.



Shakira Coffee, cocaine and 'Kira—three addictive picker uppers brought to you by the good folks of Colombia.

Jennifer Aniston How do you rebound from the dumping of the year? Stripping down for a few magazine covers should do the trick.

Tiffany Fallon She's the latest inductee into the most exclusive of Playboy clubs. In all of recorded history, there have been but 46 Playmates of the Year.

Brooke Burke What does Brooke have in common with Bo, Farrah and Cindy? They were all invited back for a second PLAYBOY celebrity pictorial.

Carmen Electra Her real name is Tara Patrick, and she's from Cincinnati. She hit the big time on *Baywatch*, and we've been watching her ever since.

Scarlett Johansson This serious actress is seriously sizzling. We lost count of the times we hit PAUSE during the opening credits of *Lost in Translation*.

Vida Guerra Professor, what's another word for *pirate's treasure*? Send answers to i_think_its_booty@playboy.com.





JEREMY BLOOM

(continued from page 104)

was particularly painful for him. He had to decide whether to concentrate on his skiing career or his football career. The thought that, for the first time, he couldn't do everything bothered him, but his choice was made easier because his skiing seemed to be stuck in a rut. He had always dreamed of skiing in the Olympics. When he was three he drew a picture of himself at the 2002 Olympic Games. "I did the math," he says. "I knew I'd be 19 then." But with the games approaching he was relegated to America's C team with little chance of ever making the World Cup squad. The head of the U.S. ski team didn't even know his name. "I just didn't understand it, why it wasn't happening," he says. "Some said it was because of football. So I quit skiing and accepted a football scholarship as a wide receiver and punt returner at the University of Colorado. It had always been my dream to play for the Buffaloes."

This was the beginning of a pattern of behavior for Bloom. In the next few years, whenever his prospects in one of his favorite sports dimmed, he would turn his attention to the other. This way he always avoided outright failure.

In summer 2001, before he enrolled at Colorado, Bloom received a call from the U.S. ski team, then training in Chile; if he did well, he would have a chance to make the World Cup team and compete in the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City. Bloom flew to Chile. "I got out of my football mentality and focused on skiing," he says.

That trip was the turning point of his life. "I was never more motivated," he says. "I skied really well and made the World Cup team." Of course, this required him to ski in all the World Cup events leading up to the Olympics, which made it impossible for him to play football for the Buffaloes. When he returned to Colorado he was "scared to death" at the prospect of having to tell Gary Barnett, then Colorado's coach, that he was going to ski that winter. But Bloom was shocked at how understanding Barnett was. He told Bloom he had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and should take it. His scholarship would be waiting for him the following year. "He treated me like a son," says Bloom. "If he had told me I couldn't do both, I would have chosen football."

During winter 2001 and early in 2002 Bloom skied brilliantly. He won the World Cup Championship and along the way began to acquire lucrative ski-equipment endorsement contracts, which helped finance his training to the tune of \$50,000 (but would become a

major source of problems with the NCAA). When the Olympics rolled around, Bloom was considered the prohibitive favorite to win a gold medal in his specialty, freestyle moguls skiing.

Freestyle moguls owes its popularity to the kind of gonzo X Games skiing of young daredevils with surfer-dude hair and baggy clothes who get their kicks doing somersaults as they ski off mountains. There is a countercultural element to moguls and an aura of rebelliousness around its practitioners. In freestyle moguls, skiers fly over a series of kidney-jarring bumps at more than 35 miles an hour, down a 250-yard course punctuated by two ramps. As skiers launch off those ramps, they perform tricks, such as backward or forward flips. Although Bloom often falls after attempting these stunts—he once landed on his back, bruising his liver, kidneys and vertebrae; his father remembers seeing it and thinking, Paralysis or death—he finds the sport exhilarating. "There's a huge element of danger to moguls," Bloom says. "You're suspended in the air for three seconds, doing these crazy maneuvers. It's insane, but I love the feeling of invincibility and freedom."

In 1992 the IOC made freestyle moguls skiing an Olympic sport in a blatant effort to appeal to MTV fans, who found most Olympic events boring and stodgy. The rebellious freestyle skiers, it was hoped, would share a kindred spirit with these viewers. Bloom, however, is not really much of a rebel. He is more conventionally driven, cautious and success-oriented in a way X Gamers are not. X Gamers don't care much about falling or landing properly on their skis or snowboard. They compete for the thrill of the trick, the danger and outrageousness of what they do, not for the medals or endorsements that may follow.

Bloom is "the best natural talent in our sport," according to fellow moguls skier Travis Cabral. Bloom's coach, Scott Rawles, says, "He's confident, competitive and blessed." But the main reason he is the best moguls skier in the world is his showmanship. Like figure skating, moguls is a judged sport. Moguls skiers are evaluated on their turns over bumps (50 percent), their tricks (25 percent) and their speed down the slope (25 percent). Bloom, in Rawles's words, "adds flair to his tricks to give the judges what they want to see." But while Bloom admits he performs "a huge trick at the bottom to impress the judges," he gets annoyed at being called a showman, as if the label were unmanly. "I consider myself an athlete," he says. He claims that the judging for moguls is less arbitrary than that for figure skating. "The judges usually get it right," he says.

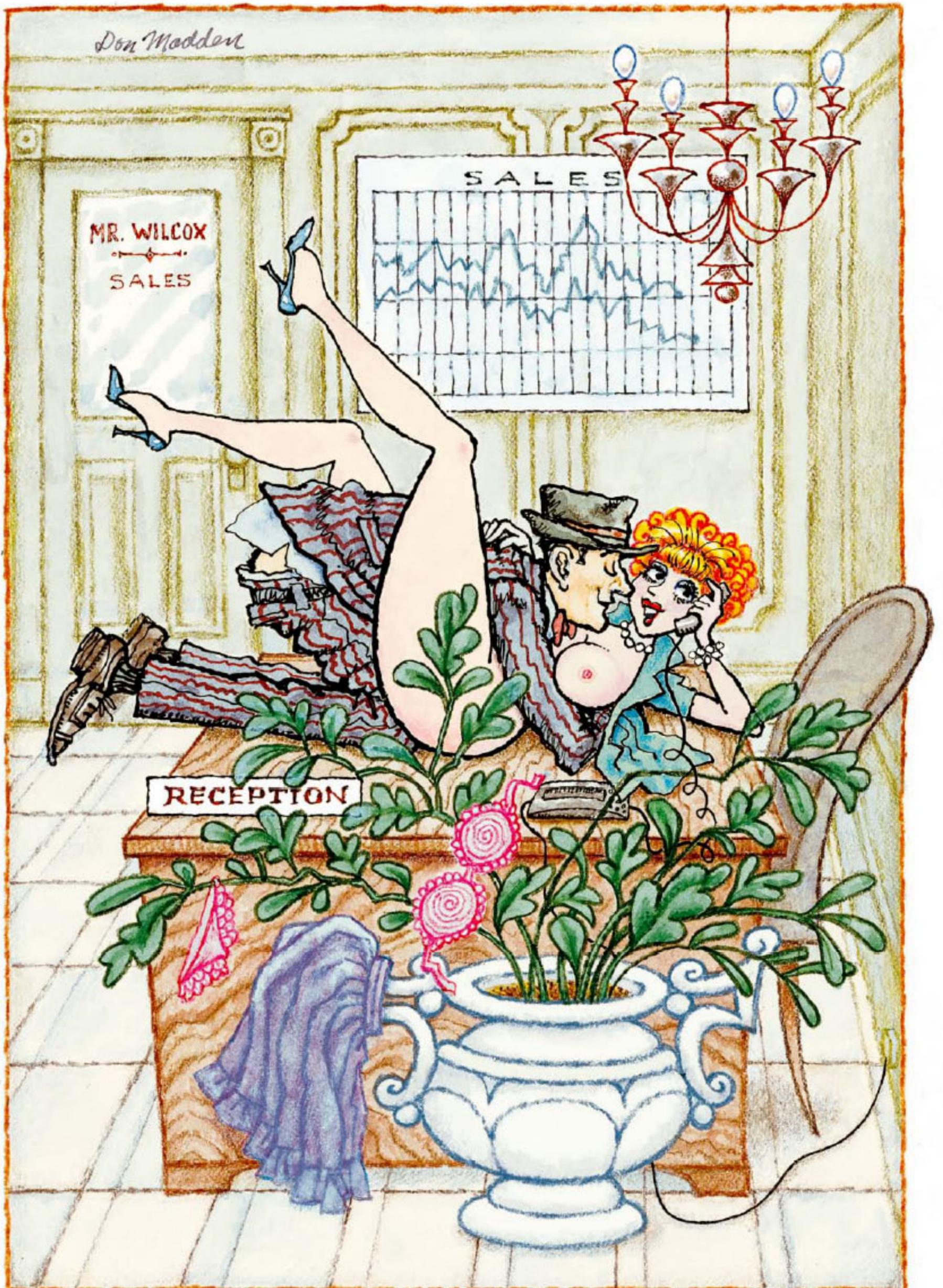
In Rawles's view, Bloom's versatility makes him unique. "I've never seen someone so proficient in radically different sports—football and skiing. Usually skiers have no interest in football." That may be, but skiers have more in common with wide receivers and punt returners than Rawles thinks. They need the same type of physique, strengthen the same muscle groups and must take the same attitude toward what they do.

Like moguls skiers, punt returners and wide receivers need lean, flexible, muscular bodies dominated by a solid core of abs and obliques that allows them to swivel left and right to elude tacklers just as skiers swivel over ski bumps. Both need strong legs, speed, quickness from a standing start and balance, the ability to land steadily on their feet whether coming down from a trick or from catching a pass. Bloom has amazing foot speed—he has clocked a 4.3 in the 40 yards and a 9.4 in the 100 yards—and an unbelievable burst from a standing start. His coaches say he can move as fast sideways and backward as he can forward. He also has excellent hand-eye coordination for pass catching and exceptional depth perception, which allows him to evaluate approaching bumps or would-be tacklers. His NFL agent, Gary Wichard, says Bloom has "a subconscious reaction to color," as if he sees more frames per second than the ordinary person—a perception so quick that just a glimpse of a tackler's uniform can translate immediately into an elusive sidestep.

Bloom says the major differences between his two sports have to do with preparation and competition: "Football training is redundant to motivate slow learners." Bloom is self-motivated and a fast learner. He says each sport satisfies a different need. "Skiing is about freedom, and football is about discipline and order. You can't win a football game by yourself no matter how well you play, and that's frustrating. In skiing, if I lose, it's because of me. I just do it better the next week. Skiing is about personal satisfaction—and personal frustration."

Bloom finished ninth in the 2002 Olympics. Fellow skier Jonny Moseley said, "He blew it. That was his gold to win." Disappointed, Bloom decided to return to football and accepted the scholarship waiting for him at Colorado. But before he could play for the Buffaloes, the NCAA insisted he drop all his ski endorsements, claiming they were contrary to its rules about professionalism. Bloom argued with the NCAA to no avail, so he decided to let his endorsements drop. "I missed the thrill of the quarterback calling my play in a huddle," he says, "going over

Don Madden



"He doesn't have an appointment, Mr. Wilcox, but there's a very persuasive man here who'd be ideal to fill that sales slot."

the middle, knowing I'd get hit with that adrenaline rush when the ball was coming toward me, leaping, trying to stay relaxed and catch it with soft hands, then hitting the ground and tightening up before getting hit by a tackler."

Bloom arrived at Colorado amid much fanfare touting him as a skier, a heartthrob and a big playmaker on the gridiron. "I had a lot of publicity," he says, "but I tried to fit in, not to take attention away from the seniors." Buffaloes quarterback Joel Klatt says, "This big-play guy comes in, and he's like five-two." But he was a handsome five-two: Girls climbed up his dormitory wall to peek in his window, and his teammates ribbed him about all his female attention.

But not for long. The first time Bloom touched a football in a game, he revealed an explosive talent. He caught a punt on his 25-yard line, then threaded his way through the tacklers, scooting left and right like a water bug eluding hungry frogs. When he got into the open field, he simply outran his defenders to the goal line. "Nothing will ever top the thrill of that," he says. His father remembers that moment. "Here comes my son on the punt return," he says. "I closed my eyes and saw a little boy in the backyard. It was the most thrilling moment of my life."

Another time, as a wide receiver, Bloom ran full speed down the field, outrunning the defensive backs chasing him, glanced up over his shoulder, caught a pass without breaking stride and took it to the end zone for a 96-yard touchdown reception, the longest pass for a touchdown in CU history.

Bloom was an anomaly. He displayed the kind of game-breaking speed associated with black NFL receivers such as the Washington Redskins' Santana Moss and the Carolina Panthers' Steve Smith, not white boys with names like Jeremy Bloom. If he ever made the NFL, that would be his brand: the Small White Hope, a little white-boy skier from the mountains of Colorado who could outrun black defenders from tiny towns in

the Deep South. "He's a ferocious competitor," says Barnett. "At the time, Colorado had two receivers who would go on to the NFL. But opposing teams always double-teamed Jeremy because they were afraid he would beat them."

The Buffaloes finished with a 9-5 record that year, and in their Big 12 title game, which they lost to Oklahoma, Bloom returned another punt 80 yards for a touchdown. He took his exams and then flew to Finland to compete in a World Cup skiing event, where he finished fourth. He then flew back to Colorado to play in the Alamo Bowl.

After his first season Bloom was named to the Freshman All-America team and was considered one of the five best punt returners in college football. Big things were expected in his sophomore season, but that year was something of a disappointment for him. The Buffaloes finished with a 5-7 record, and Bloom did not fulfill the promise he showed as a freshman, although he was voted to the All-Big 12 team. He returned 24 punts that year for a total of 289 yards; the year before, just two of his returns accounted for 155 yards. Still, after two years at Colorado he had five touchdowns on plays of 75 yards or longer.

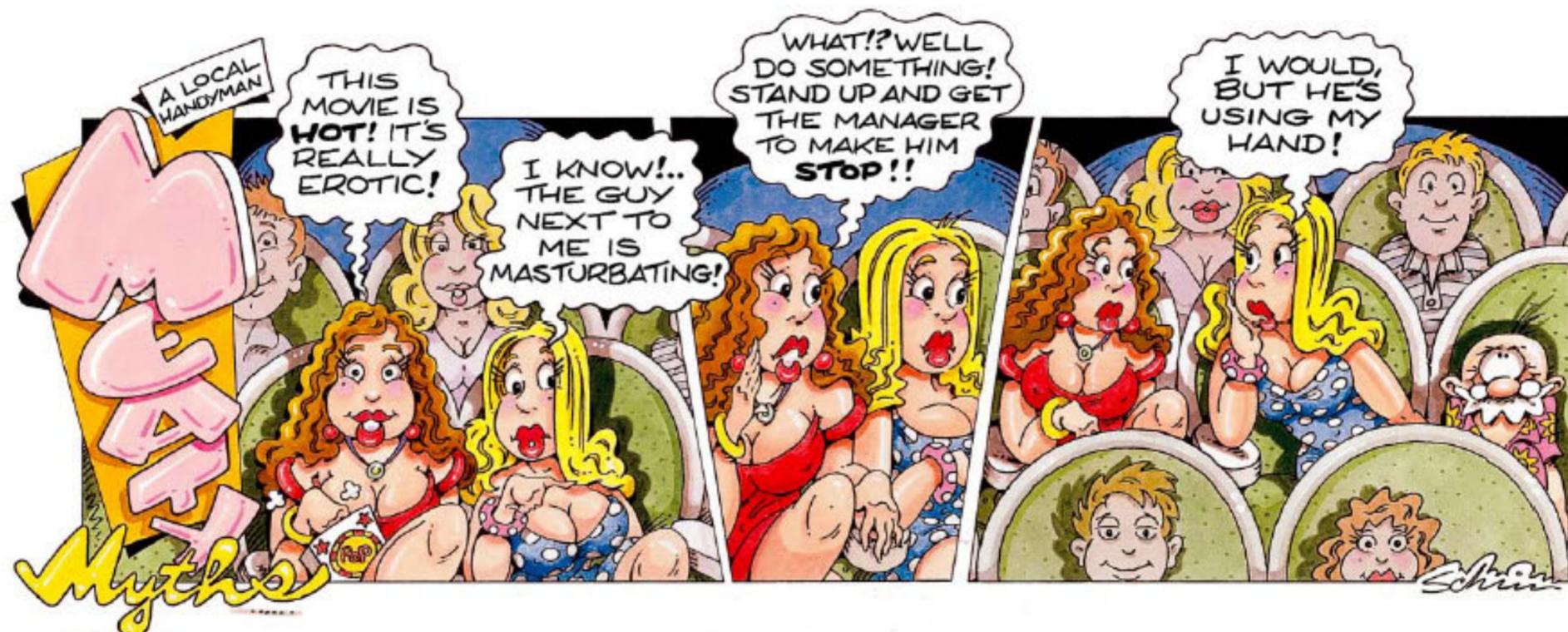
Nonetheless he turned his attention back to World Cup skiing and inexplicably signed endorsement contracts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars—a flagrant violation of NCAA rules. This was Bloom's second violation, which left the organization little choice but to ban him from intercollegiate sports forever. Why he did it, he won't say, other than that he needed money for his ski training. It's possible that he wanted a reason not to play football after his disappointing sophomore year and sought to shift that responsibility onto the NCAA. But maybe he thought he could have it all: World Cup skiing, the endorsements and girls that go with it, college football glory and, most important, the vindication that Jeremy Bloom could do what-

ever he put his mind to. Besides, a fight with the NCAA appealed to his combative nature. So he went to court to try to force the organization to let him have his endorsements and play football at the same time. "The NCAA was trying to take my dream," he says. "I was going to fight it to the bitter end."

As Bloom points out, Drew Henson had been paid a \$2 million bonus to play minor league baseball for the New York Yankees after graduating from high school and was then allowed to play quarterback for the University of Michigan. He also argues that Tim Dwight was allowed to compete on the Iowa track team after accepting endorsements as a professional football player. The NCAA argues that its rules are simple: Athletes can be paid or win prize money in one sport and still compete on the college level in a different sport, but they can't sign endorsement contracts, period. Bloom and his lawyer tried to convince the NCAA that for all intents and purposes his ski endorsements were prize money and should be considered part of his salary, but the organization rejected that argument.

The battle dragged on through 2004, with Bloom losing appeal after appeal. At one point Bloom wanted to prove that much of his appearance and endorsement money came not from his fame as an athlete but because of his talent in front of a TV camera. He wanted to call as a witness a casting director who had given him a role on Nickelodeon. "But the casting director couldn't testify," asserts Bloom, "because Nickelodeon is owned by Viacom, which owns CBS, which has sports contracts with the NCAA. It was insane."

When his last appeal had been exhausted in 2004 and the courts ruled against him, Bloom took his case to Congress. "I'm going to be a thorn in the side of the NCAA all my life," he says. He told his story to a subcommittee investigating NCAA sports, in whom he found what he had always wanted, a supportive audience.



"It was an incredible experience," Bloom says. "I was going to testify before the House. I wore a suit, but I didn't wear a tie, because it's not like my generation to dress up. But I should have worn a tie. Representative Spencer Bachus led me underground to the hearing. I got fired up. It was a weird feeling, as though I were going through a tunnel onto the field, only my teammates were now congressmen. I sat alone at a table, no lawyer, and gave my testimony. I thought, I can finally speak. Of course, nothing came of it. But for me, it was my Super Bowl."

After the hearing, Bachus said the NCAA's goal was "to keep athletes uninformed, poor and powerless." Bachus also claimed the NCAA had accused him of taking up Bloom's fight because, as a representative from Alabama, Bachus hoped to get even with the NCAA for sanctions it had placed on the Auburn basketball and Alabama football programs.

Now, Bloom says, "The NCAA can take my career, but it can't take my passion. Fighting it gave me mental clarity." Bloom returned to skiing full-time and in 2005 had one of the greatest World Cup years any moguls skier has ever had. It brought him the type of exposure that would lead to MTV and endorsements beyond skiing. These would brand him as a sex symbol and reinforce the idea that Jeremy Bloom could be everything.

Bloom says that prior to the 2005 World Cup season he had been skiing tentatively, satisfied simply to reach the podium at each event in second or third place. Finally, he says, "I was sick of being third. I wasn't putting myself at risk to be first. I watched Tiger Woods and saw how he worked on his weaknesses during a tournament, even if he didn't make the cut because of it. So last year, in my first World Cup event, I tried some new things and didn't play it safe. I finished 35th, second, 16th, fifth, and then it clicked. I won my first competition, and I thought, I don't know if I can lose all year."

He was almost right. He won six consecutive World Cup events, a moguls record, finished second in his last event and won the World Cup title. Moseley, who had criticized him for his 2002 Olympics failure, said, "He used to be great; now he's dominant. He makes magic happen."

Bloom is now poised to redeem himself in Turin for his 2002 Olympics meltdown. But the pressure doesn't bother him. He says it doesn't matter whether he even makes this year's Olympic team or wins a gold medal, because "I can walk away from skiing with a smile on my face about my accomplishments." Besides, the NFL is waiting, and television too. Bloom likes to keep his options open.

Football, for Bloom, is "unfinished business." At the NFL combine in February he will have a chance to "blow them away" with his talent. He isn't the only one who thinks he can. NFL scout Ron Hill says that despite his small size, "Bloom plays at a fast pace. He's a guy you have to look at."

"Sure, I'm small," says Bloom, "but look at Steve Smith. He's five-nine, and he's leading the NFL in receiving this year."

Gary Wichard, Bloom's agent, also agrees with his client, calling criticism of Bloom's size a kind of reverse racism. "No one talks about Santana Moss's or Steve Smith's size," he says. "No white wide receiver has been drafted in the first round since 1978, but Jeremy is going to dispel the myths about white wide receivers. Some scouts complain they haven't seen him play in three years; my response is that his body hasn't been abused in three years. I expect him to be drafted in one of the first three rounds on the first day."

Highly regarded NFL draft expert Mel Kiper Jr. says, "I expect Bloom to go as high as the third or fourth round. He has tremendous instincts and vision, plus quickness and leg strength that he got from skiing to break tackles. He can catch the ball, he's a dynamic return man, and he's electrifying in the open field."

And if Bloom doesn't make the NFL, he always has his MTV exposure to fall back on. His goal is someday to host his own live television talk show, a "Bob Costas show for the MTV generation," he says. "But I want it to appeal to everyone."

The only problem for Bloom is that his MTV brand image will conflict with his NFL brand image. Wichard wants to brand Bloom as a tough white boy in a tough black man's game. But Bloom's entertainment agents at CAA are worried that any success he may have in a mainstream sport such as football may dilute his countercultural brand image among his skiing and MTV fans, who may think their hero has sold out. If Bloom makes the NFL, CAA hopes it can still maintain his rebellious, anti-mainstream image.

"Do I fantasize about winning a gold in the Olympics, winning a Super Bowl and having my own show on TV?" he asks. "Sure, I do." And if one of those dreams falls through, he'll just switch gears and concentrate on the possibilities he has left. Even he admits, however, that at some point in his life he may have none of them.

"I think about what life will be like without the spotlight," he says. "Someday it will end. I don't mind that." He just doesn't want it to end sooner than he expects.



PLAYBOY PICKS

your guide for living the good life

PATRÓN SILVER

Patrón Silver is made from the finest Blue Agave available in the highlands of Jalisco, Mexico. Known for its light, fresh, crystal-clear taste and an elegant smoothness, Patrón is the ultimate ultra-premium tequila, simply stated, "Simply Perfect."



GLENLIVET CITY LINKS



Playboy partnered with The Glenlivet City Links tour, bringing two Scottish exports—Scotch whiskey and golf—together with Playboy Bunnies, in Manhattan. The urban-scaled course and traditional clubhouse served as golf oasis by day and VIP cocktail lounge by night. Catch the tour's San Francisco finish, February 15-25. glenlivet.com/society/citylinks

ABSOLUT SEQUEL



ABSOLUT SEQUEL, by Richard Lewis, is the new collection of ABSOLUT ads from the past decade. It comes with a bonus CD containing

unseen ABSOLUT films. Available at bookstores. Signed copies can be purchased at absolutsequel.com

NEW ORLEANS

(continued from page 72)

a deeper sentence. Many who desire to return cannot afford it and have no home to come back to. But the rebuilding is under way. Shingles are nailed by day, rotten dry-wall is hauled to the curb, diesel Bobcats purr—and by night, sounds along the river have a Hispanic tinge. Boom boxes belt mariachi; guitars have a flamenco urgency. There's talk that the city could be 40 percent Hispanic in a decade.

Some people who have been cast away will claw their way home. The historian's nightmare is the city planner's dream: Fresh concrete will be laid, neighborhoods will appear, and residents proud of their past and of the culture they have created despite their poverty, will return to claim it. The government domicile—newly roofed, its siding manufactured, its look indistinguishable from that of public housing in Minnesota, Maine or Montana—will be occupied by people who feel at home only

in New Orleans and who will make their New Orleans home authentic. Through decoration, through humidity, through funk oozing up from the soil, the generic will become particular. There's a reason that beignets at Cafe Du Monde in the French Quarter taste different from the beignets in the Metairie suburb and different from those in your nearby mall.

Give us an inch, everything about New Orleans seems to say, and we'll make a party. Like the fragrance from a camellia blossom after the rain, like bland rice taking the flavor of what surrounds it, like the title of the Rebirth Brass Band's first album, *Here to Stay* (or even the band's very name), the spirit of New Orleans makes the best of a difficult situation. To the sound of Satchmo's dramatic, impossibly acrobatic introduction to "West End Blues," we will be back, pig lips and all, to make our homes and live our lives in New Orleans. Such are the defiant rhythms of the city.



GIVING IT UP

(continued from page 73)

horrifying experience. I thought, Man, I'm never doing that again.

STEPHEN MALKMUS

We were backstage at the legendary San Francisco punk-rock club On Broadway, in 1982. This gnarly punk-rock chick came up from behind and put her hands down my pants. Then, in the filthiest needle-strewn toilet in Frisco, we became one. We had been flirting over Olde English 40-ouncers outside the club. You could say she was a veteran of the scene. I think the early, good Social Distortion was headlining that night.

DILATED PEOPLES

RAKAA: We played an old tape of Prince's *Purple Rain* soundtrack. I was half in shock that it was finally happening and half thinking about Apollonia.

OK GO

DAMIAN KULASH: I was in a shower. I feel I leapfrogged the usual chain of things; I don't think you're supposed to get to shower sex until the fifth or sixth time. But she was like my best friend. She was actually dating some guy in a famous rock band, but he was on tour. It wasn't as if we made out for weeks and then this happened. We started making out, and then we were like, Hey, why not? I suppose people's first sexual experiences are frequently awkward, so the shower could have amplified that. But to tell you the truth, it wasn't all that awkward. Maybe it was because having sex after my 15 years of not having sex felt so good.

DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS

PATTERSON HOOD: The Rolling Stones' *Tattoo You* album came out that day, and I bought it. My girlfriend at the time had been out of town on a family vacation, so I picked her up at the bus station. We went to see *An American Werewolf in London* and then went somewhere and humped our brains out. So it was *Tattoo You*, and it played over and over on the cassette deck. Not that it took that long, but if I remember correctly, we did it more than once. We were as in love as teenagers can be, which is quite a bit. I wouldn't want to change anything about it, and I hope she would say the same.

ARMAND VAN HELDEN

We were outside. When you're young that's usually where you are. It was in Holland, on a sand dune. I was about 13, might have been 12. It was with a girl from school. I had already been doing some crazy shit before then, too, so I don't know if it fully counts as my first time, but I didn't know what I was doing. Girls would just attack me. For real. They would say, "Let's go into the woods." I'd say, "Why?" They'd say, "Let's take down our pants."



"I can read you like a book!"

SMASH MOUTH

STEVE HARWELL: It was 1985, and I was 18, so it had to be Depeche Mode. I had been into Van Halen and the Clash for years, but then the mod thing hit and I got the bangs over to the side, the turtleneck, the Mary Jane flip-flops, all that shit. Back in the day there was a place called Mother's Disco in California, and there was this girl. She had the big *Sixteen Candles* hairdo and looked like Molly Ringwald with dark hair, with this hot little Italian body. God, I was so madly in love with her. I was living behind my parents' house in a makeshift bedroom off the garage, and I remember having Depeche Mode on when she came back there. She'd had sex already, and I had no clue what the fuck I was doing—and she rocked my fucking world. From that day on I became a whore.

THE PHARCYDE

FATLIP: It was on the roof of an apartment building. Back in the day, if somebody's parents were home, you couldn't do it in the house, and I definitely didn't have any money for hotels. I was 18. There was actually no music, but I remember a song was playing in my head for some

reason, U.T.F.O.'s "Roxanne, Roxanne." It was playing at the school dances and parties when I first started deejaying. I don't know why I was thinking about music at that moment.

WE ARE WOLVES

ANTONIN: It was 1995. I was at a party at a friend's place. His parents were gone. We started playing spin the bottle. There was a girl I had my eye on. Finally my turn came, and the bottle came to rest pointing at her. We went into a closet and started kissing. It got more and more serious. I thought, This might as well be my first time; this should be the moment. The only problem was "Tears in Heaven" by Eric Clapton was playing. I hated that song. So we went into another room and continued, and I put on "Teen Age Riot" by Sonic Youth, which I still love. I'm just glad it didn't happen to Clapton.

THE REVEREND HORTON HEAT

I wish I could remember what song it was, but I think the reason I can't is because it was to a lot of songs. I last way more than one song. I'm an all-nighter. But I think one was "Three Times a Lady." Yeah. And "(Don't Fear) the Reaper." And

"Stayin' Alive." All night long. It was in a housing project in Tulsa. And I was old, too. I couldn't get laid to save my life in high school. I was 18. And in truth it was one of those 15-second deals.

SEVENDUST

LAJON WITHERSPOON: I was 16 years old, living in Triple Creek apartments in Georgia. I had a piano teacher who lived upstairs. She was really cool. She was remarried, and I remember always hearing about her new husband's daughter. I couldn't wait for the summer, when she was going to be in town. When I finally met her she was gorgeous. We would get close to the point, but I always had to go inside early. My parents were really strict. When it finally happened we were next to a shed out back, in among trees. It was a beautiful evening, dark, with moonlight. We started to do this, and it lasted about three minutes. It ruined my summer: The only thing I could think about after I ran to my house was someone knocking on my door and telling me she was pregnant.

WYLDE BUNCH

YUNG DAME: It's a New Year's Eve in L.A., during high school. Some girls that me and my boys had been kicking it with for a few months call us that night and say they're having a get-together at a hotel. I'm not even thinking anything is going to happen; I'm still naive. Only two of us go over to the hotel, because one guy can't make it. We get there, and it's just the three girls. I'm like, "Where's everybody else?" And they say, "This is everybody." So I'm starting to catch the drift of what's going on now. I'm taking big gulps, like, Here it comes; it's do-or-die time. Plus my boy is there, so I can't chicken out. So we drink plenty of cheap vodka. The girl I've been talking to is real cool. We're just lying in bed, talking, chilling. My partner is in the other bed—there's only one room—but the girl he's with has her sister there. The sister is a little heated because there aren't three guys. And she's drunk, sitting over there salting him up: "You aren't going to touch my sister tonight. You can forget her body. Nothing going down in here." Finally we get the lights off. We have the CD changer on random. D'Angelo's *Brown Sugar* comes on, the perfect CD for a first time. As I start doing what I do, I can still hear my boy over there in the next bed catching the blues. All of a sudden the sister passes out and starts snoring. I'm trying not to laugh. I have to perform—this is my first time. The whole time I'm throwing my thing I can hear my boy trying to convince the girl now that her sister has passed out. As we finish, the D'Angelo CD fades out, and he is finally about to get his on. As soon as he starts, the next CD comes on, and it's Mack 10. I couldn't help but laugh.



"First of all, this is not a state-sponsored event...."



WILLA FORD

(continued from page 63)

"I Wanna Be Bad," and a serious relationship with Backstreet Boy Nick Carter. But soon after, she gave it all up. "Music became this corporate world where you have to compromise everything, and I'm uncontrollable," she says. "I was recording in New York, and I got in a cab, called home and said, 'I'm finished. I'm not doing this anymore.' I mean, I had so much more fun taking my clothes off for PLAYBOY than I ever had sitting in a studio writing a song."

Instead, Willa spent the next year and a half reinventing herself: She took up boxing, began working with the UFC and discovered a best friend (and sometime boyfriend) in the UFC's hulking six-foot-two, 205-pound Chuck "the Iceman" Liddell, the light-heavyweight champion as of press time.

Don't assume, though, that muscles are the only way to win Willa over. "I like tough boys because I'm tough," she says, "and if I can take you over—either mentally or physically—we've got a problem. But I like somebody who's brilliant, too, and if a guy can really out-smartass me, then I'm totally in love." But be warned that in the time she's spent with her UFC pals, she's picked up a few fighting strategies of her own. "I'm more of a verbal fighter, but if somebody ever hurts one of my friends or lays a hand on me, they're going to get laid out."

Willa once came close to testing her fighting skills outside the ring, on a night when she and onetime nemesis Paris Hilton—who also once dated Nick Carter—found themselves in Las Vegas's Hard Rock Hotel at the same time. Willa happened to be backed up by her UFC entourage. "We were sitting in a private booth," she says, "and Paris wouldn't stop walking back and forth in front of us. Chuck went over to her security guards and said, 'Listen, you see all those guys over there? We're with Willa Ford. If Paris comes closer and Willa snaps, I can't help anything. If you get in there and you touch Willa, we're all throwing down on you guys.'" Needless to say, when Paris and Willa next crossed paths, at the Playboy Mansion Halloween party, the celebrity heiress was eager to bury the hatchet. "She was so apologetic," Willa reports. "She took the high road, and we're cool now."

With a film and TV career coming into focus, Willa says she's much more at ease with herself than the teen-pop princesses who were once her peers. "If you look at all of them right now—Britney, Christina, Jessica, Mandy—and what they're doing, honestly, how happy are they?" she wonders. "I just think they're burnt. They didn't take time to slow it down for a minute, decide what they really wanted and then figure out how they were going to get it."

Judging from what we're seeing, Willa's got what it takes to get wherever she wants to go. Brains and beauty—a knock-out combination.



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 30, 33–36, 96–99, 106–111 and 154–155, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.

GAMES

Page 30: *Beatmania*, konami.com. *Donkey Konga 2*, nintendo.com. *Flow*, ubi.com. *Full Auto*, sega.com. *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers*, thq.com. *Guitar Hero*, redoctane.com. *Karaoke Revolution Party*, konami.com. *Marc Echo's Getting Up*, atari.com. *MVP '06 NCAA Baseball*, ea.com. *World Soccer: Winning Eleven 9*, konami.com.

MANTRACK

Pages 33–36: *Breguet*, breguet.com. *Fisker Coachbuild*, fiskercb.com. *iMP*, impamp.com. *JVC*, jvc.com. *Ksar Char-Bagh*, ksarcharbagh.com. *Nike Golf*, nikegolf.com. *Olive*, olive.us. *Sitbag*, 8gon.com.

PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Pages 96–99: *American Beauties poker chips*, nevadajacks.net. *Auto part chess set*, novica.com. *Blatt Billiards pool cues*, blattbilliards.com. *Cuetech cue case*, blattbilliards.com. *Hector Saxe simulated-crocodile backgammon set*, gammonvillage.com. *King and queen dart cabinet*, blattbilliards.com. *NASCAR Pinball*, sternpinball.com. *New Yorker pool table*, blattbilliards.com. *Opus foosball table*, elevenforty.com. *Piranha II Razor Grip darts*, blattbilliards



.com. *Rallystar Champion tennis table*, rallystartennis.com. *Table Hockey*, tablehockey.com. *Three-sided Dreamcade*, dreamarcades.com. *Wurlitzer Digital Jukebox*, gibson.com.

ROCK/RAP/FASHION

Pages 106–111: *Asics*, asicsamerica.com. *Azzuré Denim*, available at Fusion in Atlanta. *Best Tires*, 516-482-1060. *Calvin Klein*, 888-222-1213. *Claudia Ciuti*, 888-31-CIUTI. *Clift*, 212-730-2288. *Dior Homme by Hedi Slimane*, dior.com. *Duckie Brown*, 212-675-8627. *Hugo by Hugo Boss*, 800-HUGO-BOSS. *Indigo Red*, available at Up Against the Wall stores nationwide. *J. Lindeberg*, jlindeberg.com. *Just Cavalli*, 702-893-3542. *JVC*, jvc.com. *Massive Revolution*, available at Up Against the Wall stores nationwide. *Original Penguin*, 646-443-3520. *Playboy Fashion*, Playboy Concept Boutique, Las Vegas. *Richmond X*, available at J. Ransom in Los Angeles and David Lawrence in Seattle. *Royal Filth*, available at All the Right in Queens, New York. *Salvage*, available at Nordstrom. *Vass Ludacer*, 212-206-3600.

POTPOURRI

Pages 154–155: *CBGB shower curtain*, cbgb.com. *Flashlite Friends*, thinkgeek.com. *Geox*, geox.com. *Happy Dog Toys*, sitstay.com. *Hummer laptop*, hummerstuff.com. *Irish Pub Cookbook*, available in bookstores nationwide. *Playboy guitar straps and picks*, musiciansfriend.com. *Rosendahl Winetube*, unicahome.com. *Solitude headphones*, protravelgear.com.

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I'm not a tough guy, but I'm a strong person. Rap music innately has to be hard. Life itself is hard.

PLAYBOY: talking to me? Can't you see my mouth is fucked-up?" But she kept on having me talk. You know how they keep you talking so you don't die or something? But it was like they were about to make me die—talk me to death, literally.

PLAYBOY: And you say the accident was good for your career. How?

WEST: That's one of the best things that can happen to a rapper, to almost die. Tupac, 50 Cent and now me. People connected with that.

PLAYBOY: It made you seem a little tougher. People don't usually think of you as tough.

WEST: I'm not a tough guy, but I'm a strong person. Rap music innately has to be hard. But we've changed what it means to be hard because life itself is hard. I've started presenting the hardship of regular people's lives. Hard isn't always "I went to jail" or "I have to shoot somebody. I'm gonna kill somebody today." Hard is anything: "I have a test to take." All I did was see the open lane.

PLAYBOY: The reaction to *The College Dropout* wasn't quite instant acclaim.

WEST: When it first came out, I was frustrated that people didn't believe in me. That's when you would read quotes that came off as more arrogant or defensive than funny. Now I don't have to be defensive at all. When people try to attack me, it's like, Come on, fam. What else do you need me to do?

PLAYBOY: *Late Registration* has some conspiracy-theory lyrics. Do you believe the government is spreading AIDS, as you suggest in "Heard 'Em Say"?

WEST: Right now? No. But I do believe the theory that AIDS was being placed in Africa. I do believe the FBI placed crack in the black community. I believe the U.S. government gave smallpox to the Indians. I believe financial institutions are capitalizing on the African AIDS epidemic.

PLAYBOY: Not all of those theories are equally credible. What's your source for the government starting AIDS in Africa?

WEST: You know what? I don't have the answer to that. Life isn't a big test in which I have to know the answer right now. People always want me to say things in black-and-white. "What's your answer to this?" So many people hang on every word I say. I feel like I'm in *Forrest Gump*, the scene when he's running and everybody's coming up alongside him, asking, "What do you think about this?" He steps in shit and says, "Shit happens," and then there are bumper stickers. That's my life right now.

PLAYBOY: What would we find if we drug-tested you?

WEST: Does alcohol show up? You'd find some Hennessy, some Belvedere and that's it. The only drug I've done is weed. I used to smoke weed like every day. I hated it, though. It gave me a headache. But I'm really intrigued by

the 1980s white yuppie cocaine culture. That was an inspiration for *Late Registration*: white modern buildings, leather jackets, Lamborghinis, model bitches, all that. I wanted to make the album darker and sexier than the first one. I don't do any other form of drug. My only drug is porn.

PLAYBOY: What's your taste in porn?

WEST: Elegant Angel is pretty good, and the Brazilian joints are crazy.

PLAYBOY: Are you unapologetic about porn? Do you play it in front of your girlfriend?

WEST: Yeah, I'll just keep it on. That's one of the old pimp moves: If the girl comes over, have porn playing. If she's like, "Ugh," hurry up and turn it off. "Man, I don't know who left that on!" And if she says, "Hmm, what's this?" then keep it playing, keep it playing. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: Not everyone admits to liking porn.

WEST: We all like porn; I'm just the first to admit it. I could show you examples of some things I like.

PLAYBOY: Let's look at the bookmarks on your laptop: "Ass man's paradise," "Mexican lust."

WEST: I have normal conversations all the time while I'm looking at these sites. If this were a phone interview, I'd probably be looking at porn. It's an addiction. Whenever we go to the porn store, we call it the crack house. And I stash my porn just like someone would stash weed, in a baggie. Here, these are some really good ones.

PLAYBOY: Let's see what you've got in the bag. *Ghetto Booty*. *Housewives Gone Black, Part 3*. *She's Got Ass, Part 9*. *My Daughter Is Fucking Blackzilla*. *All That Ass Brazil 30*. *Black and Wild, Volume 18*.

WEST: This girl's incredible. See that? PLAYBOY would never have that. I don't think PLAYBOY has enough ass. But the best girl you had in the past three years has to be Rita G., the Spanish girl. She's got an ass even white people like.

PLAYBOY: One of your biggest songs is "Jesus Walks." Is Jesus happy with you?

WEST: God is. I personally believe Jesus died for our sins, because that's the way I was raised. Same reason I like fat asses: That's how I was raised. If I had been raised in an all-white community, maybe I'd like skinny asses. I try to walk and be more Christlike. I'm a man, and I have shortcomings. But I think if there were a bible written today in the new millennium, I'd be one of the characters in it.

PLAYBOY: What role would you play in this bible?

WEST: I'd be a griot. I bring up historical subjects in a way that makes kids want to learn about them. I'm an inspirational speaker. I changed the sound of music more than one time: I did it with *The Blueprint*, did it again with *The College Dropout*. For all these reasons, I'd be a part of the bible. I'm definitely in the history books



"An erection doesn't count as personal growth, Howard."

already. "Jesus Walks"—that song will never go away.

PLAYBOY: Is the devil trying to get you too?

WEST: Always. Let's take it back to Atlanta, back to the strippers. You know, when Marvin Gaye made "Sexual Healing," it was a fun song, but he really did have a problem with sex. And I think I might have a problem, a sexual addiction. I have porn on me at all times.

PLAYBOY: Haven't you mostly been in relationships for the past few years?

WEST: Lust is part of the reason I've been out of relationships, too. I just want to do it all the time. All the time. Like four times a night. And then in the morning.

PLAYBOY: Are you bothered by your addictions?

WEST: In "Touch the Sky," I say, "I'm trying to right my wrongs/ But it's funny them same wrongs help me write this song." Those addictions and afflictions are what make me a great artist. If I were perfect, if I didn't have any conflicts, what would I have to say? My biggest problem is lust, looking at girls with big booties.

PLAYBOY: You're one of the few rappers who have spoken out against homophobia. How did that go over?

WEST: I got more backlash for that than I did for my George Bush comment. I said it's wrong to discriminate against gays, to call them fags and to gay bash. And people were like, "We don't agree with you. We feel like it's okay to do that." What I said about Bush was just popular opinion, but homophobia is so taboo to talk about. If you bring it up, people say you must be gay, and then they hate you also. In the black community, not just in rap, it's a thing people stay away from. They mention gays only in a negative way, even if they have a gay cousin or they know the choir director. And I had to learn from experience. I felt like it was okay to say "fag."

PLAYBOY: In the past you used the word *fag* in your songs.

WEST: Yeah, I'm sure I did. Even to this day I'm dealing with my personal homophobia. I'm not gay, and I don't feel comfortable in a gay bar. I wouldn't be at a gay parade.

PLAYBOY: It's possible to be opposed to gay bashing but still feel some homophobia.

WEST: Yeah, like I think it's wrong to lust but I still end up at the strip club.

PLAYBOY: What hip-hop trend would you like to see die?

WEST: Hip-hop trends die on their own. That's like going to a senior citizens' home and asking, "Who do you want to die?" Yo, they're all going to die pretty soon! That's what hip-hop is about. At the point when my albums become classic, they transcend hip-hop. Because hip-hop is about being fresh.

PLAYBOY: You said earlier that you were making \$70,000 a year when you were 21. How much have you made in the past year?

WEST: Millions. With a real long *s* at the end. Yeah, *millionssssss*.

PLAYBOY: Here's one number we heard. A movie studio paid \$700,000 for the use of "Jesus Walks" in *Jarhead*.

WEST: Let me check with my lawyer. So add that up, that's one thing, and I have multiple movie offers and multiple shows. But I need to figure out a way to make more.

PLAYBOY: You're not making enough money?

WEST: No, I'm not. Not to do all the things I want to do creatively. Now that I can get pretty much anything I want for myself, I want to show people art. I want people to know about the architecture in Prague. I'd like to purchase a castle in Europe and renovate it. I want to design buildings. I want to produce movies and have complete ownership so I don't have to run ideas by people. I'm meeting with the biggest movie director in the game. I don't want to say his name.

PLAYBOY: Well, the biggest director in Hollywood is Steven Spielberg. Is that who you're meeting with?

WEST: Okay, yeah. And I'm writing a TV show with Rick Rubin and Larry Charles, who wrote *Seinfeld* with Larry David. So it's like the real shit. I've been talking to Ben Stiller about some things. This year I met with the Steves: Stevie Wonder, Steve Jobs and Steven Spielberg. I'm going to the Kanye Wests of their genres.

PLAYBOY: What about music?

WEST: What about it? Asking me "What about music?" is like coming to Spielberg and asking him "What about movies?" This is what I do and what I will continue to do at the highest caliber possible.

PLAYBOY: Are you producing anyone?

WEST: I'm producing Jay-Z's new album. I'm doing the whole thing.

PLAYBOY: Wait a minute. When we interviewed Jay-Z in *PLAYBOY* three years ago, he told us he was retiring. And we made him a bet: If he comes out of retirement, he owes us \$1,000.

WEST: Well, he's about to pay.

PLAYBOY: Rap careers come and go in a pretty short time. As you said, trends die out; even the hot producers burn out quickly. How long are you going to stick around?

WEST: As long as I want to. I've had beats that were impactful on the culture for the past six years, and I'm not stopping anytime soon. I see things I still want to do that no one has done before. I could be the Steve Jobs of hip-hop. I'm making a beat a day, and they're coming out pretty good.

PLAYBOY: Yeah, but in "Spaceship" you say you used to make five beats a day. You're slowing down.

WEST: Yeah, you can put that in the story. Kanye's falling off. [laughs] He's making only one beat a day.



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BAD WEATHER

(continued from page 68)

by heating the atmosphere just a little, allowing it to take up and retain more moisture, which then warms the atmosphere further. So a positive feedback loop is created, forcing our planet's temperature to even higher levels.

Although it is a greenhouse gas, water vapor is also an enigma in the climate-change arena, for it forms clouds, which can both reflect light energy and trap heat. By trapping heat more than they reflect light, high thin clouds tend to warm the planet; low thick clouds have the reverse effect. No single factor contributes more to the uncertainty of future climate-change predictions.

Many greenhouse gases are in some way or another generated by human activity. Although scarce and weak in its capacity to capture heat, CO₂ remains in the atmosphere a long time: Around 56 percent of all the CO₂ that humans have liberated by burning fossil fuel is

still aloft, which is the cause—direct and indirect—of around 80 percent of all global warming.

OVERSPENDING THE CARBON BUDGET

The fact that a known proportion of CO₂ remains in the atmosphere allows us to calculate in very round numbers a carbon budget for humanity. Prior to the start of the Industrial Revolution there were about 280 parts per million of CO₂ in the atmosphere, which equates to around 586 gigatons of CO₂. (Figures such as these relate only to the carbon in the CO₂ molecule. The actual weight of the CO₂ would be 3.7 times greater.) Today the figures are 380 parts per million, or around 790 gigatons. If we wished to stabilize CO₂ emissions at twice the level that existed before the Industrial Revolution (widely considered the threshold of dangerous change), we would have to limit all future human emissions to around 600 gigatons. Just over half of this would stay in the atmosphere, raising CO₂ levels to around 1,100 gigatons, or 550 parts per million, by 2100. This,

incidentally, would be a tough budget for humanity to abide by, for if we use fossil fuels for only another century, that equates to a budget of six gigatons a year. Compare this with the average of 13.3 gigatons of CO₂ that accumulated each year throughout the 1990s (half of this from burning fossil fuel), and add the projection that the human population is set to rise to 9 billion by mid-century, and you can see the problem.

Our servants, the billions of engines we've built to run on fossil fuels such as coal, gasoline, oil-based fuels and natural gas, play the leading role in manufacturing CO₂. Most dangerous of all are power plants that use coal to generate electricity. Black coal (anthracite) is composed of at least 92 percent carbon, while dry brown coal is around 70 percent carbon and five percent hydrogen.

Carbon and oxygen, the components of CO₂, are close neighbors on the periodic table, meaning they have similar atomic weights. Because two oxygen atoms combine with one carbon atom to form CO₂, around three and a half tons of the gas are created for every ton of anthracite consumed. Some power plants burn through 500 tons of coal an hour, and so inefficient are they that around two thirds of the energy created is wasted. And to what purpose is the coal burned? Simply to boil water, which generates steam that moves the colossal turbines to create the electricity that powers our homes and factories. Like the atmosphere itself, these Dickensian machines are invisible to most of us, who have no idea that 19th century technology makes 21st century gadgets whir.

The places that the carbon goes when it leaves the atmosphere are known as carbon sinks. You and I and all living things are carbon sinks, as are the oceans and some of the rocks under our feet. Some of these sinks are very large, but they are not infinite, nor is their size steady through time. Over aeons much CO₂ has been stored in the earth's crust. This occurs as dead plants are buried and carried underground, where they become fossil fuels. On a shorter time scale, a lot of carbon can be stored in soil, where it forms the black mold beloved of gardeners.

For the past couple of decades scientists have been monitoring where the CO₂ that humans produce by burning fossil fuels goes. They can do this because the gas derived from fossil fuels has a unique chemical signature and can be tracked as it circulates around the planet. In very round figures, two gigatons is absorbed by the oceans and a further 1.5 gigatons is absorbed by life on land annually. The contribution made by the land results partly from an accident of history: America's frontier phase of development, which gave some land plants a ravenous hunger for carbon. Mature forests don't take in much CO₂ because they are in balance, releasing CO₂ as old vegetation



NOT SO SUPER HEROES

rots, then absorbing it as new vegetation grows. For these reasons the world's largest forests, the coniferous ones of Siberia and Canada and the tropical rain forests, are not good carbon sinks, but new, vigorously growing forests are.

THE MAGIC GATES

Global warming changes the climate in jerks, during which climate patterns jump from one stable state to another. Because of the atmosphere's telekinetic nature, these changes can manifest themselves instantaneously across the globe. The best analogy is perhaps that of a finger on a light switch. Nothing happens for a while, but if you slowly increase the pressure, a certain point is reached, a sudden change occurs, and conditions swiftly alter from one state to another.

Climatologist Julia Cole refers to the leaps made by the climate as "magic gates," and she argues that since temperatures began rising rapidly in the 1970s our planet has seen two such events, in 1976 and 1998. These dates are important, for again and again they mark the onset of remarkable phenomena.

Between 1945 and 1955 the temperature of the surface of the tropical Pacific commonly dipped below 67°F, but since the magic gate opened in 1976 it has rarely been below 77°F. The central Pacific is an important location because it is where El Niños, which are a major climate force across the globe, are first detected. "The western tropical Pacific is the warmest area in the global ocean and is a great regulator of climate," says Martin Hoerling of the Earth System Research Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado. Among other things, that area controls most tropical precipitation and the position of the jet stream, whose winds bring snow and rain to North America. In 1977 *National Geographic* ran a feature on the crazy weather of the previous year, which included unprecedented mild conditions in Alaska and blizzards in the lower 48 states.

The 1998 magic gate is also tied up with the El Niño-La Niña cycle, a two-to-eight-year cycle that brings extreme climatic events to much of the world.

During the La Niña phase, which until recently seemed to be the dominant part of the cycle, winds blow westward across the Pacific, accumulating the warm surface water off the coast of Australia and islands lying to its north. With the warm surface waters blown westward, the cold Humboldt Current is able to surface off the most prolific fishery in the world, the anchoveta. The El Niño part of the cycle begins with a weakening of tropical winds, allowing the warm surface water to flow back eastward, overwhelming the Humboldt and releasing humidity into the atmosphere that brings floods to the normally arid Peruvian deserts. Cooler water now upwells in the far

was ancient rain forest. On the island of Borneo 5 million hectares were lost—an area almost the size of the Netherlands. Many of the burned forests will never recover on a time scale meaningful to human beings, and the impact of this on Borneo's unique fauna will, in all probability, never be fully known.

Climatologist Kevin Trenberth and his colleagues believe that the 1997–98 event was an extreme manifestation of the more general impact global warming has had on the El Niño-La Niña cycle. Ever since 1976 the cycles have been exceptionally long—one would expect such long cycles only once in several years—and there has been an imbalance between the phases, with five El Niños and only two La Niñas. Computer-based modeling supports their research, indicating that as greenhouse gas concentrations increase in the atmosphere, a semipermanent El Niño-like condition will result.

Indeed, some of the changes spawned in 1998 were permanent; ever since then the waters of the central western Pacific have frequently reached 86°F, while the jet stream has shifted toward the north pole. So the question is, how has our changing climate affected various plant and animal populations?

One of the most powerful tools available to researchers wishing to document the response of nature to climate change is the jottings of birders, fish-

ermen and other nature watchers. Some of these records are very long; one English family recorded the date of the first frog and toad croaks it heard on its estate every year between 1736 and 1947. This type of record is of the utmost importance in revealing how things stood when the curtain separating the stable climate of the past 8,000 years from our brave new future began to lift. In 2003 the journal *Science* published a huge study drawing on such natural-history observations that reveals the immense scale of the shifts now under way.

The database has information on more than 1,700 historically recorded species. The information includes 135

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AT NEWSSTANDS NOW

western Pacific, and because it does not evaporate as readily as warm water, drought strikes Australia and southeast Asia. When an El Niño is extreme enough, it can afflict two thirds of the globe with droughts, floods and other extreme weather.

The 1997–98 El Niño year was immortalized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (now the WWF) as "the year the world caught fire." Drought had a stranglehold on a large part of the planet, and fires burned on every continent, but in the normally wet rain forests of southeast Asia the conflagrations reached their peak. There more than 10 million hectares burned, of which half

detailed records of the migration, breeding habits and distribution of birds compiled by amateur birdwatchers, the jottings of botanists about the flowering and shooting of plants, and captains' logs from whaling ships.

Prior to 1950 there is little evidence of any trend, but since that date, a very strong pattern has emerged around the globe. This manifests itself as a poleward shift in species' distribution of, on average, around four miles a decade, a retreat up mountainsides of 20 feet a decade and an advance of spring activity by two days a decade. These trends accord so strongly with the scale and direction of temperature increases brought about by greenhouse gas emissions that they have been hailed as constituting a globally coherent fingerprint of climate change. While such trends may seem small when compared with the rate of change seen over geologi-

cal time, they are in fact so rapid and decisive, it's as if the researchers had caught CO₂ in the act of driving nature poleward with a lash.

HURRICANE WATCH

In the troposphere—the lowest atmospheric layer, which extends from the earth's surface to around seven miles up and is the most influential on global weather patterns—ever-increasing levels of greenhouse gases are trapping more heat, causing it to expand.

As the troposphere has warmed in the past decade, the world has seen the most powerful El Niño ever recorded (1997–98), the most devastating hurricanes in 200 years (Mitch, in 1998, followed by Katrina, in 2005), the hottest European summer on record (2003), the first south Atlantic hurricane ever recorded (2002) and one of the worst storm seasons ever experienced (2005). This series of events,

many would argue, indicates that the potential for the new climate to generate extremes is already increasing.

Where do you think the energy to power a hurricane comes from? "A hurricane," Frederick Lutgens and Edward Tarbuck tell us in their atmospheric-studies textbook, "is a heat engine that is fueled by the latent heat liberated when huge quantities of water vapor condense. To get this engine started, a large quantity of warm, moist air is required, and a continuous supply is needed to keep it going." We're all familiar with the principle that evaporation can carry heat into the atmosphere: On a hot day we all perspire, and as our sweat evaporates it carries heat from our body into the air. It's a highly effective form of heat transfer, for the evaporation of just one gram of water from our skin is sufficient to transfer 580 calories of heat. Think of the difference in scale between your body and an entire ocean and you can sense the power that heat energy derived from evaporation carries into the atmosphere.

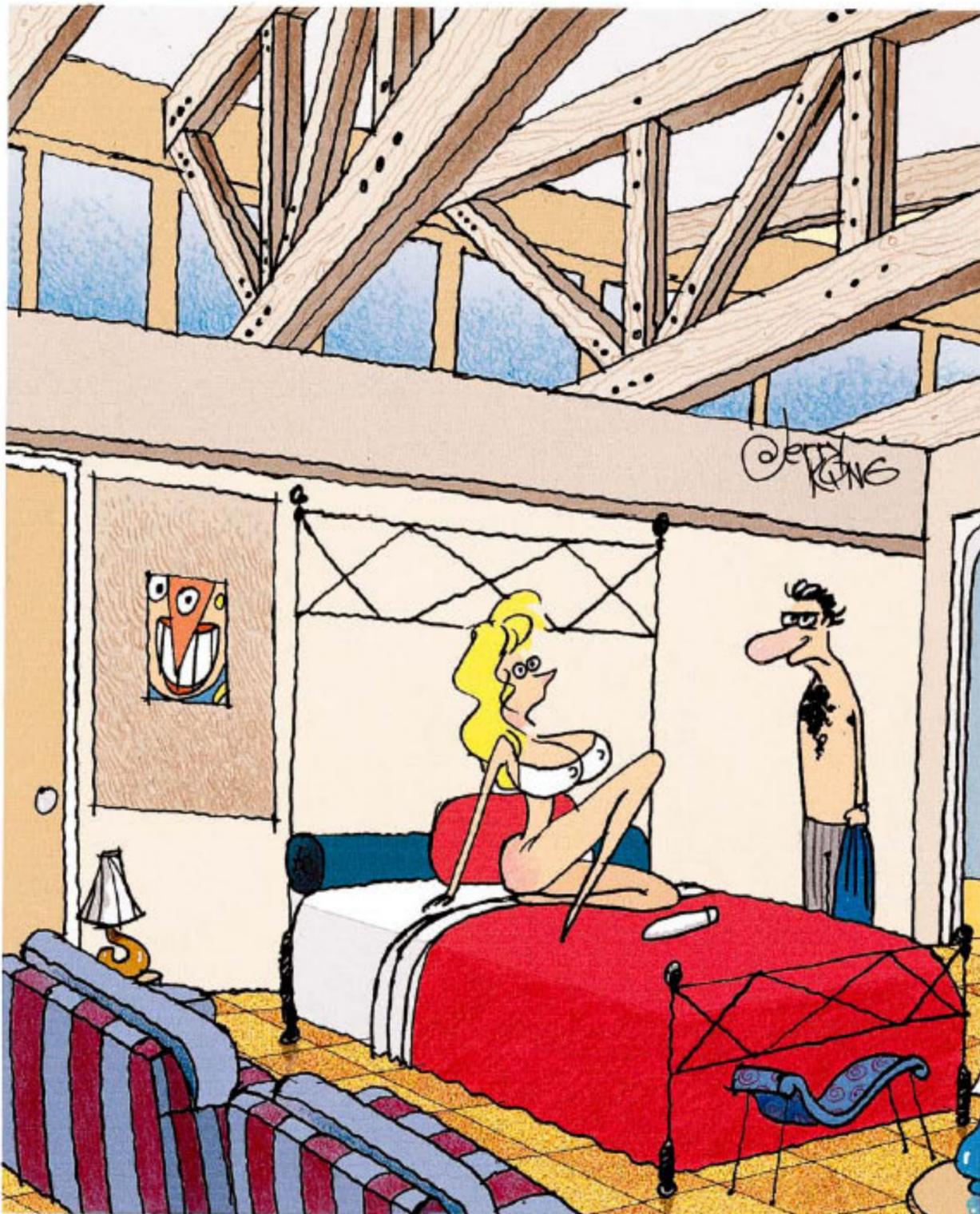
It's not widely appreciated just how much extra latent heat the hot air engendered by climate change can carry. For every 18°F increase in temperature, the amount of water vapor the air can hold doubles; thus air at 86°F can hold four times as much hurricane fuel as air at 50°F.

There are disturbing signs that hurricanes are becoming more frequent in North America. Hurricane Mitch tore through the Caribbean in October 1998, killing 10,000 people and making up to 1 million homeless. With its wind speeds reaching 180 miles an hour, Mitch was the fourth strongest Atlantic Basin hurricane ever recorded, along with 1969's Camille. At the time, Mitch was the most damaging storm to hit the Americas in 200 years, but the severity of its impact was surpassed a mere seven years later when Hurricane Katrina swamped New Orleans. It was with remarkable prescience that the U.S. National Weather Service predicted that the 2005 hurricane season was likely to be more destructive than usual.

Many of the homes damaged by these storms are still uninhabitable. With hurricane fuel increasing in the atmosphere, it is only a matter of time before the storms return with redoubled fury.

Anyone looking only at the number of hurricanes that occur in the Americas each year may think Katrina and Rita are just part of a natural cycle. This is because there are cycles in Atlantic hurricane activity that mask more significant trends. By affecting the Gulf Stream, the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation brings variations in hurricane activity every 60 to 70 years. Another cycle alters hurricane activity each decade or so. Both cycles have complex causes relating to ocean currents and the state of the atmosphere.

Many of the most devastating impacts of any individual hurricane are unrelated to global warming. Whether Katrina was a



"I've got a lot of things to do, so I'd like to cut out the foreplay and go straight to the orgasm. So I won't be needing you today."

little weaker or stronger, whether it struck 30 miles or 100 miles from the city and whether it struck a week earlier or later are all matters of chance. But equally, evidence is growing that global warming is changing the conditions in the atmosphere and oceans in ways that will make hurricanes even more destructive in the future.

The impact of climate change on the later phases of the hurricane life cycle is more certain than its effect on the initial formation of storms. Satellite measurements reveal that the oceans are rapidly warming from the top down as the result of additional heat coming from the atmosphere. Already the oceans have warmed on average by just under 1°F, though some areas, such as the Gulf of Mexico, have warmed far more. (During the summer of 2005 the surface waters of the northern Gulf were exceptionally hot—around 87°F.) In response to this, the amount of water vapor—hurricane fuel—in the air over the oceans has increased by 1.3 percent per decade since 1988. Both the warmer ocean and the increased water vapor augment the energy available for all manner of storms, from thunderstorms to hurricanes. But they are especially important in transforming tropical storms into hurricanes and in feeding category 1 hurricanes so they become category 5s. With this enhancement of hurricane fuel, Katrina was an accident just waiting to happen.

What is increasingly perplexing and astonishing to meteorologists is that, in the real world, we are already seeing an increase in hurricane intensity and numbers far in advance of that suggested by computer modeling. Kerry Emanuel of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology has found that the total amount of energy released by hurricanes worldwide has increased by 60 percent in the past three decades. And Peter Webster of the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta has discovered that more of that energy is going into the most powerful hurricanes. Since 1974 the number of category 4 and 5 hurricanes recorded has almost doubled.

Some commentators believe that the discrepancy between the computer models and conditions in the real world somehow indicates that global warming is not responsible for the increasing hurricane activity. Others, however, believe it suggests what they have long suspected: that the global circulation models used to simulate future changes in climate are deeply conservative. If those latter researchers are correct, the current heat imbalance of the earth has been sufficient to shift our planet's climate into a new, more dangerous phase.

Much hangs on this scientific debate. When Hurricane Ivan roared through the Gulf of Mexico in 2004, the oil industry considered it to be a once-in-2,500-years event, but then came Katrina and Rita. "We're see-

ing 100-year events happening every few years," one oil industry executive said.

It's worth recording that the United States already has the most varied weather of any country on earth, with more intense and damaging tornadoes, flash floods, thunderstorms, hurricanes and blizzards than anywhere else. With the intensity of such events projected to increase as our planet warms, the United States would seem to have more to lose from climate change in purely human terms than any other large nation. Indeed, the ever-spiraling insurance bill resulting from severe weather events and the growing water shortages in the West mean that the U.S. is already paying dearly for its CO₂ emissions.

Because extreme weather events by their very nature are rare, a long time can pass before sufficient data accumulate to detect a trend. Less extreme changes in temperature and rainfall are a lot easier to quantify, and with climate records going back centuries, Europe is a great place to start looking for these impacts. The 1990s was the warmest decade in central England since records began to be kept in the 1660s; 1998 was the warmest year ever and 2001 the third warmest. As a result, the growing season for plants has been extended by a month, heat waves have become more frequent, and winters are much wetter, with heavier rain. The Hadley Center, a world-leading institution set up in Exeter, U.K. to predict and examine climate-change impacts, has determined that the U.K. has experienced a significant increase in severe winter storms, a trend that is predicted to continue.

On the Continent more alarming events have occurred. The European summer of 2003 was so hot that, statistically speaking, such an outlandish event should occur no more than every 46,000 years. It was worsened by water stress to plants, which restricted their moisture emissions. With less of the sun's heat used up in evaporation, more of it warmed the air. The heat wave was so extreme that 26,000 people died during June and July, when temperatures exceeded 104°F across much of the continent. Heat waves, incidentally, kill a large number of people worldwide each year; even in the climatically turbulent U.S., heat-related deaths exceed those from all other weather-related causes combined. And just one year after the European heat wave, Egypt experienced one of its highest recorded temperatures: 124°F.

A MESSAGE FROM THE GOLDEN TOAD

The Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve in Costa Rica, with its Golden Toad Laboratory for Conservation, is blessed with an abundance of researchers. Soon after our fragile planet passed through the climatic magic gate of 1976, abrupt and strange events were observed by the ecologists who spend their life conducting detailed field studies in these pristine forests.



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During the winter dry season of 1987, in the mossy rain forests that clothe the mountain's slopes nearly one mile above the sea, 30 of the 50 species of frogs known to inhabit the 12-square-mile study site vanished. Among them was a spectacular toad the color of spun gold. Aptly named the golden toad (*Bufo periglenes*), the creature lived only on the upper slopes of the mountain, but there it was abundant, and at certain times of the year the brilliant males could be seen by the dozen gathering around puddles on the forest floor to mate. The toad's disappearance particularly worried researchers, for it is one of the most spectacular of the region's amphibians and was found nowhere else.

The golden toad was discovered and named in 1966. Only the males are golden; the females are mottled black, yellow and scarlet. For much of the year it's a secretive creature, spending its time underground in burrows amid the mossy root masses of the elfin woodland. Then, as the dry season gives way to the wet in April and May, it appears aboveground en masse, for just a few days or weeks. With such a short time to reproduce, the males fight with each other for the top spot and take every opportunity to mate—even if it's only with a field-worker's boot.

In her book *In Search of the Golden Frog* (perhaps *toad* was too off-putting for a title) amphibian expert Marty Crump tells us what it was like to see the creature in its mating frenzy:

As I round a bend, I slide to a halt. In front of me is one of the most incredible sights I've ever seen. Congregated in and around the small pools at the bases of stunted trees sit over 100 dazzling bright orange toads poised like statues, jewels scattered about the dim understory.

On April 8, 1987 Crump made a note in her field diary that was to have historic significance:

We see a large orange blob with legs flailing in all directions: a writhing mass of toad flesh. Closer examination reveals three males, each struggling to gain access to the female in the middle. Forty-two brilliant orange splotches poised around the pool are unmated males, alert to any movement and ready to pounce. Another 57 unmated males are scattered nearby. In total we find 133 toads in the neighborhood of this kitchen-sink-size pool.

On April 20:

Breeding seems to be over. I found the last female four days ago, and gradually the males have returned to their underground

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retreats. Every day the ground is drier and the pools contain less water. Today's observations are discouraging. Most of the pools have dried completely, leaving behind desiccated eggs already covered in mold. Unfortunately, the dry weather conditions of El Niño are still affecting this part of Costa Rica.

As if they knew the fate of their eggs, the toads attempted to breed again in May. This was, as far as the world knows, the last great toad orgy ever to occur, and Crump had the privilege to record it. Despite the fact that 45,300 eggs were deposited in the 10 pools she studied, only 29 tadpoles survived for longer than a week, for the pools once again quickly dried.

The following year Crump was back at Monteverde for the breeding season, but this time things were different. After a long search, on May 21 she located a single male. By June, Crump, still searching, was worried: "The forest seems sterile and depressing without the bright orange splashes of color I've come to associate with this [wet] weather. I don't understand what's happening. Why haven't we found a few hopeful males, checking out the pools in anticipation?" Yet even after the season closed without another sighting, there was no undue pessimism. A year was to pass before, on May 15, 1989, a solitary male was again sighted. As it was sitting just 10 feet from where Crump made her sighting 12 months earlier, it was almost certainly the same male who for the second year running was holding a lonely vigil, waiting for the arrival of his

fellows. He was, as far as we know, the last of his species, for the golden toad has not been seen since.

Suspecting that some odd weather event might have been the cause of the changes, researchers began to pore over the monthly records of the region's climate. It would be 10 years from the last sighting before they published their findings, but in 1999 they announced that they had identified the cause of Monteverde's despoliation.

Examination of the meteorological record revealed that ever since the earth had passed through its first climatic magic gate, in 1976, the number of mistless days experienced each dry season had grown until they coalesced into runs of mistless days. By the dry season of 1987 the number of consecutive mistless days had passed some critical threshold. It was apparently so subtle as to be undetectable to the researchers working on the mountain, yet it had plunged the entire ecosystem of the mountaintop into crisis. Mist, you see, brought vital moisture, and without it the forest dried out sufficiently to trigger a landslide of catastrophic changes that swept before it mountain birds, anoles, golden toads and other amphibians alike.

Why, the researchers wanted to know, had the mist forsaken Monteverde? Beginning in 1976 the cloud line, the level at which clouds sit against mountainsides and bring misty conditions, had risen until it was above the level of the forest. The change had been driven by the abrupt rise in sea surface temperatures in the central western Pacific that

heralded the magic gate of 1976. A hot ocean had perhaps heated air, elevating the condensation point for moisture in it. By 1987 the rising cloud line had on many days forsaken the mossy forest altogether and hung about in the sky above, bringing shade but no mist.

The golden toad's permeable skin and its propensity to wander in daylight hours had left it extremely vulnerable to the desiccation brought on by the run of mistless days. By the time the study was published in 1999, this wondrous creature had been extinct for a decade.

It's always devastating when you witness the extinction of a species, because what you are seeing is the dismantling of ecosystems and irreparable genetic loss. The golden toad's extinction, however, was not in vain, for when the explanation of its demise was published in *Nature*, the scientists could make their point without equivocation. The golden toad was the first documented victim of global warming. We had killed it with our profligate use of coal-fired electricity and our over-size cars just as surely as if we had flattened its forest with bulldozers.

As the reason for the extinction of the golden toad became thoroughly comprehensible, frog researchers worldwide began to reevaluate their experiences; since 1976 many had observed amphibian species vanishing before their eyes without being able to determine the cause. Could climate change, they wondered, be responsible?

The answer, sadly, is yes. When the first global survey of amphibians was completed in 2004, it revealed that almost a third of the world's 6,000-odd species were threatened with extinction. Many of these endangered species began their decline after 1976, and according to Simon Stuart of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, "there's almost no evidence of recovery."

MASS EXTINCTION

Another way to try to understand how climate change is affecting the planet's ecosystems is to mass together the available data, which involve observations of more than 1,000 species of trees, crustaceans and mammals, and see what they say statistically as a whole. This was the approach taken by a group of researchers, led by Chris Thomas of the University of Leeds, that published its findings in *Nature* in late 2004.

Drawing from locations covering 20 percent of the earth's surface, including Mexico, South Africa, Europe, South America and Australia, and using a range of current predictions for climate change, the project examined the likely fate of 1,103 plant and animal species, from proteas to primates, by the year 2050.

Thomas and his colleagues found that at the lowest possible degree of global warming—between 1°F and 3°F—around 18 percent of the species



"Aah...my apologies, Ms. Brunswick. I thought you were chewing gum."

sampled will, in the dispassionate language favored by science journals, be "committed to extinction," or, in other words, doomed. At the midrange predictions—3°F to 4°F—around a quarter of all species will be extirpated, while at the high range of predicted temperature rises (more than 4°F) more than a third of species will become extinct.

Believe it or not, this is the good news; in these analyses it is assumed that species can migrate. But what chance does a protea have of dispersing across the populated coastal plain of South Africa's Cape Province, or a golden lion tamarin monkey of crossing the agricultural fields that have all but obliterated the Brazilian Atlantic rain forests? The answer is very little indeed, and for species that cannot disperse, the likelihood of extinction is roughly doubled. This means that at the high range of predicted temperature changes, more than half (58 percent) of the 1,103 species examined are committed to extinction.

Extrapolating from Thomas's data set, it appears that at least one out of every five living things on this planet is committed to extinction by the existing levels of greenhouse gases. The WWF, the Peter Scott Trust for Educational Research Into Conservation and the Nature Conservancy have worked for decades to save, in real terms, relatively few species. Now it seems countless thousands will be swept away by a rising tide of climate change unless greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

We must remember, however, that if we act now, it lies within our power to save *two* species for every one that is currently doomed. If we carry on with business as usual, in all likelihood three out of every five species will not be with us at the dawn of the next century.

TURNING UP THE HEAT

The most recent study of climate change, the largest ever undertaken, was published in early 2005 by a team led from Oxford University. Using the downtime on more than 90,000 personal computers, it focused on the temperature implications of doubling CO₂ in the atmosphere. The average result of the many runs made indicated that this would lead to a warming of 6°F. Overall, however, there was an astonishingly wide range of possibilities—from 3°F to 20°F of warming, the higher end of which had not been predicted earlier.

As I read these results, an anomaly that had long niggled at me resurfaced. At the end of the last ice age, 20,000 to 10,000 years ago, CO₂ levels increased by 100 parts per million, and the earth's average surface temperature rose by 9°F. It is the fastest rise in the earth's recent history and occurred at almost 2°F per 1,000 years. Today we face a rate of change that is an astonishing 30 times

faster. This suggests that CO₂ is a powerful influence on global temperature. Yet in most computer analyses, an increase in CO₂ almost three times as large (doubling preindustrial levels) results in a predicted temperature rise of only 5°F.

This anomaly has serious implications for the survival of our civilization and countless species. Scientists now working on aerosols think they may have the answer. Direct measurement of evaporation rates, which are influenced primarily by sunlight, indicates that the amount of sunlight reaching the earth's surface has declined significantly—up to 22 percent in some areas—in the past three decades. It is as if we had been stopping up that small "window" in the atmosphere through which visible light passes.

This phenomenon is called global dimming, and it operates in two ways: Aerosols such as soot increase the reflectivity of clouds, and the contrails left by jet aircraft create a persistent cloud cover. Soot particles change the reflective properties of clouds by fostering the formation of many tiny water droplets rather than fewer larger ones, and these tiny water droplets allow clouds to reflect far more sunlight back into space than do larger drops. The story with contrails is different. In the three days following September 11, 2001, the entire U.S. jet fleet was grounded, over which time climatologists noted an unprecedented increase in daytime temperatures relative to nighttime temperatures. This resulted, they presume, from the additional sunlight reaching the ground in the absence of contrails.

If 100 parts per million of CO₂ really can raise surface temperatures by 9°F, and if aerosols and contrails have counterbalanced this so that we have experienced only 1°F of warming, then their influence on climate must be enormously powerful. It is as if two great forces, both unleashed from the world's smokestacks, are tugging the climate in opposite directions, but CO₂ is slightly more powerful.

This leaves us with a grave problem. Particle pollution lasts only days or weeks, while CO₂ is difficult to clean up and lasts a century or more. Facing the prospect of a 4°F or a 9°F rise in temperature, we have only one option if our understanding of global dimming is correct. We *must* start extracting CO₂ from the atmosphere.

When we consider the fate of the planet as a whole, we must be under no illusions as to what is at stake. Earth's average temperature is around 59°F, and whether we allow it to rise by two degrees or five will decide the fate of hundreds of thousands of species and most probably billions of people. Never in the history of humanity has there been a cost-benefit analysis that demands greater scrutiny.

From Tim Flannery's new book, The Weather Makers, published by Grove/Atlantic.

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FRANZ FERDINAND

(continued from page 114)

Q16

PLAYBOY: What has been the best part of your success—expensive dining, fast cars, drugs, girls?

NICK: We haven't had any time to treat ourselves to anything. But I did get an iPod the other day.

Q17

PLAYBOY: Some musicians aren't very happy about the iPod.

NICK: I'm not quite sure. I think if you're in one place, it's nice to have an actual album, a record sleeve, the lyrics. So there will always be that element of wanting to own something and not just have a song on a hard drive. But I know because I travel a lot—and I've always liked to travel light—I don't like to have a lot of possessions. What I do is buy a CD and stick it in and rip it. Then I can listen to it and have it with me even if I lose the CD or give it away.

ALEX: I like the idea that, because of downloading, people are going to buy songs only if they are good. I think that's a positive thing. It means lazy

bands aren't going to get away with giving you one hit single and an album full of filler. We like the idea that every song should stand up in its own right so you don't have to listen to a song in the context of an album to understand it. I suppose that's why I'm sympathetic to the download environment.

Q18

PLAYBOY: Rock-and-roll feuds are a staple of the business. Do you have thick skins? ALEX: I don't like slagging off other bands, and I don't like getting involved in tit-for-tat stuff. I'm being silly, because I enjoy reading that kind of gossip, but I don't want to get involved in it. I don't want to slag off people I've never met. I wouldn't want to run into someone after having bad-mouthed them in the press and find out they're a lovely person. You'd feel like a prat yourself then.

Q19

PLAYBOY: What about the bands that have come up in your wake—the Futureheads, Bloc Party and Kaiser Chiefs?

NICK: I'm getting bored of it, to be honest. A lot of people saw us as part of a post-punk revival thing or as a band that kicked

off a lot of other things. But that was then. It's someone else playing the four-to-the-floor disco beat on the drums.

Q20

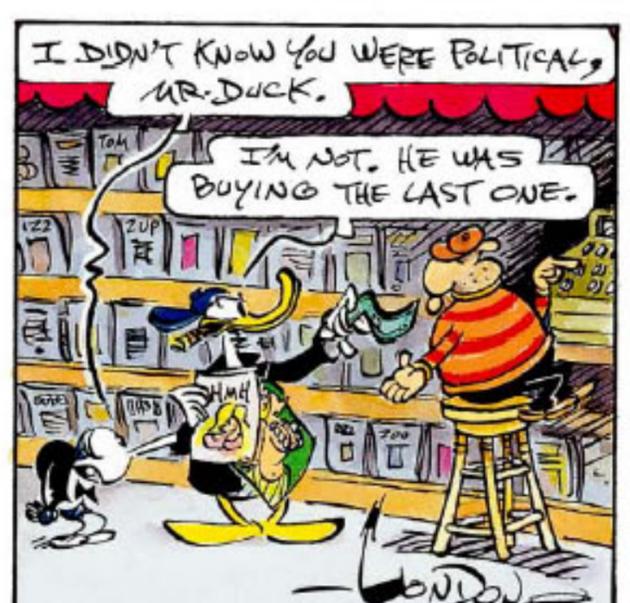
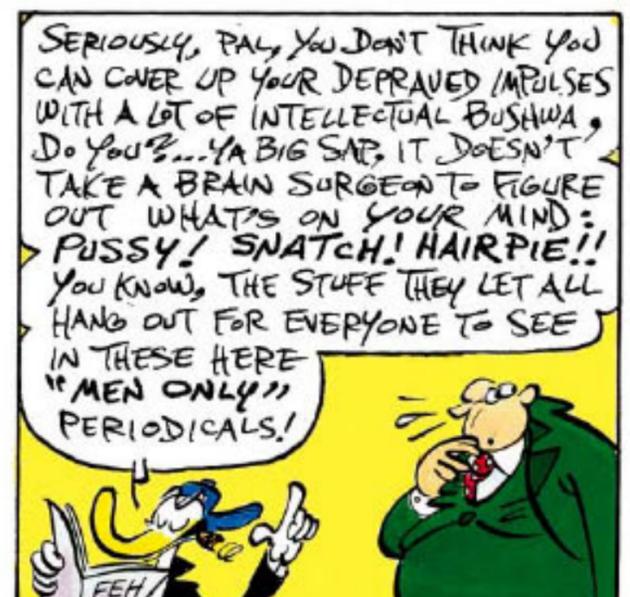
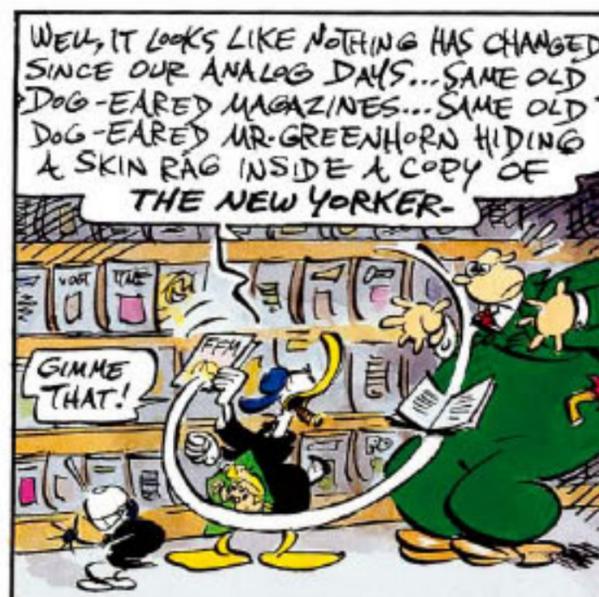
PLAYBOY: Whose career would you want? NICK: I like it when a band progresses. The Beatles are the big one—they always reinvented themselves from one record to another. Talking Heads did that as well. The Who did it too. We played at a charity concert in London organized by Roger Daltrey. I was talking to the sound guy for the Who, and he said, "Why do bands want to do something special, something different? It has ruined so many bands." I thought, Man, you idiot. I definitely don't want to keep doing the same thing.

ALEX: We did our first touring with Interpol. Now, I know they haven't been going for years and years, but when we first went on tour with them they'd been touring for a year and a half, and they were famous in the U.K. The fact that they were so together, loving what they were doing, and that they were completely unegocentric, pleasant people to spend time with was quite inspirational. God, I thought, you can make it and not turn into a dick.



Dirty Duck

by Bobby London



Sogbo's Wife

(continued from page 80)

he watched me eat the plantain *foutou* and peanut sauce that he'd had his wife prepare to honor me. In the corner, his wife undid her top wrap in the lamplight, smoothed shea butter from a jar over her chest and breasts with her hands.

"You won't get sick and die if you eat black men's food?" Sogbo said. "The white men in Abidjan, they eat 'falafel.' They eat this thing, 'cheeseburger.' Don't you need to eat those things not to die?"

"Two and a half years now," I said, whisking a glob of that great treat through the peanut sauce, popping it in my mouth. "Still alive."

"And you sleep in a hut? On a mat?"

"Sometimes I sleep in my fields. When I'm hunting *agouti*, I don't sleep at all."

"Hey!" he said, shaking his head. "You hunt the *agouti*?"

His wife snorted from the corner. Though she was deep in the shadows, the lamplight shone on her moistened skin. She rubbed her arms with the butter, said, "Don't pester him with questions, Sogbo. It's you who are the stranger here. They call him *Uao-fa* because he kills so many francolins. Don't ask him what he eats, where he sleeps. He plays in the forest with the witch doctor." She looked into my eyes in a hard way as she said this. Why had I never noticed her before? "Look at how he speaks our language. Look at how he eats our food. How can he be white? He takes off his skin and hangs it up at night. He's black underneath. He's a sorcerer."

"Hey?" Sogbo said and seemed confused.

I said, "The zipper's on my back."

He looked at me a moment, then bounced his son on his knee, smiled. "You even joke like we do."

I ate, sucked the thick sauce from my fingers as I did. I looked at the wife, and she at me. Her presence was all over me. Her skin was black and supple with the shea butter. Her breasts were pendulous with milk. We'd both worked hard in the fields that day and were tired in a way that her husband wasn't. I said to her, "Sogbo's wife, you've pounded the *foutou* as smooth as cream."

"I thank you, friend of my husband's. I thought of you as I pounded it."

"The sauce is as rich as honey."

"It was with thoughts of you that I mixed it."

"Sogbo's wife, I have eaten it all."

"I will rise now and prepare more, friend of my husband's."

"Tomorrow I will eat it, my friend's wife."

"As you say, Adama white man. Tomorrow. Tomorrow I shall think of you again."

Sogbo looked at his wife, at me, like he was trying to decipher this exchange, which I was too. The wife looked down at her hands, rubbed the shea butter into

her shins. Sogbo said to me, "You are satisfied, Adama?"

"For now."

"You are welcome," he said and smiled.

I spent the next days close to him because I wanted to be close to his wife. Just the bowed presence of her as she served us food brought the blood up under my skin. Sogbo had left the village years before, visited now only irregularly. I could see that the conditions depressed him, that the labor of the fields wasn't something he wanted to do. But I honored him with my presence and in that way helped make his short visit a pleasant one. The men who came from the city went into deep debt to return to the village, to distribute gifts in it. The villagers had no concept of the poverty of city life, so nothing brought back to them was ever enough. All they could see was Sogbo's Manchester United jersey, his knockoff Reeboks, fine modern things to them. I understood that these were probably the only clothes he owned.

"Good-bye, my friend," Sogbo said to me as I saw him off onto the logging truck that would carry him away. He had tears in his eyes. "We are great friends now, and when you come to the city, you will come to my home and allow me to honor you."

As the truck coughed to life and raised thick veils of dust behind it, I waved good-bye at it, understanding simply that I would never see Sogbo again.

Time passed as it does in the village. In the evenings, after a long day setting up an AIDS lecture in a neighboring *campement* or uprooting yams in the fields with the men of my age-group, I'd wash from a bucket behind my hut in the last light, pull on my *boubous* like a nightgown and walk to dinner at Mamadou's.

Since Sogbo had left, I'd found myself taking a roundabout route. There on the east end of the village, I made a pretense of saluting the blacksmith, of asking after the well-being of his banished son. He'd recently repaired the lever of my shotgun for me, and as I'd sit and smoke a cigarette with him under his mango tree, I'd look across his courtyard to the next: Sogbo's. There Mariam turned cassava *toh* in the pot with the long paddle while Sogbo's decrepit mother sat nearby on a mat, watching. Sogbo's mother was an ancient woman; she often sat with her head bowed and eyes closed as though in pain or asleep. I understood then that Mariam took care of her and the son both. Mariam's arms were long and strong, the skin on them without flaw. She never looked up.

At dinner Mamadou would note the direction I'd arrived from. "What's there, Adama, this new direction you've been arriving from?" he said to me one night as his mother set calabashes of *toh* and

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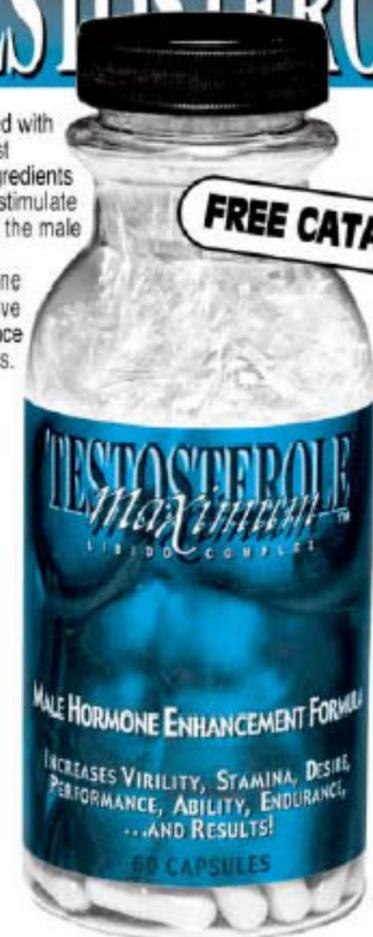
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okra sauce on the ground between us.

"The blacksmith's," I said and washed my hands in the water bowl.

"Even the constant dog is led away by a new scent."

"What's that you say, Mamadou? I'm not in the mood for proverbs."

As he lowered his eyes to eat, he said, "Women don't really satisfy themselves with carrots, Adama."

"I know that."

"And men don't use empty calabashes. Nobody needs to visit the cross-eyed blacksmith more than once a month. You know your way around. I won't say any more. Many things have happened since you've come. Now we'll see what you've learned from them."

I put Mariam out of my mind. Except one night, overcome by the image of her smoothing shea butter into the skin of her chest by lamplight, I lifted the corner of my mat and scratched her name, Mariam Dosso, into the dirt of my floor. Then I took an ebony leaf from the bundle the witch doctor had long ago given me to protect my hut and laid it over the letters of her name. What good would it do? Could the ancestors read? Could she?

The next evening, I shot two francolins in the rice of the chief's fields, tied them by their spurs to my belt. The nightjars were calling the coming of evening, and

as a last thing, I hunted the swamp in the forest near the edge of the village. There was a large lizard that lived there. The people called it *varan-o*. I don't know the Western name. But it was like a small crocodile without teeth, and if you happened upon it and startled it, it would whip your legs with its tail before diving under the water.

Here now, I crouched in the rushes at the swamp's edge, breathed, let the scene come to me. The evening light between the trees was blue all over the black water. There were gray stumps in the water like broken concrete pilings, and on one, its eyes closed, lay the *varan*. I aimed, exhaled, watched the air sacs under the creature's throat fill and deflate as it breathed. The meat and skin were prized. If I brought it back to the village, the children would holler and sing my hunting prowess to everyone.

Perhaps I had been there too long. I looked at the sleeping animal a long time, wondered why in the world I should want to kill it. I lowered my gun, simply looked at it. How did this great lizard and I come to share this world?

Nearby someone was chopping wood. I circled through the forest and crept in close to the sound. I could stalk people even more easily than I could animals. It was a woman with a child tied to her back, collecting some last wood before returning to the village for the night. I crept closer

and saw it was Mariam. She thwacked the long ax into a dried stump, worked the blade free again with her foot. Her son was asleep on her back, and each time she raised the ax high above her head and swung it down into the wood, she exhaled like coughing. She seemed as oblivious to everything as her sleeping son was. From behind the tree where I watched, she was Africa, struggling with her work beyond the eyes of the noisy world.

I stepped into the clearing. Mariam turned and looked at me.

"I felt you behind me, Adama. How long have you been watching?"

"Why didn't you turn if you felt me there?"

"Who turns and looks at danger?"

"Am I a danger to you, Mariam?"

She looked at me. She didn't seem frightened. She said, "I don't know what you are."

"I've wanted to see you."

"I've seen you, at the blacksmith's. Every night you come and look at me."

"Should I not?"

She didn't say anything. I slung my gun over my shoulder. I went to her and touched her bare arms. She looked up at me. She said, "Not here, Adama. Not in the forest."

"When I breathe, I think of you. When I sleep, I think of you."

"When the moon is new, come to me. The old woman sleeps early. It will be dark all over the village. Come to me then. Even after you go back to your people, I must stay here. When the moon is new, Adama. Then come."

I pressed her arms with my rough hands, was surprised at how soft her skin really was. She gathered the shards she'd cut from the stump, arranged them into a neat stack on her head. She said, "I know that you are a man, Adama. I know that the skin you wear is your own. Every night I am glad to see you looking at me. Every night I've wondered how we would meet." She squeezed my hand, left on the trail to the village, and I lit a cigarette and waited in the swamp for the full cover of the falling darkness.

In a few more nights the moon was new, and after dinner I went to my hut, made all my typical signs of retiring—brushed my teeth and spit, pissed a last time in the grass—then closed the door and lay on my mat, waiting. I could hear the witch doctor's sons laughing around their hearth fire. A long time went by as I willed everyone to go to bed, and finally there were last coughs, and then there was quiet. I went out through the dark village in my bare feet, the dust of the paths soft like powder between my toes. Some dogs barked at me, and I hurried on. Even the stars were covered by clouds. Under her mango tree I whispered, "Mariam, Mariam," to the night.

I heard someone trying to hide her



"Now turn your head and tell me how long you've been seeing my wife."

footsteps. Then her hands were on my arms. "To your hut," she whispered. "The old woman is sleeping."

I led her by the hand through the dark. Inside I closed the door, lit my hurricane lamp. Mariam's son was asleep on her back, and she untied him now, spread the wrap on the floor, laid him on it. Then we stood and looked at each other in the lamplight. I offered her my hands, and she took them, stepped close to my body. She unhitched her wraps, let them fall; the lamplight shone warmly all over her clean body. I pulled off my shirt, undid my belt and let my pants fall. I stepped out of them. I pulled down my shorts, stepped out of them, too. Her marriage beads were like pearls around her waist. Milk hung in drops on her nipples. What was there to say? We didn't say anything. For the first time I held her to me, nothing between us but flesh.

"Hurry, Adama. There isn't time."

She looked at me, put her fingers in the hair of my chest, touched my stomach, wrapped her hand around me. Everything was a marvel: my body, hers, the colors of our skin, our desire. She lay on my mat, and I lay on her. I kissed her, held her face, drank her milk. I had a condom, began to put it on. She took it off me with her hand.

"You should be afraid of me, Mariam. I've been to the city."

"How can I fear? My husband lives there."

It didn't last long.

In a few minutes, she dressed, tied her son on her back, and I led her to her hut.

We made love everywhere. It was difficult, it was dangerous. But with my every breath, I thought now of Mariam.

I asked the witch doctor for the leaf wash that would make me invisible to genies in the forest, shared the leaves with Mariam, and we made love in the rushes of the swamp, in the forest's dark glades, her son asleep on a bolt of cloth beside us. We contrived stories to travel into Séguéla: she to sell onions from her garden, me to mail letters home, and when her onions were sold, she'd come to the small house I shared with

the aid workers of the region. Melissa or Shanna would entertain the boy in the front room while Mariam and I made love on a real bed for a change, showered together afterward. The girls had their own affairs. They were happy to help me in mine.

After a few months of this, Mariam received word that her mother had broken her leg back in their home village, Djamina. She told me as I passed by her hut, "Meet me tomorrow in Gbena." Gbena was the village where the bonesetter lived. I told Mamadou I'd be hunting gazelles in the forest beyond Soba-Banadjé, and he took it at that. I wound my way to it through the forest, found Mariam in Gbena with her

Even the first sound of the women's pestles pounding rice in the morning found Mariam's body entwined with mine.

When I returned from Gbena, I ate dinner with Mamadou. "No gazelles?" he asked.

"No luck," I said and brushed off my pants.

He wouldn't look at me. I washed my fingers in the water bowl, and we ate his mother's *toh*. I pretended for a while that his silence didn't bother me. Finally I said, "What is it?"

"Don't you know what it is?"

"That's why I'm asking."

"Sogbo's my kinsman. We were circumcised together."

"What if I say I don't know what you're talking about?"

"Adama, you are my brother. You were like an infant when you came, and you have grown before me until you have become more important to me than my children. Don't you respect my name? Our ways? Her mother-in-law has made accusations to the chief. Don't you know that old people don't sleep well? Old people are the bridge to the ancestors, are almost ancestors themselves. She says they've been speaking to her in her dreams. She's made claims against you."

"What did the chief say?"

"He sent her away. If it was anyone else, Adama," he said and shook his head. "But it is you. Our white man. The old

woman's gone to Wye. The only reason anyone goes to Wye is to see the witch doctor there. He is blind and has a white beard. Everyone fears his magic. You should be careful now. If shame comes upon me because of you, I don't care. But the old are old because they have learned to protect their lives. She needs Mariam to care for her. Be careful, Adama. You think you know a lot here, but you don't. Get medicine from Chauffeur. Do whatever he says. She's set genies on you. Everyone is expecting you to die."

I met Mariam in the hut of my old fields. The work had been too difficult alone, and after the first year, I'd let mine fall 145

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mother. The mother's shin was swollen with the break, and she had to stay at the bonesetter's for a week. Villages kept secrets like this from each other, and after presenting the chief of Gbena with a bundle of kola nuts and a pair of francolins I'd shot on the way, Mariam and I were able to live there a week, discreetly, as man and wife.

Her mother was kind to me, and this was the finest week of my life in Africa. I'd hunt francolins in the Gbena chief's rice fields during the day and in the evening return to the hut he'd given us and a meal of *toh* that Mariam had prepared. Then we'd watch the evening settle down on the land from our stools until all of the land was dark, and we'd retire to our night together.

fallow to help Mamadou enlarge his instead. All around us my old farm was a tangle of weeds and short trees. Even the old paths through it were lost in the surging reclamation of the forest. Mariam set her son down on the cloth to sleep. She lay beside me. She wasn't well.

"What's the matter, Mariam?"

"I haven't eaten in three days. I'm afraid of the old woman. I think she's going to try to poison me."

"She's an old witch."

"She's not a witch, Adama. She's Sogbo's mother. If I were in her place, I don't know if I would do any differently. Adama, I have to leave the village. If I go to my mother's, they will find me. I have to go to Abidjan. I've wanted to anyway. I learned how to weave as a child. I can go to Abidjan and weave market baskets. Everyone will buy them. All women need a basket to go to market with."

"And I'll be alone here?"

She petted my face. She said, "You will go back to your people. Give me money, Adama. Let me run away. I will write you, and then you can join me. I'll find a house in Abidjan, and when you come to me, it will be like when you came to me the first time, when the moon was new."

For a few days we kept a low profile. I went into Séguéla and withdrew 150,000

CFA francs from the bank. People in Abidjan were lucky to make 15,000 CFA a month; people in the village, 15,000 the whole year. It was nearly all the money I had. I gave the bundle of money to Mariam in my field hut, and she tied it into her wrap. We made love a last time.

In the morning Mariam was gone. On discovering this, the old woman let up a lament that brought even the old chief to her hut. No one, not even Mamadou, spoke to me for days.

For many weeks the old woman and I battled with magic. I was constantly sick with malaria and killed first one cobra, and then another, that had somehow gotten into my hut. After that I visited the one-eyed witch doctor of Kavena, because I knew Chauffeur wouldn't help me with what I wanted to do, and was told to sacrifice a black-and-white-speckled chicken at the black granite boulder outside that village to cleanse myself.

"It needs to be strong magic," I told him when I came back from the sacrifice. "I need to protect myself from her. I'm guilty of what she claims."

"It will be as strong as what you feel in your heart, white man," the old man said. He tossed bones, antelope joints, on his

mat, read them, then assembled a packet of herbs and fur drawn from the many bundles of them he had tied in the rafters of his hut, which looked like an alchemist's workshop. He wanted 5,000 CFA and six eggs to get the old woman's genies off my back and gave me the concoction in burlap to bury behind my hut.

For some days the old woman and I exchanged hard stares when we'd pass each other in the village, as hard as what we felt against each other. The whole village seemed to await the outcome of this battle, and everyone, even Mamadou, kept their distance from us lest the genies circling about our huts think they were caught up in it too. Soon enough, the old woman cut her foot while chopping wood for her hearth fire. She was carried to her home village, Kenegbé, on the back of a young nephew, and there, despite the Kenegbé healer's best efforts, the wound grew gangrenous and she died.

After he returned from her funeral, Mamadou said to me, "So it's over, Adama. Good. But know that the bush pig who uproots a baobab tree eats well for one day. After that, he starves."

I'd be leaving soon because of war, though I didn't know that yet. In many respects, the death of the old woman was my end in Tégéso anyway. It wasn't about the way people treated me. It was how I felt about myself.

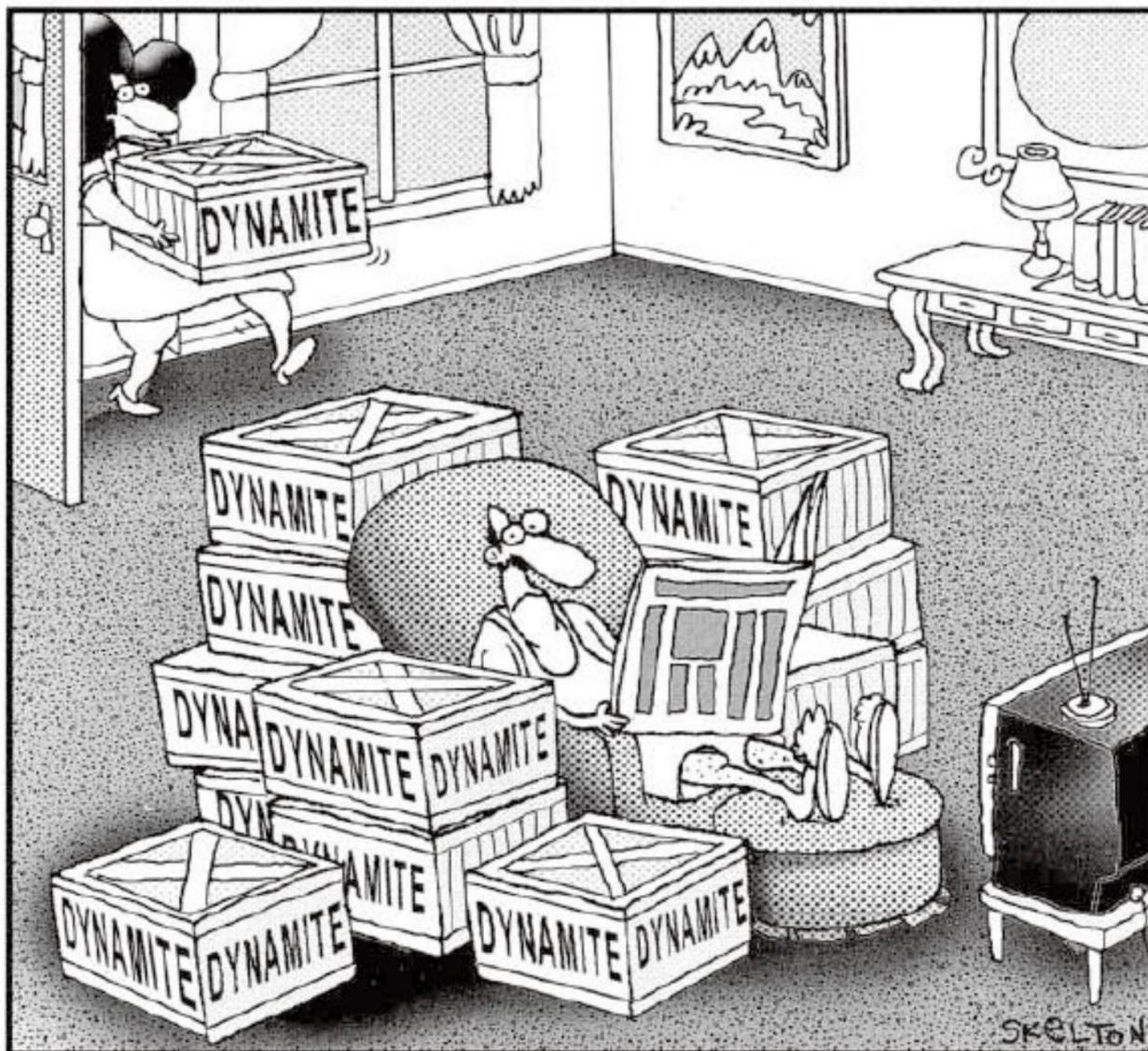
Nothing I'd done there was what I had been sent there to do. Now I'd killed an old woman.

A letter came on a logging truck addressed to me: Diomandé Adama, Whiteman, Tégéso village. On the seal, it read, *Devine*. Guess.

Inside there was an address in Abidjan. The words on the paper said simply, "I wait for you as on the new moon."

I took a transport to Séguéla the next day, was in Abidjan within three. The address was in a squalid and dangerous neighborhood of Adjamé, and as I made my way through the fetid alleyways of tin-roofed shacks in the darkening evening, youths and menacing toughs followed in my wake. At her shack I rapped on the door. Sogbo opened it. His smile was broad and open under his thin mustache. He said, "Adama! I told you that you would visit my house. Come in. Mariam will prepare a special meal, a feast! I hear my mother has died. I'm very sorry for that. But first I thank you for the help you gave Mariam so that she and my son could join me here."

In the corner, in the lamplight, she was spreading shea butter on her chest—unconquerable, unknowable, as beautiful and resolute as always. She did not look up at me.



Looking back, Herb remembers Anita taking a special interest in the "till death do us part" clause.



PLAYMATE NEWS



Miss November 1980 Jeana Keough (center) anchors the new Bravo reality series *The Real Housewives*.

JEANA KEOUGH KEEPS IT REAL

“Over the years my friends have made comments that we should have our own TV show. They say I’m like the character Karen from *Will & Grace* and my housekeeper is like Rosario,” Miss November 1980 Jeana Keough, formerly Tomasino, says. She finally gets a spot on the tube this month with the new Bravo reality series *The Real Housewives*, a decadent blend of *Desperate Housewives* and *The O.C.* that follows the lives of five women in the competitively affluent Coto de Caza gated community in southern California. Her Playmate status has worn an interesting wrinkle into the conservative neighborhood. “There were children who were not allowed to play at my house



when the kids were little because I was a Playmate,” she says. “Now that we’re older we all laugh hysterically about it.” Though she’s now a successful real estate agent, the entertainment business is nothing new for the media-savvy Playmate. As readers may remember, Jeana worked in movies and was one of the original video vixens, appearing in the iconic ZZ Top videos for “Gimme All Your Lovin’” and “Legs.” “Unfortunately, with reality TV you’re not allowed to see the shows until they come out,” she says. “I think I will be the scandal-free one. Hopefully. If not, I can always blame it on the editing.”

30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Readers may recall Miss March 1976 Ann Pennington following in the footsteps of her sister Janice—a *Price Is Right* model, as well as Miss May 1971—right onto the pages of *PLAYBOY* and onto the set of the game show. At the time, Ann had just divorced and considered herself to be “uninhibited and very open.” She declared, “It’s great to experiment. There isn’t anything I won’t try”—no doubt fueling our readers’ fantasies.



LOOSE LIPS

“My dog has a little *PLAYBOY* collar. When people ask why he has it, I say, ‘He gets around a lot.’”

—Colleen Marie



RED CARPET RAIDERS



The plush red pile unfurls for everyone’s favorite Centerfolds. From far left: Victoria Silvstedt at the World Music Awards, held in Hollywood’s Kodak Theatre; Anna Nicole Smith at Pam Anderson’s Comedy Central roast at Sony Studios; Heather Kozar at the Mansion; Jenny McCarthy at the TV Guide and *Inside TV* Emmy Awards after-party at the Roosevelt Hotel in Hollywood; Pam Anderson at the World Music Awards.



HOT SHOT



CARA WAKELIN

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By James McDaniel

My favorite Playmate is Miss June 1975 **Azizi Johari**. Have you seen her? She looks like the prototype for those velvet paintings of a black woman

on a cliff, holding a cheetah on a leash.

The first time I saw her it was "Wow!"

I wonder what she's up to now.



POP QUESTIONS: AMBER CAMPISI

Q: Are you still working at the restaurant, or does being a Playmate take up all your time?

A: When I'm not modeling I'm still doing the same stuff I did before. It's nice to come back and catch everyone up on my life. They're always asking me, "Where have you been?"

Q: Do readers come to the restaurant just to see you?

A: I have lots of customers who come in and want stuff signed or want to have a picture taken with me, so I definitely can't run in wearing sweatpants and with my hair in a ponytail anymore.



Q: What do your parents think of your newfound notoriety?

A: My dad loves it. He's totally supportive. He framed my issue. We're working on a little area of the restaurant where we'll hang a bunch of my memorabilia. We have all these photos of celebrities and sports stars, and now I'm going to have my own little wall.

Q: What's your favorite dish at the restaurant?

A: I just love the pizza. Hef loves it too. He orders it on a regular basis, and we FedEx it out to the Mansion.

PAM TAKES A JOKE WITH THE BEST OF THEM

Even Tommy Lee described Pam Anderson's Comedy Central roast as "unbelievably hard-core" after she took some solid shots from Jimmy Kimmel, David Spade, Sarah Silverman and other noted potty mouths. So with Pam's blessing the cable network cobbled together an uncensored DVD riddled with raucous, raunchy yuks. The real showstopper, though, may be Courtney "Sober for a Year" Love's attempt to stay upright.



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Miss March 2005 **Jillian Grace** and PMOY 2005 **Tiffany Fallon** teamed for a sexy spread in *Guitar World's Guitar Review Guide*....

Miss December 1997 **Karen McDougal** had a 10-page "Hardbody" pictorial in *Iron Man* magazine.... Miss June 1963 **Connie Mason** appeared at the Chiller Theatre convention, where she received a commemorative plaque for the 40th anniversary of her cult film *Two Thousand Maniacs!*... Miss March 1996 **Priscilla Lee Tay-**



Tiffany and Jillian are dangerously electric near the high-end equipment in *Guitar World's Guitar Review Guide*.

lor had a guest shot on the CBS series *Out of Practice*.... Miss February 1999 **Stacy Fuson** and Miss August 2001 **Jennifer Walcott** can be seen playing mock newswomen on *FoxyNews.com*, a parody of the Fox News Channel.... On February 28 **Anna Nicole Smith** made an appearance at the Supreme Court to claim an \$88.6 million inheritance from her late husband.... Congratulations to Miss December 2001 **Shanna Moakler**, who is a new mom; to Miss July 1998 **Lisa Dergan**, who wed White Sox base stealer Scott Podsednik; and to Miss May 1998 **Deanna Brooks**, who celebrated her 10th wedding anniversary.... We extend our condolences to the family of Miss October 1961 **Jean Cannon**, who passed away in November.



Workouts are so much more inspired with Karen.

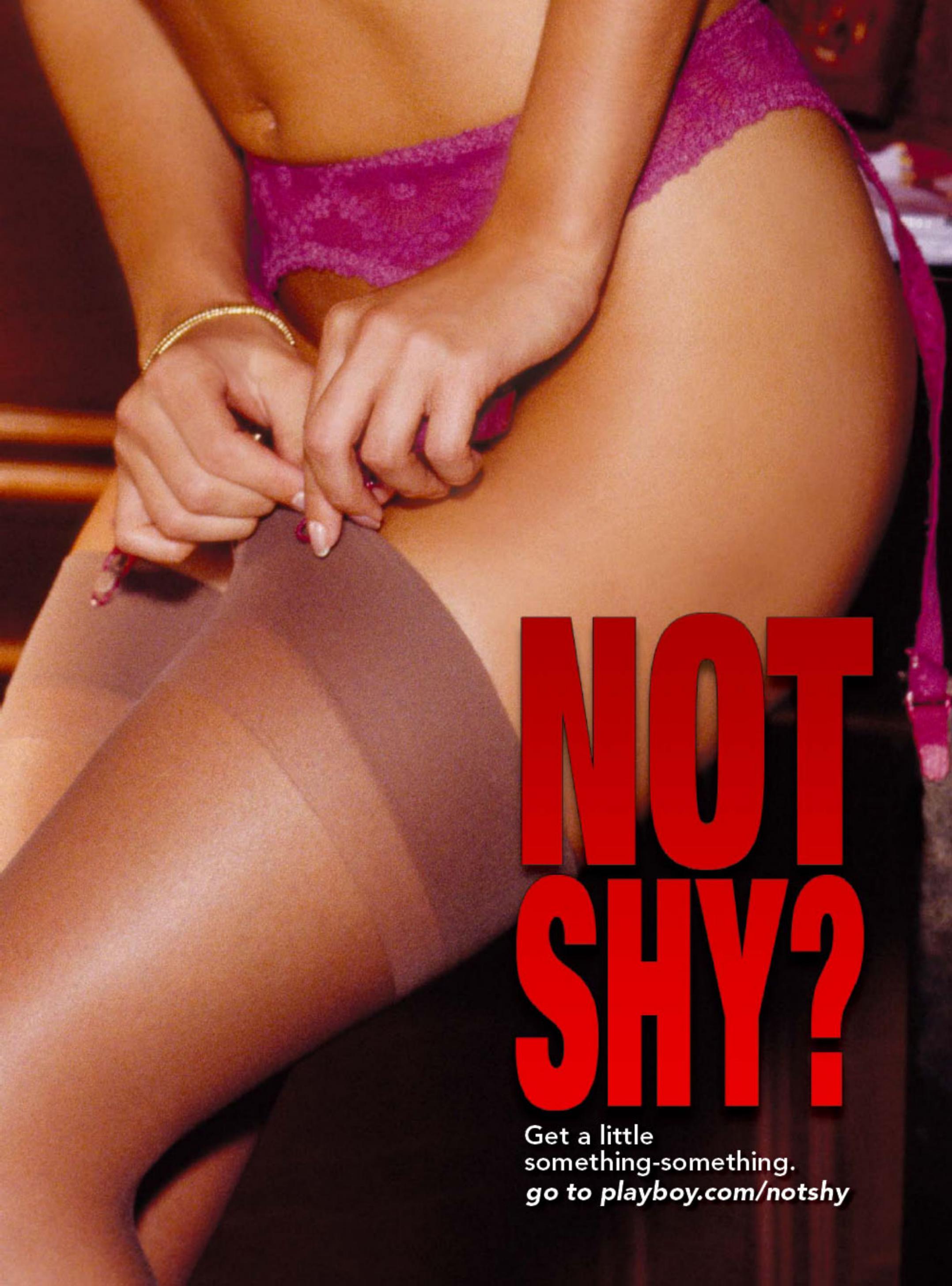
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See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at cyber.playboy.com.



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A close-up photograph of a woman's midsection and hands. She is wearing pink lace underwear and is sitting on a wooden table. Her hands are clasped together, holding a brown paper shopping bag. The lighting is warm and intimate.

NOT SHY?

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Playboy On The Scene

WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN



Customs Official

Young, hip and prolific, Roland Sands is fueling the next generation of custom motorcycles

When Roland Sands says he was born into motorcycles, he means it literally. "My dad brought me home from the hospital on a Harley," he says. But motorcycles were more than just transportation in the Sands family. His father, Perry, helped pioneer the aftermarket motorcycle-parts industry with his company, Performance Machine; when Roland dropped out of college, he went to work for Perry and started racing bikes. In short order he won 10 American Motorcyclist Association nationals, but by 2002 a bruised lung, a lacerated liver and 32 broken bones

had convinced him he wasn't having fun anymore. He began designing concept bikes, creating a startlingly unique series of choppers that have won top design awards (see the bikes at rolandsands.com). Handcrafted one-offs as they are, Sands's creations are not for sale. Neither are they museum pieces. "I thrash 'em till they fall apart," he says. "I need to be sure that whatever I build is going to last." What's next? "I love Frank Lloyd Wright. I want to apply the philosophy of custom bike building—tune and flow, form and function—to a building. You could make it absolutely sick."



Mind Bender

A sculpture in the lobby of Penn State's McAllister building will break your brain

On one level this tangle of stainless steel called *Octacube* is a work of art. On another it's a feat of mathematical derring-do. On still a third, it's a window into the fourth dimension. Confused yet? Its designer, Adrian Ocneanu, explains: An octacube is a four-dimensional regular solid with 96 sides. Just as your shadow is a two-dimensional outline of your three-dimensional form, this sculpture is a three-dimensional outline of a theoretical four-dimensional form. Four-dimensional objects are hard to visualize, but thanks to a process called radial stereographic projection we can see what their three-dimensional outlines would look like. Ocneanu has spent 20 years researching the mathematics of symmetry, which is related to quantum field theory. *Octacube* lets him show people a little bit of what he thinks about at work. Note, however, that the piece is not actual size. "The legs are cut off halfway toward infinity," he says. "We had only a finite amount of metal." 151



Watts Goin' On

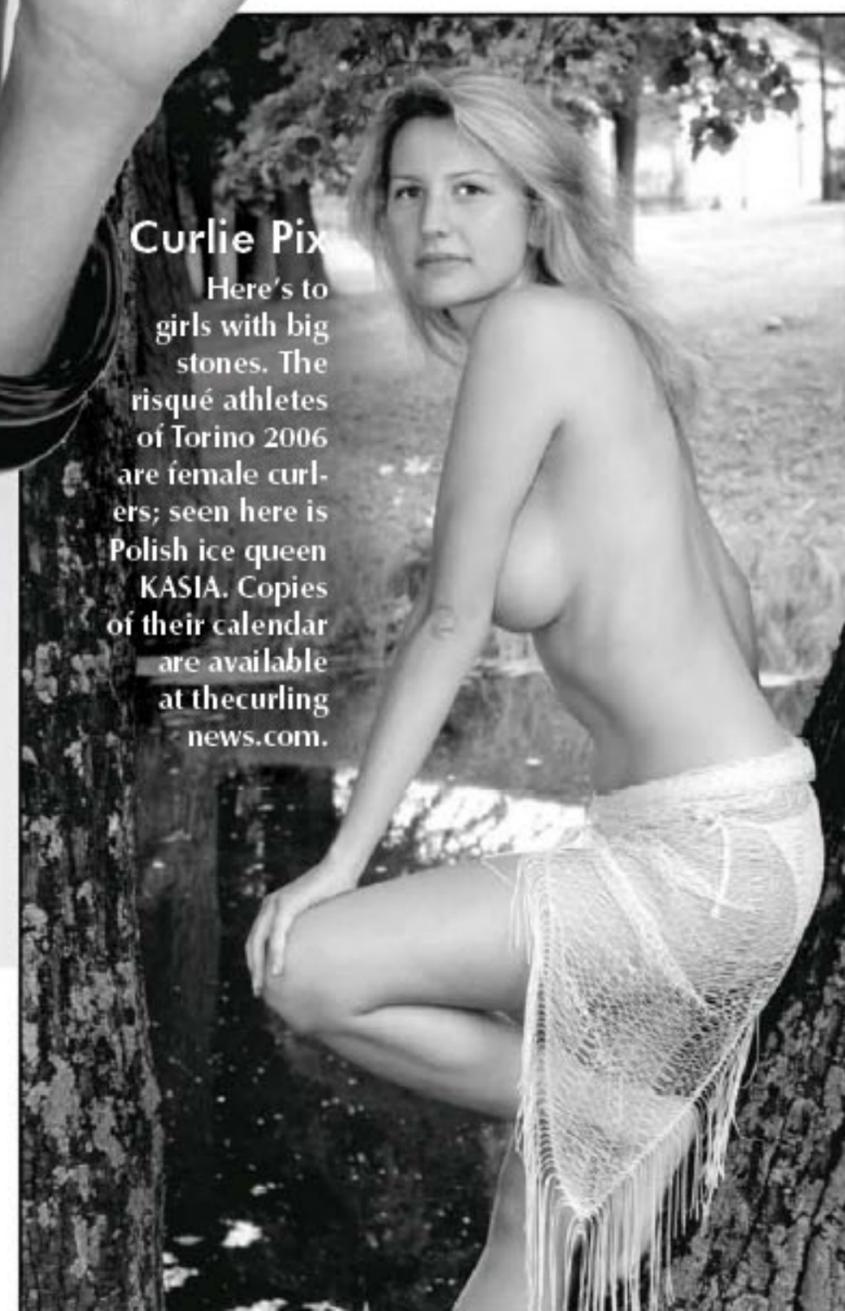
She's the Aussie who had us at hello, if by "hello" you mean "lengthy lesbian sex scenes with Laura Elena Harring in *Mulholland Drive*." *Hel-lo!* You loved NAOMI WATTS in *King Kong*; for a full Naomi overdose, rent the little-seen *Ellie Parker*, a throwaway mockumentary salvaged by luminous Wattage.

CELEBRITY PICTURES LA



Dirty Linens

It's a myth that Orthodox Jews have sex through a hole in a sheet, but that didn't stop cutup SARAH SILVERMAN from shredding the bedding to show some kosher cleavage. Mazel tov!



Curlie Pix

Here's to girls with big stones. The risqué athletes of Torino 2006 are female curlers; seen here is Polish ice queen KASIA. Copies of their calendar are available at thecurlingnews.com.

INA/ICE

Casting Call

You're never too old for a schoolboy crush. Our latest is on Page 3 girl **KEELEY HAZELL**, a natural to head up the U.K.'s Ministry of Sculpture.



Gluteus Magnificus

"And on the pedestal, these words appear: 'My name is **KAROLINA KURKOVA**, superest of supermodels: Look on my ass, ye mighty, and despair!'"

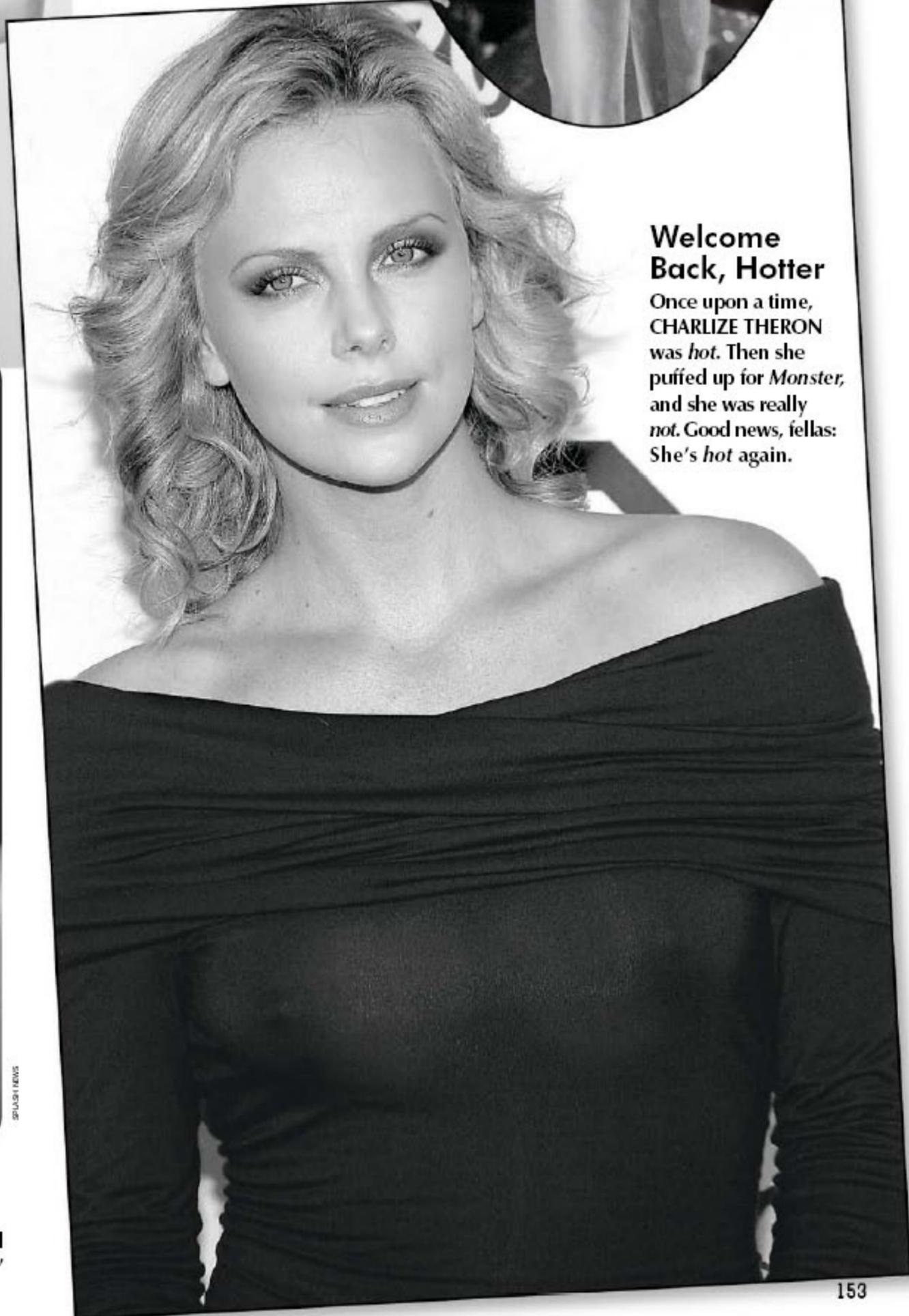
—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY



KRISTIN CALLAHAN-ACE PICTURES

Welcome Back, Hotter

Once upon a time, **CHARLIZE THERON** was *hot*. Then she puffed up for *Monster*, and she was really *not*. Good news, fellas: She's *hot* again.



ANNA POCCAROLENSKY/EMERTON/SPASH NEWS

THE SUN



SPASH NEWS

Keira Knippley

She froze, confused. **KEIRA KNIGHTLEY** hadn't expected dancing polar bears in tuxedos and bowler hats. "Aha!" said her left nipple. "Now's my chance to slip out."

THE SOLE OF A MAN

Mario Moretti Polegato was walking down the street one day when—eureka!—he had an idea: shoes that expel sweat and keep your feet dry. He figured out the technology, and 11 years later his company, Geox, is growing faster than any other in Italy. With a new flagship store on Madison Avenue, he's ready to take on America. Pictured from left: the canvas-and-suede Gade walking shoe (\$110), the calf-leather Sea thong (\$93) and the suede-and-mesh Legend sneaker (\$95). Available at geox.com.



CHEW ON THIS

Between the barking and the scratching and the whining to get out, your dog makes enough noise without a \$@%# squeak toy. But Snuffles loves his squeak toy, doesn't he? Yes, he does! Yes, he does, his widdle shnuffly snuffums! Sorry. Now your peace and Snuffles's play don't have to be mutually exclusive. In a stroke of genius, Happy Dog Toys has fitted its line of Soniks silent squeak toys with an ultrasonic squeaker he can hear but you can't (pictured: Tweeter, \$5, sitstay.com). It's like a dog whistle, minus the effort. And the going outside.



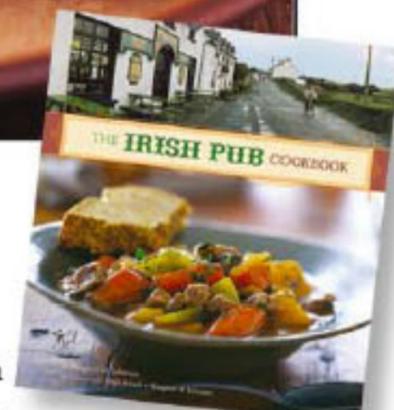
SHOWER OF POWER

There's a problem in bathrooms across America. A problem that, unchecked, could become a national tragedy. We're talking about shower curtains that are not punk. Luckily there's a solution: CBGB's shower curtain (\$18, cbgb.com), printed with fliers from the legendary New York City club from its beginnings, in December 1973, through 2001. Everyone from Richard Hell to the Knack is on the bill, so string it up, turn on the water and start your own two-person mosh pit.



THE REAL MCFOOD

The Irish are known for a lot of things: stout, whiskey, James Joyce, U2, stout, whiskey. But food? Aha! The fact is, nothing beats Irish cuisine when the occasion calls for it (say, when you're drinking stout or whiskey). Margaret M. Johnson's new *Irish Pub Cookbook* (\$25, available in bookstores) is thick with great simple recipes for the Emerald Isle's comfort food, such as beef-and-Guinness pie, prawns and bacon with mustard sauce, and cider-braised chicken and cabbage. Pictured: caramelized duck breast with pineapple chutney. If you're a fan of that other holy trinity—bacon, butter and beer—consider this book holy scripture.



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Bebe Buell and Steven Tyler. Pam Anderson and Tommy Lee. Shanna Moakler and Travis Barker. Playboy and rock share an intimate history. With a set of logo guitar picks (\$6) and a Swarovski crystal-embellished Rabbit Head strap (\$40 to \$70, musiciansfriend.com), you won't even need to learn how to play to be a rock god.



HUM ALONG

If you travel with a laptop, chances are you've dropped it a few times. Whoops. Itronix, the company that makes computers for the military, partnered with GM to create this tough-as-nails Hummer laptop (\$3,000, hummerstuff.com). It shrugs off bumps and features built-in GPS, as well as swappable cell receivers for wireless Internet access. Finally, a Hummer you have a legitimate reason to own.



RACK 'EM UP

In case you haven't heard, women love a well-designed accoutrement. Especially when it's Danish, mounted on your wall and stuffed full of vintage Barolos and Médocs. Part of Rosendahl's Black Label collection, the Winetube wine rack (\$100, unicahome.com) is a minimalist masterpiece of anodized aluminum that displays up to 12 bottles. With each vintage suspended by the neck, the Winetube creates a floating effect. And who doesn't like a little floating effect? Isn't that why you uncork those bottles in the first place?



A FRIEND INDEED

Imagine a flashlight that points itself. No more holding it between your teeth, sucking on the hard metal. No more arguing with your girlfriend, who's so bored standing there that she forgets your name. Now you're free to peer into that black hole behind your stereo cabinet and get to work. Flashlite Friends (\$20, thinkgeek.com) come in black or silver, with legs that twist 360 degrees and lock in 10 positions. Sometimes it's the simplest things in life....

QUIET, PLEASE

There are things you cancel and things you don't. Things you don't cancel: season tickets to the Lakers, PLAYBOY subscriptions. Things you do cancel: equivalents on both sides of a mathematical equation, airplane noise. These Solitude noise-canceling headphones (\$200, protravelgear.com) were developed by a pilot acquainted with the edginess that comes from a six-hour flight's constant drone. Though not as heavy-duty as the headphones real pilots use, they can negate a full 18 decibels of noise, removing the hum while keeping what you want to hear—whether that's music, video-game sound effects or our favorite, absolute silence.



Next Month



TAKE A TUMBLE ON THE MAT WITH CANDICE MICHELLE.



COMIC GENIUS.



PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: RED PILL OR BLUE PILL?



CYBERSEXY.

SCIENCE VS. RELIGION—FROM SCHOOL BOARDS TO CONGRESS, THE BATTLE OF OUR LIFETIME IS BEING WAGED BETWEEN FAITH AND REASON. A SYMPOSIUM OF MODERN HUMANISTS, **KURT VONNEGUT** AND **LEWIS BLACK** AMONG THEM, PONDER THE DANGER OF REACTIONARY THOUGHT.

CANDICE MICHELLE—MEET ANOTHER WWE DIVA WHO COULD PIN YOU (AS IF THAT'S A BAD THING). DON'T LIKE WEARING SPANDEX SHORTS? PIN HER PICTORIAL UP INSTEAD.

KEANU REEVES—IN HIS ROLES, REEVES HAS RANGED FAR AND WIDE, FROM THE ABSURDITY OF TED IN *BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE* TO THE COMPLEXITY OF NEO IN THE *MATRIX* SERIES. NOW HEAR HIM SPEAK FOR HIMSELF IN A MUST-READ *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW* BY **MICHAEL FLEMING**.

THE BEST MEALS I EVER ATE—**ANDY MURRAY** IS A CHEF AND A SIBLING OF A SUPERB COMIC ACTOR, BUT HE IS FOREMOST A TRENCHMAN. A FABULOUSLY FINICKY EATER RELIVES HIS FAVORITE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCES.

GRAPHIC CONTENT—ART AND LITERATURE COALESCE IN A UNIQUELY AMERICAN FORM, THE COMIC BOOK. IN THE PAST 25 YEARS, COMICS HAVE EXTENDED THEIR POP INFLUENCE INTO FILM, TV, BOOKS, VIDEO GAMES, DESIGN, ADVER-

TISING—BASICALLY EVERYTHING. HERE'S THE ESSENTIAL PRIMER ON THE KEY ARTISTS, AUTHORS AND TITLES.

SEX WITH ESTHER—A MIDDLE-AGED FILMMAKER FALLS FOR A YOUNG STARLET. SHE GIVES HIM HER BODY, BUT LOVE IS NOT IN THE SCRIPT. FICTION BY **MICHEL HOUELLEBECC**

CRASHING AUGUSTA—THE MASTERS TOURNAMENT, HOME TO SLICK GREENS AND MUCH-WORSHIPPED GREEN JACKETS, IS THE HIGH HOLIDAY FOR AMERICAN GOLF FANS, BUT AVERAGE JOES ARE USUALLY SHUT OUT. OUR ENTERPRISING **JONATHAN LITTMAN**, HOWEVER, MANAGES TO MAKE HIS WAY INTO 18-HOLE HEAVEN.

SPRING AND SUMMER FASHION FORECAST—STYLE PSYCHIC **JOSEPH DE ACETIS** SEES A DELUGE OF SHORT JACKETS AND A LINE OF THIN TIES ON THE HORIZON.

CRAIG FERGUSON—THE SERIOCOMIC SCOT WHO WORKS THE LATE LATE SHIFT ANSWERS A JOCLAR 20Q FROM **DAVID RENSIN**.

PLUS: PLAYMATE **LISA DERGAN** RECOUNTS HER HUSBAND SCOTT PODSEDNIK'S WORLD SERIES HEROICS, COMPUTER-SCREEN SIRENS SIZZLE IN OUR CYBER GIRLS PICTORIAL, AND APRIL SHOWERS FIND OUR MISS APRIL **HOLLEY ANN DORROUGH** IN NOTHING BUT RAIN BOOTS.

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