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LEAGUE**

THE SEXIEST
SHOW ON TURF

**AZIZ
ANSARI
20Q**

THE
DEMISE OF THE
HOLLYWOOD
**TOUGH
GUY**

BY NICK TOSCHES

THE INTERVIEW
LAMAR ODOM

THE
YEAR
IN **SEX**

SPECIAL REPORT

**NARCO
AMERICANO**
DEEP INSIDE THE
**MEXICAN
DRUG WAR**



VICTOR A DISH SERVED 9,000

MAZDA, 2010 GRAND-AM ROLEX GT CHAMPIONS

2010 proved to be a year to remember for Mazda and its MAZDASPEED Motorsports partners. With more Mazdas being road raced on the weekends than any other brand, it's no surprise the eight GT Mazda RX-8 teams helped bring home the Rolex 24 at Daytona, as well as all three Rolex Grand Am GT championships - driver, team, and manufacturer. Standing between Mazda and destiny lay some of the world's best from Porsche GT3s, BMW M6s and Ferrari F430s, but when the brake dust settled the rotary-powered Mazda RX-8s were parked in victory lane.

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February—who cares about February? It goes by so fast. And that gives you less time to read your favorite magazine, which is a shame, because *PLAYBOY* is known for its excellent February issues. Take for example this month's fiction from **Walter Mosley**, who deserves twice as many awards as he's already won. In *Untitled Crime Story* he shares the story of Friend Williams, who gets involved in relieving drug dealers of three suitcases of cash. The takedown doesn't work as planned, but it wouldn't be nearly as good a story if it did. If you're celebrating a birthday this month and hope you're another year wiser, think again. As **Susan Jacoby** argues in her *Forum* commentary, "The Folly of Age," the idea of old-age wisdom is a myth. If you're a fool now, you'll be one at 85, too. Another misconception these days is that there are any tough guys left. In *The End of Rico*, **Nick Tosches** ponders why we no longer see characters like Rico Bandello as portrayed by Edward G. Robinson in *Little Caesar* (1931). Tough women are not in short supply, at least not in the Lingerie Football League, where they pound one another while wearing little more than bikinis, helmets and shoulder pads.

Arny Freytag uncovers the softer side of the LFL for *Fantasy Football*. In 200, comedian **Aziz Ansari**, one of the stars of *Parks and Recreation*, reveals how to pick up women through "peacocking" and what it was like growing up Indian in the South. Something funny is going on in Juárez, Mexico, but no one's laughing. As **T.J. English** reports in *Narco Americana*, the drug war that extends well over the border from the dying city has become a game of mirrors in which it's hard to tell the insanely criminal from the criminally insane. A different type of enforcer—the kind you admire, especially if he's on your team—once roamed the rinks in Detroit. In *The Berserker of Hockeytown*, Kevin Cook interviews those close to **Bob Probert**, who spent 16 seasons in the NHL. When he died last year, at the age of 45, his pallbearers included guys he had beaten up on the ice. What does that say about a man? **Lamar Odom** excels in another arena, starring for the Los Angeles Lakers after a rough start in life. In the *Playboy Interview* he talks about his monthlong courtship of new wife Khloé Kardashian, whether President Obama's got game and how he felt about being traded for Shaq. Better dig in—it's almost March.



Walter Mosley



Susan Jacoby



Nick Tosches

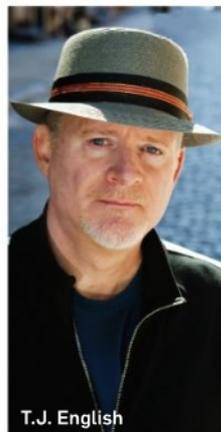
PLAYBILL



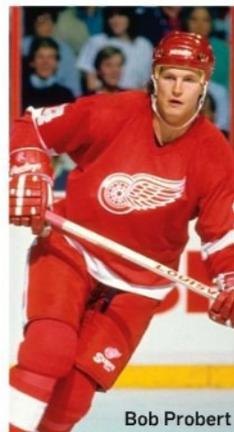
Arny Freytag in an LFL huddle.



Aziz Ansari



T.J. English



Bob Probert



Lamar Odom



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PLAYBOY

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Even the worst mob family wouldn't be so brazen as to have a U.S. consulate employee gunned down in broad daylight, but that's exactly what happened last year in Juárez. **T.J. ENGLISH** reveals the disturbing realities of Mexico's narcotics war.



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Chocolates, bubbly, lingerie and jewelry! Everything you need to know to deliver the perfect Valentine's Day.

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Pretty boys and politically correct story lines—that's what modern-day movies are made of. **NICK TOSCHES** reflects on the tough guys of Hollywood past.

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Dog abuser? Accused rapist? Egregious philanderer? Don't sweat it. Prowess on the field is all it takes to absolve athletes of past transgressions. By **A.J. DAULERIO**

76 THE BERSERKER OF HOCKEYTOWN

He brutalized rival players on the ice, and fans loved him for it. **KEVIN COOK** looks back at the troubled life and times of the NHL's toughest enforcer, Bob Probert.

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The Lakers forward talks to **JASON BUHRMESTER** about sex tapes, life on reality TV and his rise to basketball stardom.

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He hangs out with Kanye West, starts fake fights with Justin Bieber and plays an Indian redneck on TV. **ERIC SPITZNAGEL** spends time with the consummate wiseass.

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50 UNTITLED CRIME STORY

In this new short story by **WALTER MOSLEY**, two men almost get away with murder, until karma catches them by surprise.



COVER STORY

A sublime mix of brawn and beauty, the hard-tackling women of the Lingerie Football League give new meaning to the term *fantasy football*. When these athletic vixens shed their uniforms for photographer Arny Freytag, they reveal their sculpted physiques. Not surprisingly, our Rabbit made sure to be on hand for the shoot.

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Miss August 2008 Kayla Collins is one tough Yankee. As the sole American on the latest season of the popular U.K. reality-TV show *I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!*, Kayla proved her mettle, battling bugs, Brits and foul weather.

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Get acquainted with the ravishing Miss February, a nursing student and rock-and-roll snowboarding babe who possesses both brains and beauty.

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Ah, 2010. Tiger Woods showed his love, Montana Fishburne kicked off her career in porn and Brett Favre may or may not have sent Jenn Sterger pictures of his little friend. We look back at these and other salacious moments.

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They may put the *skin in pigskin*, but the powerhouse women of the Lingerie Football League are dead serious about their sport. Take a peek inside the locker room of the best-looking football players in the country.

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GÉRARD PRUNIER considers the dark and tragic nature of an African nation born of strife and genocide.

THIS MONTH ON PLAYBOY.COM

DEAR PLAYMATE Our Playmate of the Year candidates answer your questions on style, sex and more.

LINGERIE FOOTBALL LEAGUE See more photos and bonus video of the tough, sexy women of the LFL.

THE YEAR IN SEX Get the full multimedia experience of the raciest scandals of 2010.

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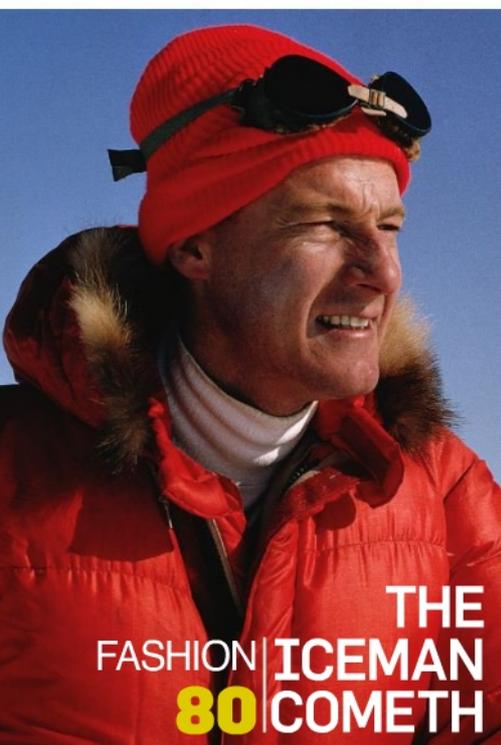
Playmates Kimberly Phillips, Crystal Harris and Anna Sophia Berglund enjoy Pumpkin Carving Night; Corey Feldman, Paris Hilton, Too Short and other celebs party with Hef at the Mansion for the annual Halloween bash.

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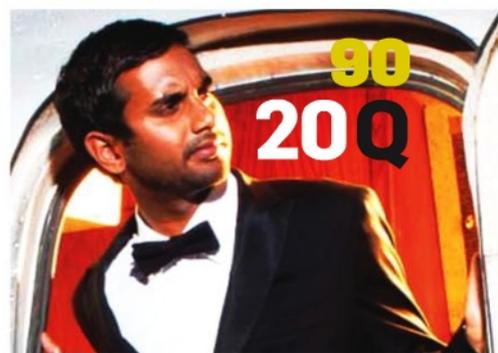
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THE FASHION 80 ICEMAN COMETH

Rugged, mountaineer-inspired winter weather gear that proves practicality and style don't have to be mutually exclusive. By **STEVE GARBARINO**



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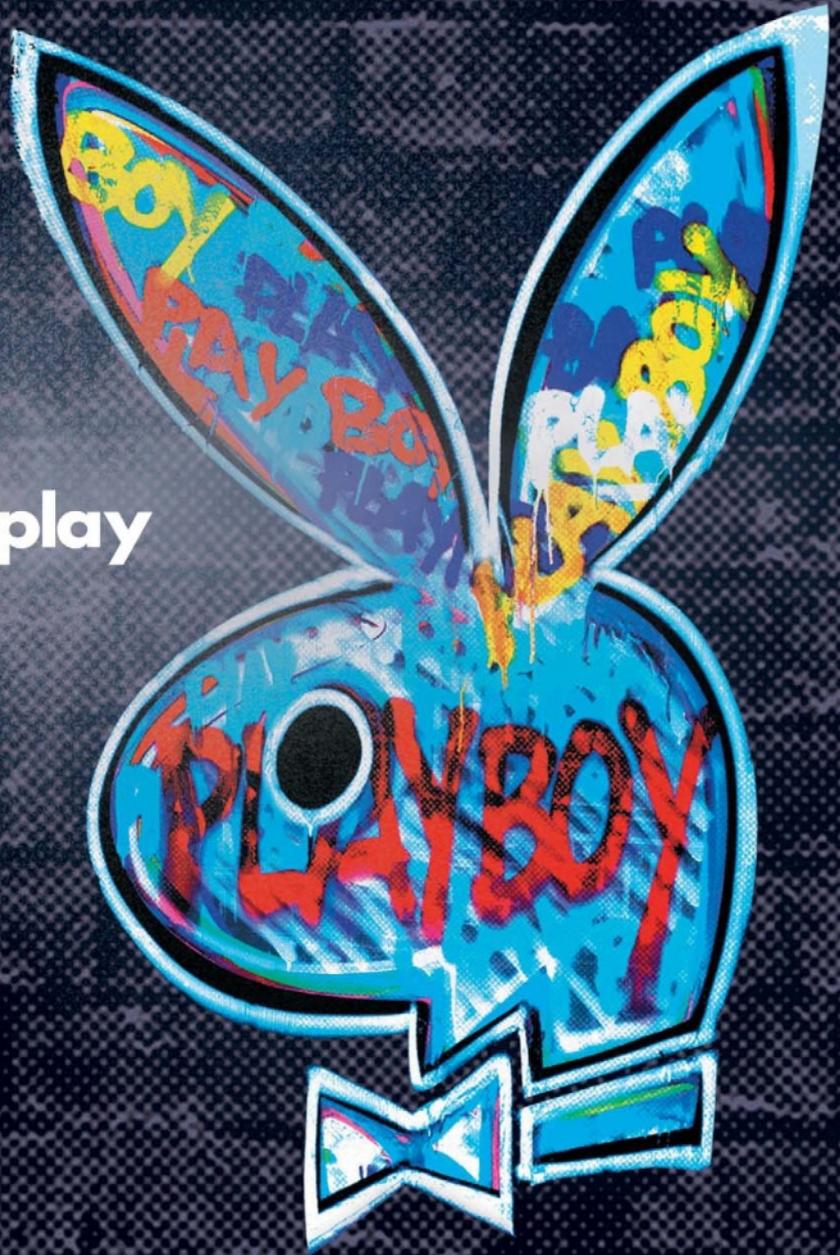
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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES

MR. PLAYBOY GOES TO GLAMOURCON

In honor of its 50th anniversary, Hef attended this year's Long Beach Glamourcon. As well as the man himself and girlfriend Miss December 2009 Crystal Harris, more than 65 Playmates from over six decades (below) came to show their appreciation to admirers who lined up en masse in the early morning for the opportunity to meet Mr. Playboy and his Centerfolds.



LIGHTS, ACTION, COOPER!

Hef's youngest offspring, Cooper Hefner (below center), is a chip off the old block. Father and son share a deep appreciation of film, and now on *The Playboy Radio Morning Show* (Sirius/XM 99), Cooper reviews the latest releases. Every Friday he talks cinema and names Cooper's Cougar of the Week, an honor bestowed on sexy older women such as recent recipient Jennifer Aniston.



HALLOWEEN COSTUME BALL

In addition to the legendary Playboy Mansion Halloween bash, we threw a party at the Highlands Hollywood with the help of Jane's Addiction rocker Dave Navarro (at left with Miss May 2002 Christi Shake). Playmates Hiromi Oshima, Irina Voronina, Jennifer Pershing and Kimberly Phillips (above) helped select the naughtiest costume.



THE BENEFIT OF LAUGHING

Ever the fan of Lenny Bruce's comedy (Hef booked Bruce for the *Playboy's Penthouse* debut) and story (*PLAYBOY* published his autobiography), our Editor-in-Chief attended the Lenny's House benefit at the Laugh Factory. Tim Allen performed at the event organized by Lenny's daughter Kitty (above left) to raise funds for her charity, which helps women recovering from alcohol and drug abuse.

GIRLS AND GOBLINS



Some say that when you're no longer a teenager you're too old to trick-or-treat and dress up for Halloween, but not Hef, who thinks late October is a perfect time to throw a costume party. (1) The Hefners host Pumpkin Carving Night at the Mansion. (2) Miss September 2009 Kimberly Phillips and her masked gourd. (3) Crystal and Miss January 2011 Anna Sophia Berglund. (4) Miss January 2010 Jaime Faith Edmondson, her dog Miss Molly and a werewolf friend. (5) For Karma's Kandy Halloween at the Mansion, Hef chose to come as Mr. Playboy, accompanied by Anna, a genie, and a mermaid named Crystal. (6) Corey Feldman hunts vampires with sexy sidekicks. (7) Karma's executive producer Dylan Marer with Paris Hilton. (8) Son of Gene Simmons and PMOY 1982 Shannon Tweed, Nick Simmons. (9) Aussie model Sheri-dyn Fisher and PMOY 2007 Sara Jean Underwood. (10) International DJ sensation Tiësto made the party even hotter. (11) Rapper Too Short with well-dressed guests. (12) Father and sons: Marston is Mario and Cooper is the man behind the mask.



SCOTCH TREAT

(*Secret*) Marilyn (December) brought back memories. In 1947, to mark Robert Burns Day, my brother (the radio personality Bill Thompson) and Alan Young (the actor best known for his later role on *Mister Ed*) posed for a publicity shot in kilts with a young miss, also in a kilt, holding bagpipes. That was 20-year-old Norma Jean Dougherty. The best part was the snack I shared at the Hollywood Brown Derby with my brother, Alan Young and the future Marilyn Monroe.

Donald Thompson
Garden Grove, California

THE PLANE! THE PLANE!

I loved *The Big Bunny* (November). What happened to the DC-9's flight crew? Where is the plane now? I believe I was lucky to fly on the *Big Bunny* as a passenger on Aeroméxico.

Mauricio Travesí
Flower Mound, Texas

Purdue Airlines (operated by Purdue University) provided the pilots until 1971, when the company closed and most of its pilots went to a start-up called Southwest. Crews were then supplied by Ozark Airlines until the *Big Bunny* was sold in 1975. The jet was decommissioned by Aeroméxico in 2004 and scheduled in 2008 to be cut into scrap. Instead the fuselage, long ago painted silver and blue, was donated to the city of Cadereyta to use as an aviation classroom for its public schools.

POOR LITTLE RICH BOY

I had hoped PLAYBOY would be the first of Conan O'Brien's interviewers to present some balance about his plight with NBC (*Playboy Interview*, December). O'Brien sold himself to the network as a solid replacement for Jay Leno, but in the end the network found it cheaper to pay him \$33 million to go away. Now he will be considered a success if he attracts even half the audience Leno commands.

Jim Cassidy
Las Vegas, Nevada

ULTIMATE HOTNESS

As a huge UFC fan, I want to say thanks—Arianny Celeste looks amazing (*The Knockout*, November), and the best part is she is so physically fit.

Jeffery Smith
Belleville, Illinois

Apparently UFC also stands for Ultimate Female Creation.

R.J. Hornor
Princeton, New Jersey

November is a great issue from start to finish. I was blindsided by the amazing Elba Jiménez (*"Becoming Attraction," After Hours*), *Raw Data* is wise beyond my years, and to Arianny I can only say, "I submit."

Bruce Wayne
Goodsprings, Alabama

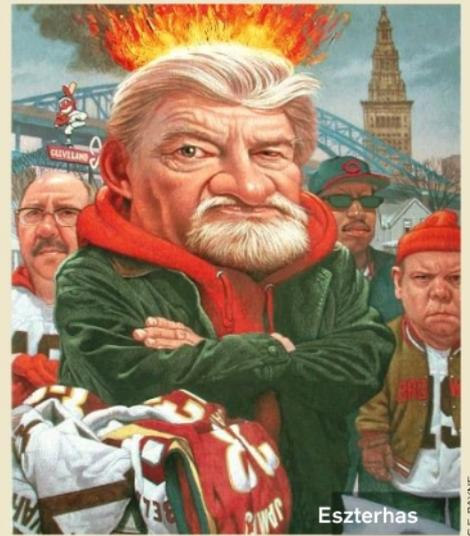
DEAR PLAYBOY

Cleveland Rocks

As a novelist I can live anywhere. Like Joe Eszterhas, I chose Cleveland (*City of Broken Dreams*, December). I moved here from L.A. 20 years ago and have enjoyed every moment. It's a tough blue-collar city with pride and loyalty—we love our teams not because they win but because they are *ours*. People who dis Cleveland, like our late and unlamented NBA superstar, do so because they have spent most of their lives with their head in a place that keeps them from seeing what the city is all about.

Les Roberts
Cleveland, Ohio

Roberts has written 14 mysteries featuring Cleveland PI Milan Jacovich, including, most recently, *King of the Holly Hop*.



Arianny has made the November issue one of the most prized in my collection. Any man who says he watches the UFC just for the fights is lying. We all wait for a glimpse of Arianny. I feel cheated during pay-per-view events when she is not one of the Octagon Girls.

Bill Burns
Owensboro, Kentucky

As my husband was admiring Arianny's physique, he couldn't believe she was



Arianny almost lifts her own weight.

lifting 50-pound dumbbells and barely flexing. To soothe his ego I told him they must be fake. Are those real weights?

Renata Weiss
Warwick, New York

Deputy Photography Director Patty Beaudet-Francès responds: "The weights are real. However, they were supported by wires and two assistants. Even Supergirl could not do that in heels."

INVENTIVE COCKTAILS

I love "The Playboy Drink Generator" (*Holiday Spirit*, December). I am a zookeeper who moonlights as a bartender. One night I asked a beautiful redhead at the bar what I could get her, and she said, "Something sweet and delicious but strong. I trust your judgment." Five minutes later four more beauties (they were in a wedding party) asked for the "same drink Kathy got." I scrambled to recall what I had used! They asked what the drink was called. Seeing how the cocktail matched the color of Kathy's hair, and considering my passion for saving rhinos, the red rhino was born. It contains 1.5 ounces of vodka, one ounce of cranberry liqueur, 1.5 ounces of ruby-red grapefruit juice, 1.5 ounces of cranberry juice and a splash of grenadine. Shake and pour over ice in a highball glass. I finish it with an orange, lime and cherry garnish to look like a rhino horn.

Jason Faessler
Cincinnati, Ohio

I call my signature cocktail the Cuban because it starts with two shots of Havana rum. Add two or three shots of port, then fill the glass with pure apple juice. Shake and pour over ice in a pint glass or equivalent. I frost the rim and garnish with a slice of apple.

Teresa Wilson
Harlow, U.K.

CRAZY LIKE A FOX

I was stationed in South Korea along the DMZ with the 1st Cavalry Division. In the negotiating village of Panmunjom a soap opera played out reminiscent of the Kafkaesque incidents described in *Shopping for a Mad Man* (November). In Korean

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culture, one who looks down on his opponent is superior. One day a U.S. negotiator noticed the North Koreans were looking down from their side of the table—the previous night they had secretly substituted taller chairs. That night the South Koreans sawed down the legs. On the table sat four flags representing the Koreans, the U.S. and the UN. One morning the North Korean flag appeared higher. We then made our flags taller. This continued until the flags nearly reached the ceiling. There was also the matter of the doves that settled on North Korean buildings, which the North Koreans claimed was because the birds recognized their “peaceful intentions.” It turned out the North Koreans had trained the doves to land on the color blue, then painted their roofs blue, so we painted ours blue also. This surreal world, which exists in the village even today, says a lot about the North Korean mentality and attendant insanity.

Louis Oreamuno
Jackson Heights, New York

IS CAROLLA RIGHT?

I hope the average reader sees Adam Carolla’s rant (*We’ve Built a Minimum-Wage Gilded Cage*, November) for what it is—satire reminiscent of Jonathan Swift’s. Anyone who draws attention to a problem by truth, lies or what rests in between (clever comedy) is a hero in my eyes.

Becci McAfee
Bryan, Ohio

In the 1960s even bluenosed English professors admitted your writers were exceptional. Now Carolla laces his street venom with words common to the most modest intellectuals. What a shame the lamp PLAYBOY lit is no longer tended.

Emile DuGrenier
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Had the “diesel dyke” allowed Carolla’s daughter to get on the Disneyland ride even though she wasn’t tall enough, and had she been injured, you can be sure Carolla would have sued for damages.

Mike Gary
Fort Collins, Colorado

I find it disturbing that PLAYBOY would publish a piece that contains explicit support of domestic violence, i.e., “I left with the satisfaction of knowing that in a few short years her Armenian husband would be beating the holy shit out of her.”

Douglas Campbell
Columbus, Indiana

Carolla’s rant is spot-on. I am a pilot. An airport security officer once removed two cans of microwavable soup (my lunch) from my bag, pulled the tabs and dumped the contents into the trash. Did he think chicken soup in the cockpit was part of a maniacal plan?

Name withheld
Tyler, Texas

Carolla comes off as another cranky baby boomer. I’m part of the Generation X mired in the economic quagmire his generation created. And they blame us for making their lives miserable?

Aaron Shipley
Bloomington, Illinois

Carolla is guilty of wageism. I bend the rules for people who show me respect.

Jarett Reinwald
Chicago, Illinois

REALITY CHECK

Bravo for sharing Natalin Avci (“Becoming Attraction,” *After Hours*, December). We need to see more models like her—only two percent of women are the size twos commonly shown in the media.

Jo Anne Rickard
Ellicott City, Maryland

It’s great to see that Nicholle Lottman (“America’s Sexiest Bartender,” *Holiday Spirit*, December) has natural breasts. I’ll drink to that!

Gary Matassa Jr.
Cabot, Pennsylvania

FORGOTTEN FANTASIES

How could you omit Phoebe Cates from *Why We Love the ’80s?* (December). Every teenage boy—my husband included—lusted after her in *Fast Times*



Phoebe Cates in the best scene of a great movie.

at *Ridgemont High* (1982), and every teenage girl wanted to look like her.

Tracy Foor
Davenport, Iowa

You overlooked Kelly LeBrock from *Weird Science* and *The Woman in Red*.

Larry Padilla
Tucson, Arizona

My boyfriend and I noticed Madonna’s armpit hair is gone in her iconic nude. Why not stick with the original?

Martha Gerry
Menomonie, Wisconsin





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ONE  ALL

PLAYBOY AFTERHOURS

BECOMING ATTRACTION

Adrienne Rusk

Where have you seen Adrienne Rusk before? Pretty much everywhere. She has appeared on many television series (*Weeds*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *The Mentalist*) and in several films (*The Social Network*, *Hot Tub Time Machine* and the forthcoming *Water for Elephants*). In fact, the 26-year-old Wisconsinite has worked steadily as a model and actress ever since a studio photographer discovered her more than a decade ago. "He quite literally yanked me off the sidewalk," she says. When Adrienne isn't on set, she is pursuing her other passion—writing. "I feel blessed to be working in front of the camera, but I've been writing ever since I could hold a pen. I find it exciting to create, collaborate and pitch ideas."

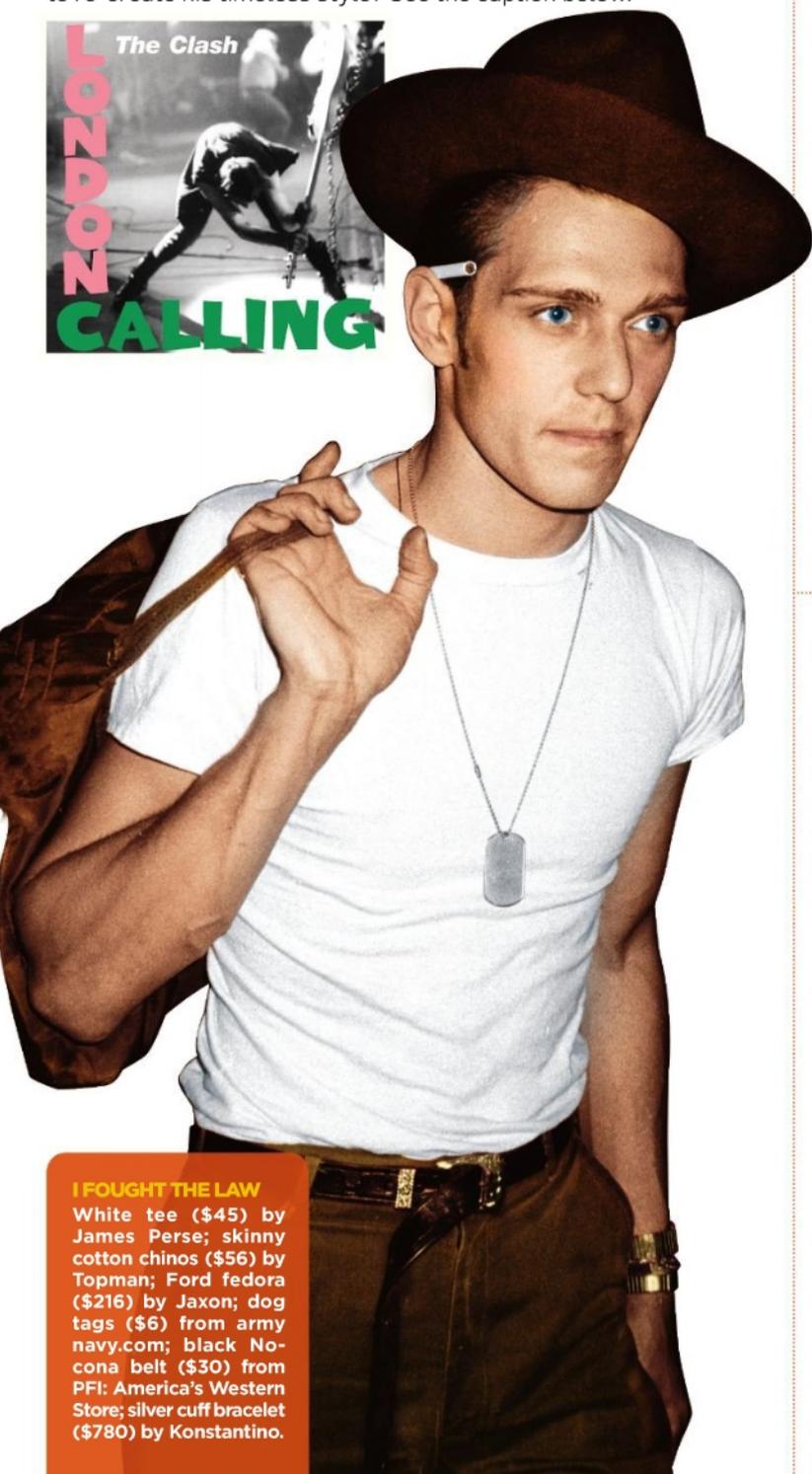
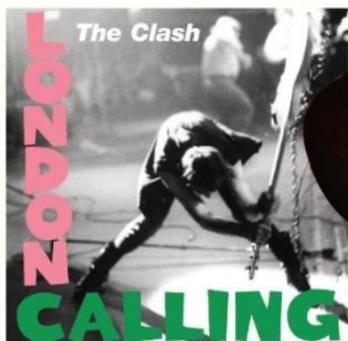
"I was discovered just walking down the sidewalk."



Classic Look of the Month

Paul Simonon

Thirty years ago this winter the Clash's third LP, *London Calling*, arrived in stores in America. There was nothing like it: part punk, part pop, a little reggae, with plenty of built-in booze-and-drug-fueled rage, social commentary and pure musicianship. The Clash's two frontmen, Mick Jones and Joe Strummer, became instant superstars. While every punk wannabe tried to copy their gritty London getups, the bass player who stood toward the back of the stage, Paul Simonon, emerged as the band's—and the early 1980s'—punk rock sartorial standout. That's Simonon on the cover of *London Calling*, photographed at a 1979 show in New York. Want to re-create his timeless style? See the caption below.



IF I FOUGHT THE LAW

White tee (\$45) by James Perse; skinny cotton chinos (\$56) by Topman; Ford fedora (\$216) by Jaxon; dog tags (\$6) from army.navy.com; black Nocona belt (\$30) from PFI: America's Western Store; silver cuff bracelet (\$780) by Konstantino.



Shop Talk

How to Spend It

The new trend in men's stores: shops that guys don't hate being in. We're talking about stores filled not just with clothes but with vintage motorcycles, rock-and-roll memorabilia, 1920s racing trophies, taxidermy, knives and pans for cooking elk steaks. It's man cave meets retail. Pictured above: Isle of Man (iomstyle.com) in Chicago, a completely curated lifestyle on sale. We love this Ferrari racing-boat model (yes, the Italian company made a few in the 1950s). Another favorite: Palmer Trading Company (palmertrading.com) in New York.

Literary Spiller

Drinking on the Job

When Dan Dunn was hired to write the Imbiber mixology column for *Playboy.com*, he knew it would involve travel (Borneo, Bordeaux, Guadalajara, etc.). He didn't know that in the course of his reporting he'd witness pigs fornicating in the Dominican Republic, end up drunk with a famous porn star in her Hollywood hotel room or meet Prince Charles. This month Dunn's memoir, *Living Loaded* (\$15, Three Rivers Press), hits; it's already being turned into a TV pilot by the guys behind *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*. Here's a recipe out of the book, as an appetizer.

PEARL S. BUCK

(by Jonathan Pogash)

- 1 oz. Beefeater gin
- ½ oz. Chambord
- ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
- ½ oz. simple syrup
- ¼ tsp. minced ginger
- Splash of Moët & Chandon White Star champagne

Shake all ingredients except Moët and strain into an ice-filled highball glass. Top with champagne and garnish with a lemon slice.





Oil and Water Fish Tale

Proof the BP oil spill didn't destroy the Gulf seafood industry: This past holiday season, President Obama's chef placed its products center stage on the menu at White House

parties, shipping in 2,000 pounds of shrimp and crab. To celebrate the fisheries' future, we hit GW Fins in New Orleans, one of our favorite seafood houses in the world, where chef and co-owner Tenney Flynn specializes in Gulf fare—shrimp rémoulade, bouillabaisse, etc. You owe it to yourself to make the pilgrimage. Info at gwfins.com.

Holy Roller

Paint Your Wagon

Iranian-born designer Bijan of Beverly Hills, whose customers include Arnold Schwarzenegger and George W. Bush, bills his menswear as "the most expensive in the world." He recently announced a partnership to build 31 Bijan-style Rolls-Royce Phantoms, which are hitting the market now. So what does the man himself drive? Among his collection of supercars is this million-dollar-plus Bugatti—capable of more than 250 mph and with what looks like God painted on the hood. Beats a plastic Jesus any day. More on the Rolls at bijan.com.

WHEELS OF FORTUNE

Bijan's custom Bugatti joins his famous collection of absurdly expensive rides.



BARMATE Veronica Gomez



IN SEARCH OF AMERICA'S
HOTTEST BARTENDERS

PLAYBOY: We don't see any Boy Scouts in here.

VERONICA: And you never will. Welcome to Scout Bar in Houston.

PLAYBOY: What's the scene like?

VERONICA: All types of people who like to drink and listen to music.

PLAYBOY: Always rock music?

VERONICA: Scout is a rock-and-roll bar. We have live bands five nights a week.

PLAYBOY: The crowd is very tattooed.

VERONICA: We get the guys from the local tattoo shop, but we also get regular guys. Texas is a conservative state, so I get customers who are mesmerized by my tattoos.

PLAYBOY: Isn't that just an excuse to stare at your body?

VERONICA: Honestly, the order of their eyes goes boobs, tattoos, butt and then my eyes.

PLAYBOY: You have nice eyes.

VERONICA: And I talk with them. They can say either "You don't have a shot" or "Come closer."

PLAYBOY: How would you like to pose for PLAYBOY?

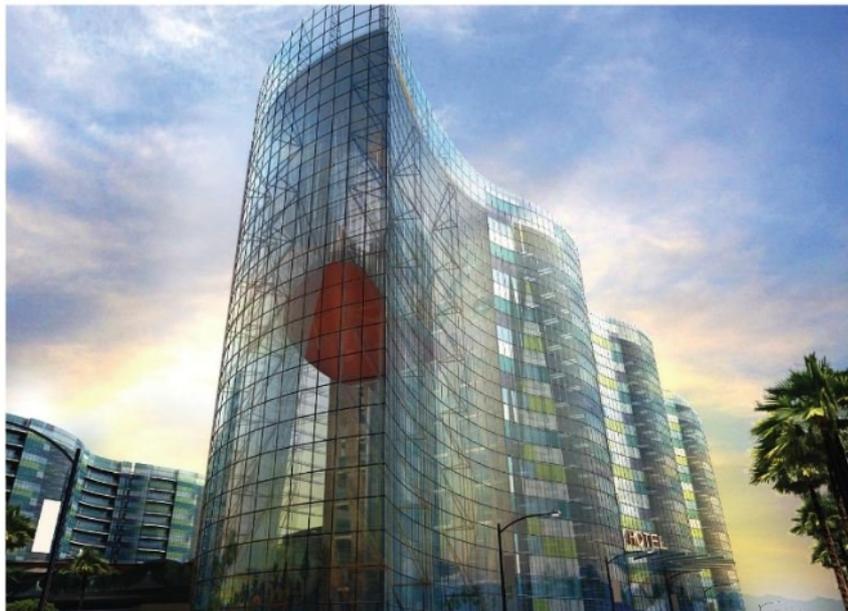
VERONICA: I'd be honored.

PLAYBOY: Let's celebrate with a toast. What's your specialty?

VERONICA: People ask for Jägerbombs and kamikazes. I pour shots of bourbon, so that's what they get.



SEE MORE OF VERONICA
AT CLUB.PLAYBOY.COM.
APPLY TO BE BARMATE AT
PLAYBOY.COM/POSE.



Overnight Sensation The New Monte Carlo

Dubai may be the Vegas of the Middle East, but Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is becoming the region's Monte Carlo. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the only Formula One race held (in part) at night, is now

a fixture on the calendar. And superluxe hotels are dotting the horizon. Pictured: the five-star Rocco Forte hotel, set to open in 2011. Part of the Rocco Forte Collection headed by Sir Rocco himself (the son of England's Lord Forte), the hotel's garage will be crammed with bespoke Lambos and Aston Martins. The 2011 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix will be held on November 13. Book your room at roccofortehotelabudhabi.com.



Dandy Warhol Art of Artifice?

Andy Warhol is a polarizing figure. Take his movies: Are they genius? Or are they horrible, perhaps a joke? Critics go either way, but decide for yourself at New York's Museum of Modern Art exhibit Andy Warhol: Motion Pictures, closing March 21. Clockwise from top left: *Flesh* (1968), *Trash* (1970), *Blood for Dracula* (1974) and *Bike Boy* (1967).

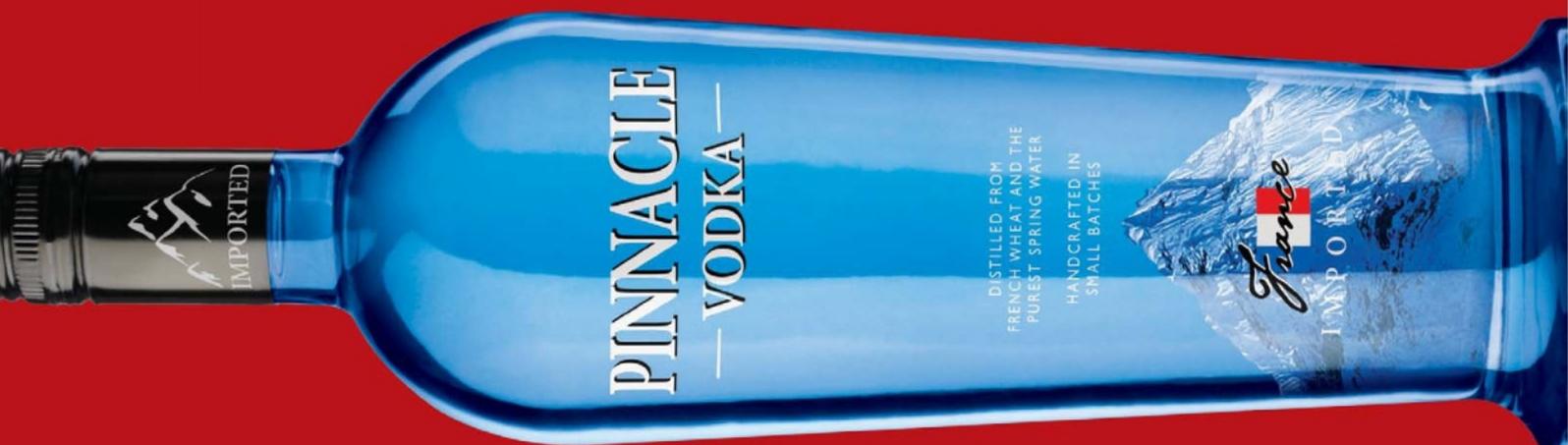
Trojan War Rubber Soul

Sir Richard's condoms have nothing to do with Sir Richard Branson. Which makes us think the marketing of the world's only high-end fashion condom is disingenuous. But who cares? Your package deserves the best. A cross between gabardine and abstract expressionist art, the condoms are sold at outlets such as Paul Smith and Fred Segal. And every time you buy one, the company donates another to a country in need. Bonus: They're vegan! Info at sirrichards.com.





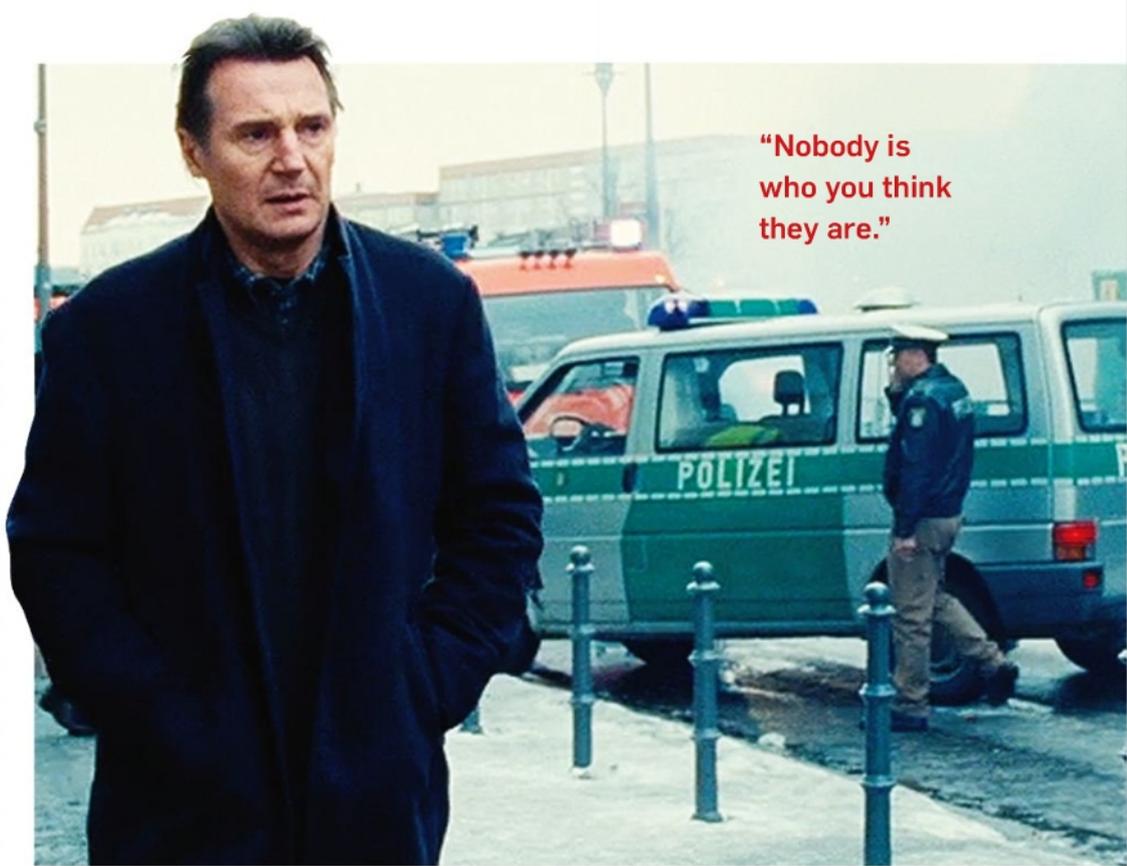
Bottoms up!



Movie of the Month **Unknown**

By Stephen Rebello

In the thriller *Unknown*, Liam Neeson plays a doctor who, after a car accident in Berlin, finds out not only that his wife (January Jones) doesn't recognize him but also that he's the target of assassins. The twisty movie, directed by Jaume Collet-Sera, also stars Diane Kruger, Bruno Ganz, Frank Langella and Aidan Quinn. "It has a kind of noir feeling, a little like the first *Bourne* movie, where you're trying to figure out if the hero is a good guy or a bad guy," says *Mad Men*'s Jones. "Every scene is through the eyes of Liam's character, and you're trapped in his head, unsure which way is up. Nobody is who you think they are, and I like that by the end all the mysteries aren't cleared up. You're intrigued and want more."



"Nobody is who you think they are."

What's in Your Netflix Queue?

Here are the films **BEN FOSTER** is waiting to watch on the small screen as his thriller *The Mechanic* opens on the big screen.

All That Jazz: "A kaleidoscope of work, women, memory and abuse. Few films are as shamelessly sexy, cinematically inventive or ruthlessly autobiographical."

Richard Pryor: Here and Now: "A talking crack pipe and self-immolation. Pain has never been funnier or more human."

The Iron Giant: "This one makes me cry."

The Messenger: "Grievous self-promotion."

Faces: "A call to arms for the independent filmmaker: Make things."



Tease Frame

British actress **Minnie Driver**, who earned an Oscar nomination for her role in *Good Will Hunting*, moonlights as a singer, having released two albums. We sing her praises when she busts out of her bodice, as in this scene from 1998's *The Governess*. See her next as Mrs. P opposite Paul Giamatti in *Barney's Version*.

DVD of the Month



Actress Noomi Rapace's Lisbeth Salander is the genius cyberpunk "girl" in the titles of the three books in author **Stieg Larsson's Millennium Trilogy**: *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played With Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*. Rapace lifts the three Swedish films to something more than *Masterpiece Mystery!* with nipples, piercings and blood. The late Larsson campaigned against the abuse of women. He pumps that into Salander, a victim of stunning abuse—raped in the first film, shot in the second, tried on trumped-up charges in the third—who gives it all back and then some. **Best extras:** Both the DVD and Blu-ray sets include a new documentary and much more.

—Greg Fagan

Game of the Month Dead Space 2

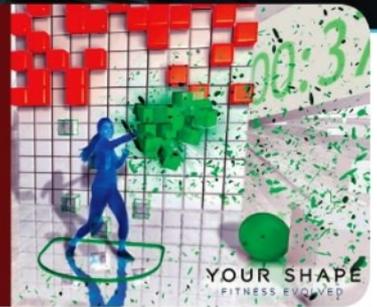
By Jason Buhrmester

In *Dead Space* no one can hear you scream. After escaping an abandoned ship infested with gruesome space necromorphs in the original game, hero Isaac Clarke awakens in **Dead Space 2** (360, PC, PS3) as the only survivor left on the Sprawl, a deserted space city infested with more horrific beasties. The vibe is part *Alien*, part *28 Days Later* as Clarke races through the city and floats through zero-gravity compartments while butchering undead creatures with a plasma cutter, javelin gun and other weapons. One tip: If you get cornered by a creature called the Puker, breach the hull and blow that sucker into deep space. 🐻🐻🐻½



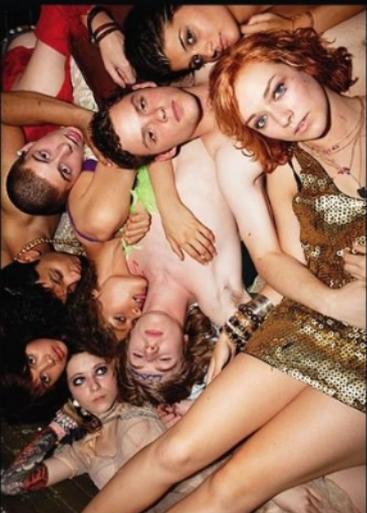
Weight Controllers

After years of contributing to waistline growth, games are using the latest motion-based controllers to help players sweat off the pounds. *EA Sports Active 2* (left; 360, PS3, Wii) designs a workout of exercises and activities such as mountain biking and includes a heart-rate monitor to measure the results. *Your Shape: Fitness Evolved* (right, 360) uses the Kinect camera to analyze your body and track the results of customized workouts featuring martial arts, yoga and more.

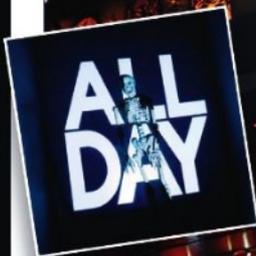


Must-Watch TV Skins Game

MTV's *Skins* is adapted from the U.K. series of the same name, but its stylized, matter-of-fact depiction of teenage debauchery shares almost as much DNA with Larry Clark's 1995 film *Kids*. Our young heroes make no attempt to hide their obsession with sex and drugs. There's a compelling soap opera here, one the morality cops will be in a tizzy over. That's just one more reason to watch. 🐻🐻🐻½ —Joe Adalian



Album of the Month



DJ Gregg Gillis mixes 373 songs into a 71-minute outburst.

Outrageous Girl Talk

The genius of *SportsCenter* is the highlight reel, which distills the stop-start pace of major sports to the most exciting moments. Why watch the whole race when you can see just the fiery crashes? Why watch nine innings when you can get the home runs and sliding catches in a 45-second burst?

That's also the genius of Gregg Gillis, a 29-year-old DJ from Pittsburgh who has released his fifth CD under the deceptive name *Girl Talk*. Gillis, who has wowed crowds at Coachella and Lollapalooza, mixes and mashes other people's songs into an ecstatic

highlight reel, the musical equivalent of hockey brawls and one-handed dunks.

On *All Day* he splices 373 songs into a 71-minute outburst full of outrageous juxtapositions—rapper Ol' Dirty Bastard joyously howls, "Oh, baby, I like it raw" just as Radiohead anxiously sighs, "I'm a creep." Gillis romps across genres, creating a delightful world in which Phil Collins and Snoop Dogg live in the same house. Oh, and Gillis will let you download the entire thing for free at illegal-art.net/allday.

🐻🐻🐻

—Rob Tannenbaum

Who Will Be the 2011 Playmate of the Year?

In June 1960 Hef named Mississippi-born, Los Angeles–bred Ellen Stratton the first Playmate of the Year. Since then 50 more Playmates have worn the crown, including Patti McGuire, Shannon Tweed, Anna Nicole Smith, Jenny McCarthy and the reigning Playmate of the Year, Hope Dworaczyk. The time for Hef to choose the 2011 Playmate of the Year is fast approaching, and he wants to know which candidate you would like to see crowned in May.

Choosing the PMOY is no easy task—each of 2010's 12 beautiful Playmates embodies Hef's ideal of the approachable girl next door in her own way. Fan input is a crucial part of the process, as it influences Hef's final decision. To help you make an informed choice, comprehensive coverage of this year's contenders—including personal profiles, gorgeous pictorials and sexy videos—can be found at pmo.y.playboy.com. In addition, each Playmate's Twitter feed is aggregated on the site, making it easy to keep up with the

girls' activities and interact with them via your own Twitter account.

Once you've become reacquainted with the 2010 beauties, you can vote for your favorite by using the ballot

box at the top of the PMOY home page. Voting is limited to once a day, so come back often to see the girls' latest escapades and support your pick for the 2011 Playmate of the Year.



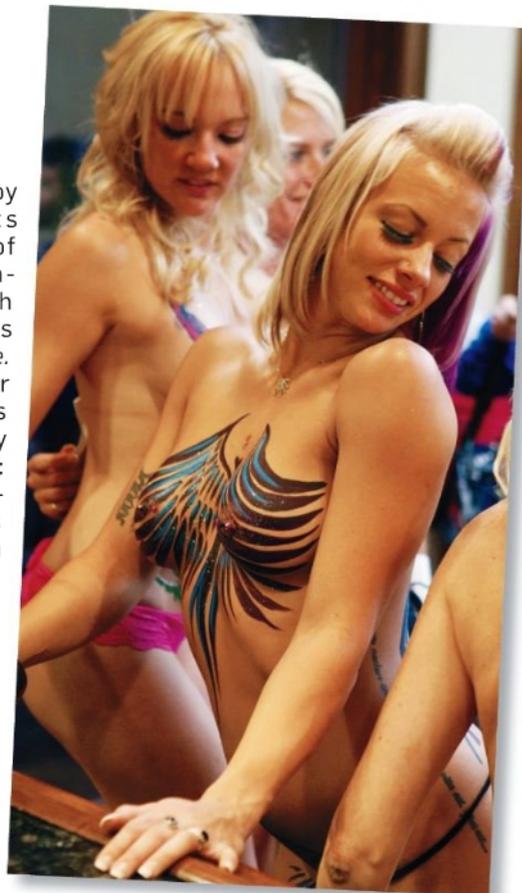
Playboy Spirits

Proving women and cocktails make a wonderful pair, Playboy and Meyers Distilling Company have partnered to create a Playboy spirits line. Playboy ultra-premium vodka, premium blended whiskey and rose-infused gin are available in stores this month, and flavored vodkas and ready-to-drink cocktails go on sale this summer.



Playboy TV Swing Time

In January, Playboy TV launched its brand-new block of couples programming, "TV for 2," with the sexy docu series *Brooklyn Kinda Love*. This month "TV for 2" brings viewers yet another steamy reality-TV series: *Swing*. In each hour-long episode of this titillating show, a different monogamous couple gets initiated into "the Lifestyle" when they spend an unforgettable erotic weekend hooking up with experienced swingers. The series premieres February 11, nine P.M. ET/PT.



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SIGNIFICA, INSIGNIFICA, STATS AND FACTS

PRICE CHECK

\$4.4 MILLION

AMOUNT PAID BY THE PENTAGON TO CONDUCT A SURVEY OF AMERICAN TROOPS TO TEST THEIR "GAYDAR."

IS IT ALL IN HER HEAD? IN ONE STUDY, 1 OUT OF 3 WOMEN SUFFERING FROM DIMINISHED SEXUAL AROUSAL HAD THEIR LEVEL OF SEXUAL DESIRE RESTORED TO NORMAL SIMPLY BY TAKING A PLACEBO.



ODD STAT OF THE MONTH

RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT SOCIALLY AWKWARD PEOPLE WHO WERE ADMINISTERED A DOSE OF THE "LOVE HORMONE" OXYTOCIN EXHIBITED SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED SOCIAL SKILLS AND RELATABILITY.

40

THE APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF ENCOUNTERS WITH HIGH-END PROSTITUTES, I.E., THOSE PAID MORE THAN \$250 PER ENCOUNTER, THAT WIND UP WITH NO SEXUAL ACTIVITY. AND EVEN BEFORE CRAIGSLIST SHUT DOWN ITS ADULT-SERVICES SECTION, 80% OF THE MEN IN NEW YORK WHO CONTACTED WOMEN LISTED ON THE SITE NEVER WENT ON TO MEET THEM.

WHAT THEY'RE THINKING

When asked what they would consider their number one dating red flag, 30% of women said a guy who brags too much, 29% said a guy who drinks too much, 24% said a guy who doesn't offer to pay, 11% said a guy who barely talks and 6% said a guy who doesn't pick them up.

\$5,000

PRICE PAID AT AUCTION FOR A 12-PACK OF DHARMA INITIATIVE BEER FROM THE TV SERIES *LOST*.



In September 2010 **BOBBY CLEVELAND** set the land speed record for a riding lawn mower at 96.5 miles per hour.



THE BUTTLOAD IS AN ARCHAIC MEASUREMENT—IT DENOTES 130 GALLONS OF BEER.

59% OF AMERICAN CATHOLICS ARE IN FAVOR OF WOMEN BECOMING PRIESTS.



17% OF AMERICAN WORKERS BELIEVE THAT SLEEPING WITH THE BOSS LEADS TO A BETTER JOB, AND 7% HAVE ACTUALLY DONE SO.

TEETOTALERS DON'T LIVE LONGER:

A University of Texas study that followed 1,824 people between the ages of 55 and 65 for 20 years found that during that period 69% of the nondrinkers died, compared with 41% of the moderate drinkers and 60% of the heavy drinkers.

The world's richest playboy.

arthur

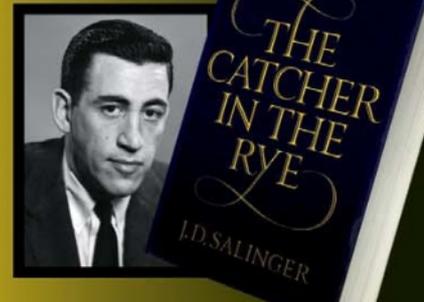
He plays tennis. He races cars. He fondles women. But he gets weekends off.



Dudley Moore Liza Minnelli John Gielgud "Arthur"

\$1 MILLION

PRICE LISTED ON EBAY FOR A TOILET OWNED AND USED BY J.D. SALINGER.





British Bombshell

Step inside Aston Martin's new seven-figure supercar

We're standing at the Aston Martin factory in Gaydon, England with the legendary marque's director of design, Marek Reichman, having a look at the new Aston supercar. So, Marek, the One-77—how did it come about? "Our CEO came to me and said, 'What would an Aston Martin supercar look like now, and what would it stand for?' The main thing we said was that it would be the essence of Aston Martin and would therefore be a piece of living art. The program name became Project Why, as in 'Why? Why not?' Literally because we can." This car will run nearly \$2 million. How many will you be making? "Fifty cars would be too few because they would disappear into collections. One hundred cars? Probably too many. We didn't like 75—too obvious. We like seven and 007, and our CEO's birthday is the seventh, so we thought seven and seven together would make a great number." Each car is

numbered like an art piece; thus the name—One-77. It's quite the looker.

"There's an elemental level that makes your hair stand on end. Wait till you hear it." As for performance, the car's monster 7.3-liter V12 is situated in the nose, behind the front axle, and produces 750 horsepower, the equivalent of five Toyota Camrys. Zero to 60 takes 3.5 seconds, with a top speed of 220 mph. Reichman describes the car as a union: "It connects engineering and design and manufacturing together to produce something that is excellence personified." That's nice. Can we have the keys now? Info at astonmartin.com.



Mountain Vision

Even the most treacherous black diamond slope can't confound Zeal's Transcend GPS goggles (\$399–\$499, zealoptics.com). The futuristic eye gear is the only snow goggle to provide GPS info and speed and altitude stats, all of which appear in real time on its interior LCD screen.



Found Sound

The BoomCase (\$375–\$550, theboomcase.com) packs seriously deafening baggage. A portable speaker fashioned from vintage leather and wooden luggage (the acoustics of plastic suitcases aren't nearly as good), it will

blast the songs stored on your iPod or laptop wherever you go and for whoever is within earshot.

Caribbean Escape

From a distance, the newly opened Viceroy Anguilla (from \$450 a night, viceroyhotelsandresorts.com) looks like a hyper-stylish cruise ship run aground on the most spectacular beach in the world. Just a 20-minute ferry ride from St. Martin, it's a singular Caribbean property—complete with a spa, 166 plunge-pool-equipped suites and five top-shelf restaurants. And how's this for an oceanfront experience? Pristine sand, ridiculously blue water and gracious service by a staff that knows you need a drink long before you do.



Espresso Yourself

The Presso hand-pressed espresso maker (\$150, presso.us) takes the art of making highly caffeinated java back to the basics—all the while swapping unsightly bulk for elegant, simple functionality. Hot water, premium coffee beans and a little upper-arm strength are the only ingredients required.

How to Open an Offshore Bank Account

Starting an offshore account is simple and can be completed online—proving your identity via a notarized copy of your passport should suffice. Barclays (group.barclays.com) and HSBC (hsbc.com) are a good fit for wealthy expatriates, while Swiss banks such as Credit Suisse

(credit-suisse.com) and EFG International (efginternational.com) have long served clients worth more than \$5 million. But be forewarned: Since 9/11 and the financial crisis, the IRS has cracked down on these accounts, which state-side are synonymous with tax evasion.

Home Screen Advantage

No tickets to the Super Bowl? No problem. Simply watch the game on Samsung's 55-inch 9000 Series HDTV (\$6,000, samsung.com). The pencil-thin 1080p LED TV's true-to-life picture makes it seem as though Tom Brady's spiral is aimed straight for you. If football isn't your game, that's okay too. The Samsung 9000 can connect wirelessly to the internet, allowing you to stream the MLB.com baseball package directly from your computer. Either way, it beats overpriced beer and unbearably long lines for the bathroom.



**SOME
MEN
JUST
NEED
TO BE
SLAPPED.**



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PLAYBOY ADVISOR

A number of girlfriends have asked me how I lost my virginity, and I've never known what to say because it happened during a gang bang. I was drinking with five guys and a girl. We all knew our female friend turned into a horndog when she got drunk, and one thing led to another. We had a rotation going for about two hours. (We weren't greedy, but she was!) Looking back I remember it as being a lot of fun; there were no hard feelings or regrets from anyone involved. But what should I tell people?—T.C., San Francisco, California

Why not tell the truth? You got drunk with a friend at a party. The sex was fun, and you're still friends. Having five other guys share the experience is unusual but not an essential detail in casual conversation.

Should you let your car warm up for five to 10 minutes in cold weather?—G.G., Kansas City, Missouri

The best way to warm up a cold car is to drive it. Modern cars don't need to idle more than 30 to 60 seconds; any more than that and you're just wasting gas and contributing to air pollution. The vehicles of old had to be warmed up for a number of reasons, one of which was so the lubricants had time to circulate. But chemical additives now allow lubes to maintain their viscosity (flow rate) even when cold. Electronic fuel injectors also allow more fuel to reach a cold engine. On a related note, to fight pollution many cities have made it illegal to idle more than a few minutes; one study found that idling for 10 seconds uses as much fuel as restarting a car.

I am a divorced father of two. My ex and I are still friends. We talk about everything, raise the kids together and even work together. We agree that if we were both unattached we would still be having sex. However, my ex is living with the man with whom she cheated on me. I have made it clear I will never be okay with him. She says I need to "get over it." If she were with someone else I wouldn't have a problem, but he broke the ultimate guy rule, which is that you never mess with another man's wife. Am I wrong, or do I have every right to hate this guy?—C.E., Canfield, Ohio

You can hate the guy, but it's wasted energy. It's better for everyone involved, especially your kids, if you can dial it back to indifference. While he shouldn't have been messing around with a married woman, your wife opened the door, and you can understand



I have a strong attraction to women with large breasts. Someone told me this is a type of fetish. Is it?—N.S., Columbus, Ohio

*If your love of large breasts overpowers your love of women, it's a paraphilia (specifically mazophilia) and won't contribute to a memorable sex life. But why do men—particularly North American men—focus on large breasts? Some critics believe it's a cultural force and not pathological, since the mass-market interest first appeared in the 1940s. In other words, this argument goes, big boobs are a commodity sold by forces such as Hollywood and PLAYBOY. Some scholars go deeper, arguing that men "partialize" women into breasts, butt and legs because we fear their sexual power; others believe that as teens we attach to pronounced curves to establish with our buddies that we're not gay. In her book *Fetish: Fashion, Sex & Power*, Valerie Steele suggests breasts are often described as pointy or protruding because they soothe male anxiety over penis size and the hidden vulva. Finally, because female human breasts are so much more prominent than those of our closest primate cousins, it may be that human males have long preferred mates with ever larger breasts. We can probably stop now.*

why he's attracted to her. We're curious how he feels about his girlfriend's ex-husband spending as much time with her as he does. We're also curious why you two aren't still together.

A woman wrote in December to say she fantasizes about having sex with men other than her fiancé. You said most if not all men and women have these fantasies. I

am a sexually active 35-year-old woman who does not share in this world of fantasy. I appreciate good-looking men, but I never fantasize about them—only my partner. Only in the past five years have I come to realize I am unusual and fantasizing about others is normal. I've accepted this but can't understand it. I hope to save this young man from a lot of grief and from questioning his own value.—H.G., Houston, Texas

We doubt the guy wasn't fantasizing about other people, though that may have been the case. Instead, he seemed unable to comprehend how his girlfriend could be doing it, which we took as another example of the sexual double standard. As for your predicament, can you read quality erotica (try the Best Women's Erotica series) or watch quality porn (which is harder to find) without getting turned on? That's fantasy at work, and some people just need a spark to get the fire burning.

Why can't you get HIV from a mosquito bite?—R.S., Toms River, New Jersey

For several important reasons. First, mosquitoes don't inject you with blood. They inject saliva to stop your blood from clotting so they can suck it out. If you don't smack it dead, the mosquito digests the blood (and any virus in the blood) over the next day or two before looking for its next meal. Hypothetically, a mosquito could be interrupted as it feeds on an HIV-positive person and then, with the virus on its mouth parts, proceed immediately to another victim or be squashed into a cut. But even then, scientists point out, not enough of the virus would be present to initiate an infection. In fact, by one calculation you'd have to be bitten by 10 million mosquitoes that had just snacked on an HIV carrier to receive a single unit of the virus from an insect's mouth.

Please settle a friendly dispute. Is it bad luck to put a shot down before you drink it?—G.A., Denver, Colorado

It's easy to imagine how this idea came about: If you have to set down your shot, it's probably because something bad is about to happen. The closest we get to letting go is the traditional tap of the glass on the bar as a nod to the bartender; those who have gone before, world peace, all bartenders everywhere, all shot drinkers everywhere and our father, who taught us to tap the glass.

Based on your December response about hat etiquette, it's obvious the Advisor doesn't wear hats. I consistently receive compliments from both men and women

on my hats, and I never tilt them. I also never remove my hat, because it's carefully selected to complement my clothes and hairstyle and therefore is an essential part of my attire. More important, where would the Advisor suggest I put it when I go to several places in one night? Have you ever tried to check a hat? Why wear one if you remove it everywhere you go? Like the song says, "You can leave your hat on." As a freethinker I will do that and still get the chicks you can't.—F.S., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Is it your hat—or your charm?

The other night after sex, my girlfriend shared with me the names of a few "celebrities" she would like to have sex with. One is the president of her company and another is a diplomat we met earlier that day. When she asked for my list, I began with a woman we met at a party but didn't get any further because my girlfriend got upset. Why does she do this, and what do you think of this game?—I.T., Newton, Massachusetts

The game can be fun if you don't get caught in a booby trap. Your girlfriend's use of the word "celebrity" here seems to be code for "never actually gonna happen." She apparently doesn't see your choice as a celebrity in that sense. Whatever the case, in the future stick with the response that has kept millions of men out of trouble: Angelina Jolie. It may not be the truth, but it's also not a lie. Alternatively, this may have been a setup by your girlfriend to see who pops into your head moments after you've had sex with her. In that case, you can't win.

A few years ago reports showed that riding a bicycle can cause impotence, so I hung up my wheels. What's the latest research on this? Or was it a hoax?—N.L., Washington, D.C.

*It's no hoax. This concern has been around since at least 1981, when a medical journal described a patient who experienced penile numbness after sitting on a narrow saddle over two days during a 180-mile excursion. A later survey of 1,709 bikers ages 40 and older found that those who biked for at least three hours a week had an increased risk of developing moderate to severe erectile dysfunction (though researchers pointed out that men who don't exercise have an even greater risk). It appears the compression pinches arteries and a major sensory pathway called the pudendal nerve. Three researchers who conducted a review of the literature last year for *The Journal of Sexual Medicine* suggest riders (1) choose a wide unpadded no-nose saddle for proper placement of the sit bones, (2) position the saddle horizontally, (3) ride in a more upright position, (4) change their position regularly from seated to standing and (5) use a road bike instead of a mountain bike. Seat manufacturers also offer a variety of designs to reduce compression in both men and women, so get back out there.*

My wife travels for work and sometimes forgets to call me. She says it's because

she and her co-workers are out and lose track of time. She blows it off and never seems to understand I worry about her. I am at the point where I feel she is having too much fun being single, since she gets away from me and our kids for three or four days at a time. How can I tell her I hate it when she travels and not get blown off?—C.H., Aurora, Illinois

Of course your wife enjoys herself. She gets a few days off to be an adult. Your insistence that she check in with headquarters turns her calls home into appointments and makes them less satisfying. What you need are phones that allow you to exchange text messages so you can send encouragement (e.g., "Can't wait to see you; we miss you"), updates on the kids and any household questions that may come up. She'll call when she feels the need, and they'll be better conversations. As for the amount of traveling she does, that's a larger issue. These days it's not so easy to jump to another job. You'd have her home, which is important, but what would you be giving up?

What is the proper way to hold a chef's knife?—C.N., New York, New York

By the handle, pointing away from you. A chef's knife has more importance in the West, because Japanese chefs use a wider variety of blades and Chinese chefs rely on cleavers even for delicate tasks. According to the Zwilling J.A. Henckels Complete Book of Knife Skills, to hold a chef's knife, pinch the blade between the thumb and index finger just in front of the handle. Keep your index finger curled above the edge, for obvious reasons, and curl your other three fingers around the handle. The side of the middle finger closest to your thumb should be against the bolster of the knife or, if there's no bolster, the heel. Japanese chefs extend their index finger along the spine of a knife, but they also work with boneless meat and soft vegetables. Westerners more typically cut meat off the bone and cook with root vegetables, which increases the risk of losing control.

Can too much porn be harmful? I watch hard-core gonzo with anal sex, gang bangs and double penetration. I usually watch for 90 minutes to three and a half hours at a time, entering a trancelike state that is so gratifying I have a hard time describing it. When I climax, it is extremely intense. I rent 50 to 70 DVDs a month and own 85. I sometimes feel guilty about my habit but almost always choose human interaction over porn, and I am a "great boyfriend," according to my girlfriend, who has no idea how much I watch. What's your take?—J.B., Louisville, Kentucky

As long as you're able to maintain a strong emotional and sexual relationship with your girlfriend, can hold a job and aren't experiencing weak knees or hallucinations, we're more concerned with the fact that you sound like a bore. Seriously, you may have an obsessive-compulsive personality that has attached itself to watching people have sex in part because your anticipation of reward (orgasm) produces dopamine and other satisfying brain chemicals. Ask a psychiatrist if an antidepressant can break the cycle.

Where should a pick stitch end?—G.Q., San Francisco, California

A hand pick stitch, which is a traditional feature of a bespoke suit, continues down the lapels and the front and bottom edges of the coat. It's designed to keep the edges flat and prevent rolling. In fact, it has become such a signature feature of a fine suit that ready-to-wear clothing companies have machines that simulate the unevenness and irregularity of hand stitching. The pick stitch, like the buttonholes, should blend into the suit. That's the Savile Row sensibility, at any rate, in which the details disappear. A hand stitch will also be finer and smaller.

Three years ago my wife and I were invited to a swingers party. My wife, who is 45, slim and buxom, complained on the way home about being "pestered" by unattractive, overweight older men. I had a great time, but we have not been back. On a business trip to Florida she agreed to try a larger club. After a few drinks she asked about the young studs standing against a wall. I explained the club allows in a limited number of single guys. We ended up in a private room and had several threesomes. My wife wants to travel regularly to this club in Florida, but we don't have the money or time, and there are local clubs that suit me fine. But I also don't want her to take one for the team. Is there a compromise?—D.L., Sanford, Maine

This isn't unusual—beautiful people tend to hang out together. But you can't judge a scene based on one party, especially since for many couples, swinging is about fucking their friends. If your wife is burdened with beauty and curves, she must learn to be polite and thank her admirers before begging off. Of course they're going to ask—it's a swing party! But why not explore larger clubs closer to you than Florida, such as in Boston or New York City? Visit nasca.com for a directory. Although most clubs don't allow single men to attend, you'll find the clientele to be on the younger side. You could also compromise by allowing each other to wander off for individual adventures—she should never take one for the team, and some nights she may not be feeling it, while you may meet a couple that wants you as a third. You could also have sex only with each other or just watch other swingers without getting involved. Given the number of men who can only fantasize about what you have, we're sure you'll work something out.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereos and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages. Write the Playboy Advisor, 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611, or send e-mail by visiting playboyadvisor.com. The site also has links to download our greatest-hits e-book, Dear Playboy Advisor, and air times for the weekly Advisor Show on Sirius/XM 99.



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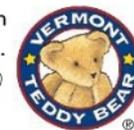


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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: LAMAR ODOM

A candid conversation with the NBA and reality-TV star about keeping up with Kobe, living in the Kardashian circus and overcoming life's hard knocks

The spotlight in Los Angeles basketball has historically been big enough for only one man, and his jersey says BRYANT. Then in 2009 Lakers forward Lamar Odom married *Keeping Up With the Kardashians* star Khloé Kardashian a month after meeting her. In the world of Hollywood gossip, the wedding was a slam dunk. Suddenly Odom was thrust onto magazine covers and talk shows typically reserved for basketball's biggest stars.

That attention also brought an inevitable backlash. The media accused the couple of faking the marriage for publicity. For Kardashian, who used the wedding as a major story line on the fourth season of her reality-TV show, the marriage was a ratings booster. For Odom, critics claimed, it was a way to raise his profile and step out of the colossal shadow of Kobe Bryant, the Lakers' main attraction.

If true, it was a very un-Odom-like maneuver. In a basketball era when the biggest stars shoot first and pass later, Odom is the oddball. He's a prolific passer and a player seemingly built for making his teammates look better. At six-10 he's a towering force capable of spreading the ball around, and his laid-back personality means he doesn't mind playing a supporting role. As a result, he is the eighth-fastest player in NBA history to reach 3,000 assists and 6,000 rebounds.

Odom crafted his game on the courts of South Jamaica, Queens, an only child raised by his mother, Cathy, a corrections officer on Rikers Island, and an absentee father who struggled with heroin addiction. Odom's prowess on the court earned him *Parade* magazine's Player of the Year title and a spot on *USA Today's All-USA* first team. Then his career hit the skids before it had even begun. His scholarship to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas was revoked before the start of his freshman year after a series of reports suggested that someone else had taken a standardized test for Odom, and he was also accused of accepting \$5,600 from a booster. He transferred to the University of Rhode Island and returned to the court with a vengeance, hitting a last-second shot to bring the school its first Atlantic 10 tournament title.

The Los Angeles Clippers drafted him in 1999, but during his four seasons there he was suspended twice for violating the NBA's drug policy. Sportswriters began writing him off as another wasted talent. Then, in 2003, the Clippers traded him to the Miami Heat, where coach Pat Riley taught him the off-court discipline he needed and, according to Odom, saved his life. After one season Odom became a Laker as part of the blockbuster trade that sent Shaquille O'Neal to the Heat. Paired with Bryant and coach Phil Jackson, Odom

flourished, helping the Lakers win back-to-back NBA championships in 2009 and 2010. Odom, now 31, is also a gold medalist, having played on Team USA in the 2010 FIBA World Championships, and a father to two children with a previous girlfriend.

PLAYBOY sent Jason Buhrmester to Los Angeles to meet Odom at Playboy Studio West. Says Buhrmester, "For someone who has lived through as much as Lamar has, he sure laughs a lot. He's an extremely positive guy and surprisingly philosophical, even when discussing what he describes as the stuff he's done that 'wasn't cool.' He has a legendary sweet tooth, and during the interview he put away a large bag of peach jelly rings and a couple of chocolate bars. We started the conversation there."

PLAYBOY: Your appetite for candy has not been exaggerated.

ODOM: I think it started because both my mother and my father had this sweet-tooth thing going on. My grandmothers used to always have cookies and cakes. My mother was the youngest child out of five kids, and I'm an only child, so I was the baby's baby. If I pointed at something I usually got it. It started with ice cream and cake. I'm the kid who would ask for two ice cream cones and have them



"I seem very happy and easygoing and fun to be around, but if you read a biography of my shit you'd think I was tough and angry. My whole shit is a contradiction, an enigma. A lot of people identify with fucked-up shit."



"I never in my life thought I would get married. I liked being social and having friends, but when I met Khloé, I got the urge to be like, I don't even want to do that anymore. That's when I knew I found somebody."



"I wasn't a bad dude. I never hurt anybody, especially at 16, 17. I wanted to play ball. I just listened to people who were coaching me. It's America, right? People get second chances. I never let it deter me."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIZUNO

dripping, trying to eat both of them at the same time.

PLAYBOY: Wrigley gave you a life-size replica of the NBA championship trophy made entirely of candy after the Lakers won the 2009 championship. You added another championship in 2010. Can the Lakers win again this year?

ODOM: We got off to a quick start and then hit a little pothole when we lost four games in a row for the first time since 2007. I think we can. I know we can. It's just about us playing basketball the right way. We need to keep our energy and our effort at a high. And it's about us understanding that we've run the championship the past two years in a row and every team wants to play their best game against us. We're the target.

PLAYBOY: You guys are looking to create Phil Jackson's second three-peat with the Lakers, but the media spend more time talking about the Miami Heat. Does that bother you?

ODOM: No. I think it's good, actually. It adds fun to the story line of the season. The beautiful thing the Heat did with those big names coming together and playing on one team—that's the story line of the season. It adds to the challenge, and as an athlete that's what you appreciate the most: a challenge.

PLAYBOY: Who's the best player in basketball now, Kobe Bryant or LeBron James?

ODOM: It's hard to say who's the best. Last year you would have given it to Kobe, and three years ago of course he won the MVP. It's hard to take away his body of work.

PLAYBOY: Kobe also has five championship rings.

ODOM: Yeah, even though my dude LeBron is having another extraordinary year, Kobe is skilled. He's at the point in his career where he doesn't have to average the most points. People think whoever averages the most points is the better player. They're both playing at high levels and they're both incredible players, but I always have to go with the home team.

PLAYBOY: Does the quality of groupies change after you win a championship?

ODOM: The groupie level is always there. I didn't have any problems meeting women in my life. I never had that problem.

PLAYBOY: Was it hard to navigate that world when you first got to the NBA?

ODOM: To each his own. You know when you're at different levels of success. Now, if you were in high school and nobody wanted to sit at your table, and then you're in the NBA and everybody's sitting at your table, most likely you know what's up. That's up to you. I always had lady friends, but that has now come to a screeching halt.

PLAYBOY: It sure has. You met your wife, Khloé Kardashian, at a "Welcome to L.A." party she hosted when the Lakers signed Ron Artest. How did you approach her?

ODOM: I knew one of her girlfriends, Malika. She was good friends with

[Orlando Magic player] Quentin Richardson. They were just platonic friends. I'm looking at Malika like, I know this girl from somewhere. She said, "Do you remember me? I used to hang out with Q." So we're having a drink, and I see Khloé getting a little overwhelmed as far as people invading her space. I had to tell security, "Why don't y'all come clear out this area for the young ladies?" We started drinking champagne and talking. I was kind of surprised at how intelligent she was. You don't know what to expect. Next thing I know I'm spending every day with her. We just hit it off.

PLAYBOY: How far from your mind was meeting your future wife when you left the house that night?

ODOM: I never in my life thought I would get married. There was a time when I liked being a certain way, being social and having friends in different places, but when I met Khloé, that was the first time I got the urge to be like, I don't even want to do that anymore. That's when I knew I found somebody. I couldn't do what I normally do. She's too strong-willed. She'd leave me.

Men, most of the time our goal is to have what we want when it comes to women. Most men like more than one woman. Most people don't want to get married.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean "do what I normally do"?

ODOM: Like, be a man. Men, most of the time our goal is to have what we want when it comes to women. More than one. Most men like more than one woman. A lot of them would not want to admit that because that might not be cool, right? Most people don't want to get married. Being married, that's a responsibility. I always used to tell that to women. I don't want a girlfriend because that means I've got a responsibility. I have a responsibility to call you. I have a responsibility not to be with another woman. I have a responsibility to be there on time when you need me. With her I was like, If I do what I normally do, I'm going to lose her. And if I lose her, I think it's going to hurt a lot. Right then and there I knew. We were together every day.

PLAYBOY: You two were married a month after you met. Did your friends or family question why you got married so soon?

ODOM: I think people could question it, but if you really know me, I'm not stupid. I make decisions because it's something I want, something I feel I need to have. As

a friend, you may disagree, but at the end of the day you're supposed to be supportive of me. A lot of people I wanted to be supportive weren't, but what can I do?

PLAYBOY: Are you referring to family and friends?

ODOM: Yeah. It was hard for a lot of people to accept. It was crazy. She's a woman who works and who understands money. Some people who don't understand see it from a view of "You've got to watch out. She's trying to get you." But she's got her own. One of the most beautiful things about her is that she understands how to make her own way in life. This is one of the reasons our connection is so strong.

PLAYBOY: So it's important to you to be with a woman who works hard and earns her own money?

ODOM: There you go. Those are some of the things that brought us together. Her will too, because there have been times when we may have stayed up late and she had to go shoot the next day for 16 hours. She gets up and does that shit. I would've been looking for somebody to call for an excuse. [laughs] I was looking at her like, damn, this is the type of person I need to be around. That's one of the reasons I'm in love with her.

PLAYBOY: A lot of critics suspected the wedding was fake and labeled it a publicity stunt. Did that bother you?

ODOM: No. That's just how gossip works, you know? You can't stop it. Because at the time, with us being so successful—me in basketball and her show doing so well—it was too big. It was too huge. It caught people off guard. It looked as though we had too much to gain. That let me know, damn, it's a big deal. Even the wedding was big. The list of her family friends was crazy. Those were her people showing up, showing their love. For some people that was too much to even think about. And it was quick. I guess that just added to the speculation—"Why can't they wait?" I didn't want to wait.

PLAYBOY: On one episode of *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, Khloé claims you were withholding sex from her until the wedding. Was that true?

ODOM: I tried to. I don't know why I wanted to wait. We came together and knew what we wanted from each other really early, and everything we did felt good, from a hug to a kiss. Then there was a time when I just tried to be a gentleman about the whole situation. I was accepted by her family. She stayed at my place and vice versa. I thought, We're going to step back for a second. Keep it classy.

PLAYBOY: During another episode Khloé makes you a "love tape" in which she poses naked in a bathtub full of candy and dresses as a sexy firefighter. Do you take the tape with you on the road?

ODOM: I laugh about that. At first I didn't know how to take it; I didn't know if it was a joke. It was the perfect spoof for me. At



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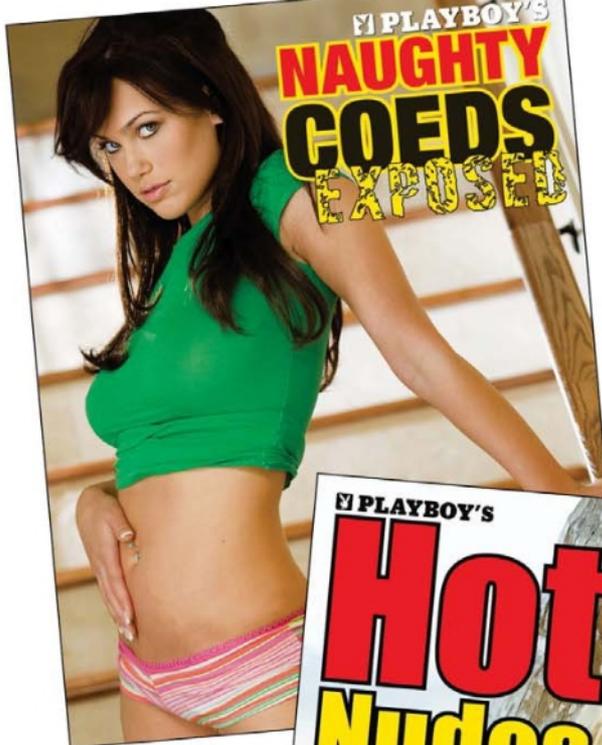
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first I was like, “Is this serious?” Was it to make me laugh? Was it to be sexy *and* make me laugh? It was funny.

PLAYBOY: What happens if a sex tape of you and Khloé leaks out?

ODOM: When people see us in person, they see Khloé’s not small. I’m not small. People see us and are probably like, Damn, I wonder how that looks. We wouldn’t have anything to be ashamed about, but no, that’s not going down.

PLAYBOY: Has it been hard to adjust to the dynamics of the Kardashian family?

ODOM: People have the wrong idea. They’re a really strong family and fun to be around.

PLAYBOY: But there is a circus that comes along with the family and the TV shows.

ODOM: Well, that’s what happens anytime you have a lot of people in a room, in a house, an environment. I’m perfect for that. I come from a big family. I’ve always been on a team. I understand. The circus is what makes it tick and keeps it going.

PLAYBOY: Her stepfather, Bruce Jenner, was cold to you at first because he was left out of the wedding plans, but he warmed up right away. What did you two bond over?

ODOM: Bruce likes me because I’m normal. First, because he’s in a house full of women. He could tell my energy is just about trying to do the best for his stepdaughter and do what I need to do. Respect goes a long way when you carry yourself a certain way and show manners when you first meet someone. If you do that, then it’s hard for somebody not to like you.

PLAYBOY: How badly do you want to tell Courtney’s boyfriend, Scott, to shut the hell up?

ODOM: Nah, that relationship is between them. As a man, you know how that goes. That relationship is between her and Scott. As long as he’s not disrespectful to Khloé, I can’t overstep my boundaries.

PLAYBOY: During game three of the 2010 finals, fans in Boston wore Khloé masks. Did that affect you?

ODOM: No. I thought it was fun. It showed the power we have as a brand. It’s a compliment.

PLAYBOY: The Lakers won that series and the championship in the seventh game. We heard Khloé bought you a congratulatory gift.

ODOM: She bought me a two-door Rolls-Royce Phantom, white on white, drop-top. I was greatly appreciative and proud. Anytime you have a woman in your life who can get you a gift like that it makes you proud she’s your woman.

PLAYBOY: You and Khloé met President Obama when the Lakers visited the White House. What type of impression did that make on you?

ODOM: That was cool. He can ball. And he plays lefty, so he has a unique way of thinking and doing things. He asked me, “How’s married life treating you?” I was like, “Oh, okay.” He’s hip. He knows what’s going on. It was amazing. My

grandmother was born in 1923 in Georgia in the segregated South, so the significance of this was pretty big to me.

PLAYBOY: You grew up in Jamaica, Queens. Your mother was a corrections officer at Rikers Island correctional facility. Was she as tough a mother as that makes her sound?

ODOM: No, not at all. My mother was real soft. I was the baby. I could do no wrong. But we would always practice good manners, proper etiquette. My grandmother was from the South in a time when you had to carry yourself a certain way to be liked because people would dislike you just for being a color. So we spoke well.

PLAYBOY: They sound like strong women.

ODOM: They were very strong. My grandmother went back to school and graduated college when she was 50 years old. She graduated from York College. To see strength in women made a big impression. That’s probably where I get a lot of my independence.

PLAYBOY: Your mother died of colon cancer when you were 12. How did your life change?

ODOM: I probably got closed off. My concentration level changed. School was

My father was addicted to heroin. I was 12 when my mother passed away. I’ve seen a lot of things growing up that I probably shouldn’t have, but that’s my story.

just something I would not concentrate on. I wouldn’t allow myself to. I became detached. I got in touch with a cold side I probably wouldn’t have gotten in touch with or maybe would’ve at a later age. I have that kamikaze button in me now where I can cut things off maybe a little too easily.

PLAYBOY: Did it affect your basketball?

ODOM: No, I poured myself into basketball. I remember the day she passed away. I went to the park and just played. My family has lived in the same house since 1957, so a lot of people in the neighborhood were familiar with my mother and my family. We have the same phone number we had then. A lot of people knew what I was going through. I remember I just played in the park. I was there for easily 12 hours before I went home at two, three in the morning, and my grandmother didn’t ask me a question. After that happened, though, she gave me a little talk, like, “There’s going to be some stuff you’re going to have to learn and do on your own now.”

PLAYBOY: How close were you to your father?

ODOM: Actually, I just moved my father to California. He had a drug addiction when I was growing up. My father was addicted to heroin. I’ve seen a lot of things growing up that I probably shouldn’t have, but that’s my story. I wouldn’t change anything. I was 12 when my mother passed away. My mother started treating me like a man when I was about 10. So I got what was going on. I didn’t ask my father to take care of me because he couldn’t take care of himself.

PLAYBOY: Was he always a part of your life?

ODOM: Yeah. He would come by. I would see him, but my mother and father had separated. I lived with my mother’s family in Queens, and my father lived in Brooklyn. When you’re growing up, you’re going to have some resentment. My mother died; my father was getting high. But I have a good heart. I have only one father. I have only one parent alive, so I can’t turn him off. And he looks just like me. I walk and talk like my father. I have a love for clothes. I have a love for fashion. I have a love for the street life. I have a love for partying, for dancing. At one time I had a love for women.

PLAYBOY: Were you always into fashion?

ODOM: Always. I can’t help it. We have our famous place to shop in Queens called Jamaica Avenue. It’s really famous for clothes and fashion. I always wanted to be part of that. Seeing it made, seeing it come to life is what I get a kick out of.

PLAYBOY: Now you own your own clothing line, Rich Soil. What’s the concept behind it?

ODOM: I guess spirituality, looking fly. I got the concept after seeing all these T-shirts with skulls and signs of death. I wanted fashion that brought life to something. So it started as a T-shirt line and has now gone to cut and sew. It’ll be in Urban Outfitters everywhere.

PLAYBOY: With your father out of the picture and your grandmother raising you, who were your male role models growing up?

ODOM: When you’re from Queens you learn a lot from the streets and the people in front of you. That’s part of a New Yorker’s upbringing.

PLAYBOY: Life on the stoop?

ODOM: Absolutely. I learned from the dudes who were playing basketball and then the dudes who were serving [drugs]. It was a mixture of things you absorbed. I learned from my environment.

PLAYBOY: You grew up with fellow Laker Ron Artest.

ODOM: Ron was from Queensbridge Housing Projects, and we grew up playing for the same traveling team, Brooklyn Queens Express. We used to go all around the city, playing in different tournaments. I always knew Ron was going to be one of those players who made it to the NBA.

PLAYBOY: At what point did you know you too could be one of those players?

ODOM: I knew for a long time, maybe since I was eight or nine years old. I

remember when I got my first rim. I had a Dr. J. Jammer, a miniature hoop that you put in your house. My father bought it, and that was it. I was attached to basketball. By 10 or 11 years old, I used to play with guys who were 14, 15 years old and hold my own. I could tell you a story. New York City public schools are horrible, so I went to a small Catholic school. My grandmother put me in there, but I couldn't focus on work at the time. The teacher used to hand out assignments, and when she would come around I'd be writing my name. She'd say, "What are you doing?" And I'd say, "I'm practicing my autograph." I used to always get in trouble for doing that, writing "Lamar Odom, Lamar Odom, Lamar Odom." People thought I was bugged out. When you're in the fifth, sixth, seventh grade, you get asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" One girl says, "An astronaut," and another girl says, "I want to be a lawyer. I want to go to Harvard." Teachers believe all of them. "Oh, you could be an astronaut. You can find the cure for cancer. You can do all that." You say, "A basketball player" and they're like, "You know what the odds are of you making the NBA?"

PLAYBOY: But the odds really are slim to none for most people to make it in professional sports.

ODOM: Well, it's slim to none to be an astronaut. It's slim to none to find the cure for cancer. It just seems further away when people talk about someone making it in professional sports. That's just the way we think. But I never let anybody shoot that down. It wasn't an either-or for me.

PLAYBOY: You left Christ the King high school during your senior year and moved to New Britain, Connecticut to live with your coach and attend St. Thomas Aquinas High School. Was it culture shock to go from the streets of Queens to the suburbs of Connecticut?

ODOM: Yeah, but it was necessary at that time. I was maybe number one, arguably the number two player in the country. I got *Parade* magazine's Player of the Year. I could not concentrate during my senior year of high school. So it was just that I had to do whatever I had to do to graduate school, man. I had coaches who were friends with a coach at a school in Connecticut. I just needed to do something.

PLAYBOY: Where did you want to go to college?

ODOM: I knew for a while I was going to try for UNLV. I figured it would be UCLA or UNLV because I had visited the West Coast my senior year and loved it. It was crazy. I was living in Connecticut, and the coach at UCLA got fired and then hired the guy I was living with to be his assistant at the University of Rhode Island. So I made the choice to go to UNLV. But then things got crazy there, so I said, "I'm going to go to Rhode Island." It's funny because I needed to

be away from home, but I also really wanted to be close by so my people could watch me play basketball and so I could go home and get that knowledge from my grandma.

PLAYBOY: Things did get crazy at UNLV. Before you arrived, your scholarship was revoked after reports surfaced that someone had taken a standardized test for you. What really happened?

ODOM: That'd be pretty hard to do, you know what I mean? I'm six-10. It was just a lot of things. It's easy to break rules in college. You always hear of that happening, and shit happens, man. I don't know. They tried to say I was taking this and taking that.

PLAYBOY: You were later accused of taking \$5,600 from a booster. UNLV coach Bill Bayno was fired, and the university was placed on probation for four years. Sportswriters everywhere made you the poster boy for everything wrong with college sports. Did that hurt?

ODOM: It hurt a little. I wasn't a bad dude. I never hurt anybody, especially at 16, 17. I wanted to play ball. I just listened to people who were coaching me

When people see us, they see Khloé's not small. I'm not small. People see us and are probably like, Damn, I wonder how that looks. But no, [a sex tape] is not going down.

or saying they were helping me. It bothered me. I won't lie. It's America, right? People get second chances and people get those chances based on perception, how people see you. It bothered me a lot, but I never let it deter me, because I knew once I stepped on the court it was over.

PLAYBOY: Stepping on the court was the one thing you couldn't do. You ended up at the University of Rhode Island but had to sit out the entire year.

ODOM: That was the fucked-up part. I couldn't do the one thing that helps me relieve stress. So then you start looking for different things to relieve stress, things you shouldn't be doing sometimes. What am I going to do? I'm going to go to New York, come back. I'm going to hang out at night, indulge.

PLAYBOY: What do you remember best about your time at the University of Rhode Island?

ODOM: The support.

PLAYBOY: Are you sure it's not the last-second buzzer beater you hit to win the first A-10 tournament title in school history?

ODOM: But that came along with the

support. Imagine hitting that shot and then going to a hotel and having the whole state of Rhode Island waiting for you. After I hit the shot and we went into the locker room, I had to do a press conference. I could barely talk. I was overwhelmed with emotion. I probably cried for about two hours straight.

PLAYBOY: You declared for the NBA draft in 1999 but then tried to pull out. What changed your mind?

ODOM: I didn't know who to trust, which way to go. You need a strong team. When you ask me about playing and people thinking I was a bad seed, I was 18 years old, and I'm not doing anything to hurt somebody, physically or mentally. I'm just living my life. I really didn't know which direction to go.

PLAYBOY: You attempted to return to college but couldn't because NCAA rules state that once an athlete signs with an agent he is ineligible to play in college. Did you have a moment of panic when you thought you might have to sit out another year?

ODOM: That's when I knew you had to have balls to do good business. I had to become a good businessman early. I did all the things I needed to do, figured it all out, how to go to different workouts with different teams, did all that myself.

PLAYBOY: You were drafted by the Los Angeles Clippers, a team not exactly known for winning. What was your mindset going in?

ODOM: Rock and roll. When I was in L.A., I was 19. I was probably the most noticeable player, even though we had some good players on that team, some talent. I was probably the most noticeable name or face. In L.A., we can't be as good as the Lakers, so I was getting all the love the Clippers were getting. It was a learning process, learning how to deal with success. Smoking pot, doing things I shouldn't have been doing.

PLAYBOY: You were trying to make the Clippers cool.

ODOM: Yeah. Like, "We're going to be cool too, even if this is a Lakers town."

PLAYBOY: The NBA's latest dress code targets everything from jeans to large jewelry to throwback jerseys. Is the league trying to remove hip-hop's influence?

ODOM: It's trying to crack down on it, but it's something the NBA can't stop. Generations change and evolve. When you've got on jeans, Gucci shoes and a blazer with your T-shirt, that's still hip-hop. You could throw on a button-down with a tie and still make it hip-hop. I don't know if they can stop that revolution. What happens when they play? You're going to see tattoos. That's hip-hop.

PLAYBOY: The NBA also cracked down on player behavior. During the four years you were with the Clippers you were suspended twice for drug violations, one of which you admitted was marijuana. What was going on?

(continued on page 115)

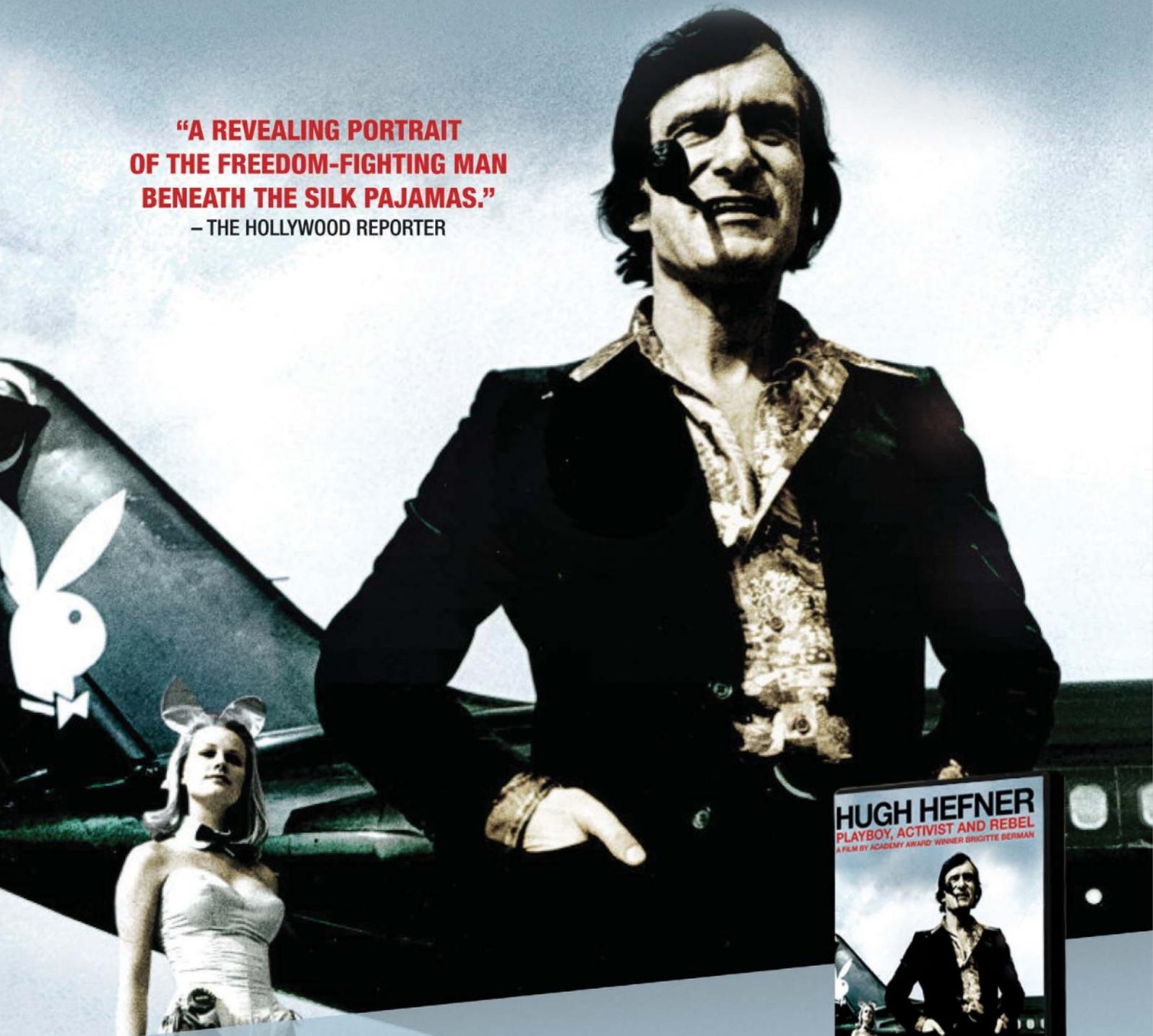
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~~N A R C O~~

~~A M E R I C A N O~~

BY T. J. ENGLISH



JUÁREZ, THE BLOODY GROUND ZERO FOR THE MEXICAN DRUG
WAR: TWO AMERICAN CITIZENS—A U.S. CONSULATE EMPLOYEE
AND HER HUSBAND—ARE BRUTALLY ASSASSINATED IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE DAY. THE MESSAGE FROM THE CARTELS? MORE
VIOLENCE IS COMING, AND NO ONE IS SAFE

THE KILLINGS

TAKE PLACE IN A CROWDED AREA IN Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, mid-afternoon.

A white Toyota RAV4 with Texas plates is chased by two vehicles one block from the border with the United States, near the Rio Grande. The driver of the Toyota is a man, age 34. His wife, next to him in the passenger seat, is 35; she is four months pregnant. In the back, a seven-month-old baby is strapped into a car seat.

A black SUV and another vehicle occupied by armed gunmen pull alongside the Toyota. The man driving the Toyota tries to escape; he maneuvers desperately through traffic toward the Paso del Norte Bridge, the border crossing to El Paso, Texas. From the black SUV, gunmen open fire, strafing the side of the Toyota. The driver is hit; the car veers wildly out of control, collides with other automobiles and comes to a halt alongside the curb.

The woman passenger screams in terror. Professional assassins step out of their car. Dressed commando style in all black, they open fire on the woman and her husband, finishing the job.

After the fusillade subsides, the assassins approach the vehicle. Some members of the hit team cordon off the area. Although they are less than a block from the border, where dozens of Mexican customs officials and armed military personnel are stationed, no cops approach the murder scene.

The gunmen check to make sure the man and woman are dead. Ignoring the crying baby in the backseat, they gather up spent shell casings and other evidence, then leave the scene. No one chases after them.

Once the killers are gone, military police descend. The couple in the front seat are history. In the backseat, the baby screams amid shattered glass and splattered blood but is miraculously okay. A policewoman reaches in, grabs the baby and clutches her to her chest.

The killings should be shocking. Even in Juárez, called the deadliest city in the world, where the war against narco traffickers has given rise to a staggering body count, this double murder—which takes place in the middle of the day in front of dozens of onlookers—is outrageous.

Even so, the flagrant brutality of the hit might be absorbed into the body politic of Juárez, a city under siege, were it not for a simple fact: The victims are not only American citizens but government employees. The female victim, Lesley Enriquez, worked at the U.S. consulate in Juárez. Her husband, Arthur Redelfs, was a corrections officer at the El Paso County Sheriff's Office, across the border in El Paso.

The killings take place on March 13, 2010. At roughly the same time as the Enriquez-Redelfs hit, elsewhere in Juárez another assassination takes place. Jorge Alberto Salcido Cenicerros, the husband of a U.S. consulate worker, leaving the same children's birthday party attended by Enriquez and Redelfs, in a similar white SUV, is also gunned down by a professional hit squad.

The killings have all the earmarks of drug cartels, which have been slaughtering people in Juárez, and all of Mexico, at an ungodly rate. The presidents of Mexico and the U.S. condemn the killings, with a spokesman for the National Security Council referring to them as "brutal murders." Secretary of State





old hood from Juárez was eventually arrested and prosecuted for the homicide; the official story was that it was a carjacking gone wrong. But Jordan remains convinced the cartels targeted his brother because of his career

In Juárez, drugs burn, soldiers drill and crime scenes abound.

in the DEA. A version of Jordan's story is chronicled in the 2002 book

Down by the River by Charles Bowden.

"What you are seeing in Mexico now," says Jordan, "is a new low. The cartels have become like Al Qaeda. They have learned from Al Qaeda."

Jordan is referring specifically to the cartels' use of beheadings to deliver a message. Cartel rivals and other enemies are kidnapped and, on occasion, videotaped being beheaded or dismembered, with the savagery broadcast on YouTube and popular internet sites such as El Blog del Narco.

Then there are the remote-control car bombings that, throughout the summer of 2010, became increasingly commonplace. The entire country has morphed into a perverse version of the traditional

Mexican celebration El Día de los Muertos ("the Day of the Dead").

The numbers are shocking. Since December 2006 there have been nearly 30,000 narco-related murders in Mexico. The violence has taken place all around the country, from large municipalities such as Mexico City and Guadalajara to tourist enclaves such as Acapulco and the Yucatán Peninsula. Mass graves, severed heads and limbs, mutilated bodies left on display in the town plaza with threatening notes have become a near-daily occurrence.

"These are the techniques of terrorists," says Jordan.

His observations are echoed by Secretary Clinton, who compared what is happening in Mexico to an "insurgency," with the cartels attempting to take over sectors of the government and whole regions of the country.

Much of the mayhem is facilitated by corruption, with *federales*, municipal police and elected officials on the take. The temptation of narco dollars is seductive, and the threat of violence is persuasive. Public officials and average citizens are often coerced into the narco trade by the drug organizations, which make them an offer: *plata o plomo*, silver or lead. Either you take the cartels' money and cooperate, or you will be shot dead.

Corruption is sometimes a two-way street. Although the U.S. does not have the deeply entrenched institutional corruption that permeates Mexican society, the drug trade is sometimes facilitated by dirty U.S. border patrol agents, law enforcement personnel and other government officials on the take.

The killings of the consulate worker and her husband are a case in point. In July, Mexican authorities arrested a local Mexican member of the infamous Barrio Azteca gang, which operates on both sides of the border (in Mexico it is known as Los Aztecas). According to the Mexican federal police, this

Hillary Clinton expresses regret and denounces the cartels, saying, "There is no question that they are fighting against both of our governments."

If there was doubt before, there is no longer: The killings represent a tipping point. What was viewed by some U.S. citizens and public officials as mostly a Mexican problem is now an American problem, with American victims. No one is immune. And no one is safe.

"In all my years in law enforcement, I never imagined it would get this bad," says Phil Jordan, a 31-year veteran of the DEA who in the mid-1990s was promoted to director of the El Paso Intelligence Center, or EPIC, the agency's eyes and ears on the borderland and the international drug trade. Although he is now retired, Jordan maintains a network of law enforcement contacts, and he is frequently quoted on narco-related subjects in the press. His interests are professional but also personal. In 1995 his younger brother, Lionel Bruno Jordan, was shot dead in a Kmart parking lot in El Paso. A 13-year-

**PLATA O PLOMO,
SILVER OR LEAD.
EITHER YOU TAKE
THE CARTELS' MONEY
AND COOPERATE,
OR YOU WILL BE
SHOT DEAD.**



gangster—Jesús Ernesto Chávez Castillo—claims that the target of the hit was Lesley Enriquez, the U.S. consulate employee. Chávez says he was the organizer of the assassination, which was ordered by the Juárez drug cartel because Enriquez was corrupt: She was helping to supply a rival gang with visas and had to die. The other victim, in the other white SUV, was murdered simply because the hit men weren't sure which car belonged to their target, so

Weapons are seized, displayed; a policeman on guard, ready for more.



they decided, just in case, to ambush both vehicles.

The FBI office in El Paso publicly expresses doubt about the explanation for the killings, stating it has no evidence Enriquez was corrupt. Over the following months many theories about the killings appear in the press. This speculation takes place against a backdrop of further killings, bombings, kidnappings and extortion that have turned the narco war in Mexico into a killing field unlike anything else currently taking place on the planet.

The narcosphere is a battlefield without borders: Politicians, businessmen, lawmen, bankers, drug lords, gangsters and poor Mexican and American citizens all have a role to play in an illicit business that generates, according to some estimates, up to \$23 billion annually from the U.S. alone. It is difficult to pinpoint the narcosphere's central nervous system, but in terms of violence, the central war zone is Mexico's northern borderland—encompassing the state of Chihuahua and its largest city, Juárez—which produces more victims of narco-terrorism than anywhere else in the country.

Howard Campbell, professor of sociology and anthropology at the University of Texas at El Paso, refers to the phenomenon as “partly an accident of geography.” Campbell is author of the 2009 book *Drug War Zone*, a fascinating oral history that explores the Juárez–El Paso narco-economy from myriad perspectives.

For nearly a century, going back to the days of Prohibition and before, America's southwestern borderland has been a storied smuggling route. Some of this history, particularly as it relates to the narco trade, is glorified in *narcocorridos*—melodramatic musical ballads that celebrate drug smuggling, usually sung in the *norteño* style in a wavering falsetto accompanied by accordions and heavy brass. The *narcocorridos* have become the soundtrack to the current war. In 2008, when a drug lord from a cartel began a violent offensive to take over drug operations in Juárez,

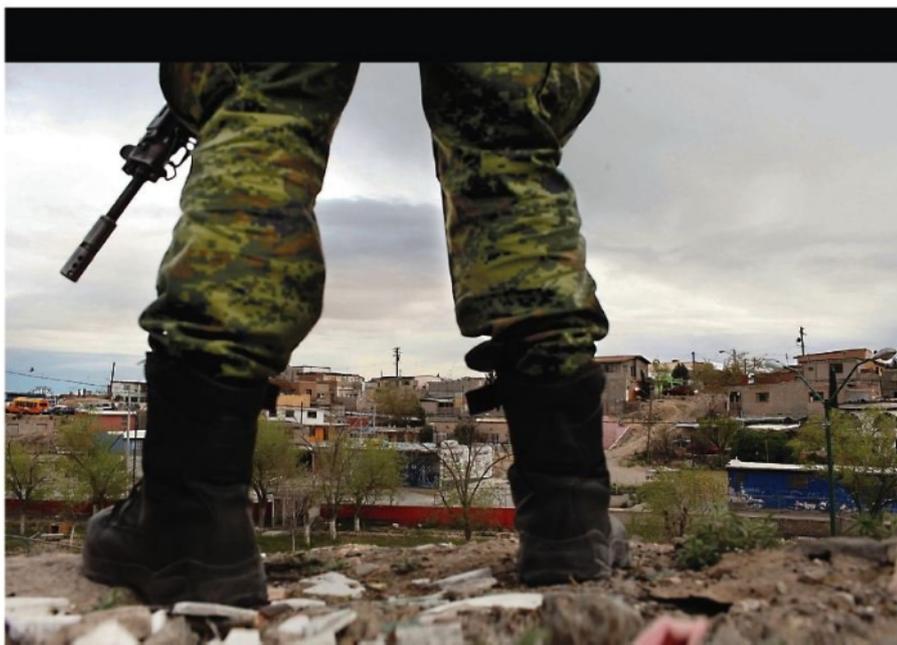
“POOR MEXICO. SO FAR FROM GOD AND SO CLOSE TO THE UNITED STATES.”

police radio frequencies were hacked to broadcast a *narcocorrido* that glorified his organization. To police in Juárez, it was a warning: *We are everywhere. Join our cartel, or you will die.*

Says Campbell, “Juárez has become a drug war zone primarily because of its proximity to the world's largest marketplace for narcotics—the United States.”

The professor's comments are an alternative phrasing of the famous observation of Porfirio Díaz, Mexican president in the late 19th century. Said Díaz, “Poor Mexico. So far from God and so close to the United States.”

Díaz was talking about the entire country, but his words resonate with the force of a shotgun blast in Juárez. Since 2008, when the U.S. government signed the Mérida Initiative—an agreement by which the U.S. Congress earmarked \$1.3 billion in training, equipment and intelligence to facilitate the Mexican narco war—there have been close to 7,000 murders in Juárez, a city of 1.3 million people. (By comparison, New York, a city of more than 8 million, had fewer than 500 murders in 2009.) President Felipe *(continued on page 119)*





"Nothing much. What are you doing?"



Kayla Gets Real

MISS AUGUST 2008 CONQUERS HER FEARS IN THE JUNGLE ON *I'M A CELEBRITY...GET ME OUT OF HERE!*

When Kayla Collins accepted the offer to be a contestant on the 10th season of the popular U.K. reality-TV show *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!* the

diminutive 23-year-old

beauty never imagined the struggles she would face. For nearly three weeks she cohabited with her 12 competitors on a remote island and contended with torrential rain, crude living conditions and disturbing insects—all while engaging in a myriad of unsavory challenges.

"In one trial I had to hold a huge cockroach with prickly legs in my mouth for 20 seconds," Kayla recalls. "It kept trying to push its way out." Despite this and other horrors, Kayla persevered: Out of 13 cast members she was the eighth to be cut.

"I would never have thought I could do the things I did, but I just went into survival mode and forgot my fears," she says. Naturally, the return to civilization was sweet—her first shower, indoors and sans TV cameras, particularly so. "It felt amazing to shower naked again," she says. "I was in there for over an hour."



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG





See more of Kayla at club.playboy.com.



*"It felt
amazing
to shower
naked
again."*

UNTITLED

C
R
I
M
E
S
TORY

HE GOT LUCKY:
HE GOT THE MONEY
AND GOT AWAY
WITH HIS LIFE.
NOW WHAT?





BY
WALTER MOSLEY

I woke up that morning with my forehead jammed against the end of the mattress, which itself was but-tressed up against

a wall. The pressure seemed to go through the bone right into my brain. The digital clock on the floor next to me read 9:13 A.M. and too-bright sunlight was slamming down through curtnessless windows that looked out over once industrial, soon to be gentrified Brooklyn. The pressure didn't lessen even after I was sitting up and watching the aboveground subway train barrel onto the Manhattan Bridge, rumbling like distant thunder.

I was thinking about lying back down and giving my brain a little more time to decompress, when what must have been a 16-wheel tractor-trailer hit the on-ramp of the BQE, bucking its chassis hard enough to sound like a bomb going off.

I could have slept for another eight hours but U-Man, Uhuru James, would be downstairs in 17 minutes. We had to get to LaGuardia to catch the 11:05 flight to Boston. No time for coffee. No time to call Doma to ask her if she would meet me that night after Uhuru and I got back from the funeral. No time to shower or eat because the food in the refrigerator needed to be prepared, or at least heated, and I only had 17 minutes...16 minutes...15 minutes...14 minutes.

I sat on the commode to piss because of the dizziness brought on by the nine (or was it 12?) double shots of ice-cold raspberry vodka I had at the Russian speak-easy the night before. I tried
(continued on page 110)



GAME *of* HEARTS

THE GUY'S GUIDE TO MAKING
HER VALENTINE'S DAY
PERFECT



THE HIGH-END CHOCOLATIER

Give the gift **THAT MELTS IN HER MOUTH**

It's common knowledge that chocolate is an aphrodisiac for women, inducing a hormonal surge that researchers refer to as *totally hornball*. (That's why men give women chocolates for Valentine's Day in the first place.) Here's what's new, however: a craze for high-end chocolate made by master Willy Wonkas who use only the finest cacao beans, most notably from Venezuela (where beans such as the *porcelana criollo* have become so valuable they have incited political unrest). The beans are crafted into tiny art pieces with ingredients such as chilies and wasabi. What do you get when you offer

a woman extra-luxurious and expensive chocolates? An extra-luxuriously hornball female. Perhaps that's why the premium-cacao market has grown more than 65 percent from 2002 to 2007. "Before this recent craze over chocolate, most people thought it came from Belgium or Switzerland. Today's consumers are more educated," says Michael Antonorsi of Chuao Chocolatier, an artisanal confectionery based in San Diego. In case you missed the boat on this news story, we're here to educate you—and just in time. See below for unique suggestions for her Valentine's Day sugar fix. At right: Sasckya enjoying a truffle from Vosges, based in Chicago (vosgeschocolate.com).



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BLOOD, GOATS AND SWINGERS:

THE ORIGINS OF
VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day evolved, some historians claim, out of a pagan rite celebrated in ancient Rome. During a February festival called Lupercalia, priests sacrificed a goat. Boys then ran through the streets naked with slices of goatskin and women would thrust themselves forward, hoping to get thwacked with the bloody strips. Women believed, as Plutarch put it, "that the pregnant will thus be helped to an easy delivery and

the barren to pregnancy." According to legend, single women would put their names in an urn and men would pick one, pairing couples as though at a 1970s key party. With this festival as impetus, around the year 500 A.D. Pope Gelasius I declared February 14 Valentine's Day, named after Saint Valentine, who had been martyred for love centuries earlier. We'd like to see Hallmark make a card out of that story.

GOOD TO KNOW *Twenty-five minutes of sex should burn off the calories in two pieces of chocolate.*

THE BUBBLY BASICS



A: BRUT Your basic dry champagne, made of pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier.

TASTING NOTES: “Louis Roederer’s Brut Premier (\$50) is balanced, with great lemony finesse,” says Bobby Stuckey, former head sommelier at the French Laundry and now owner of Frasca in Boulder.

B: VINTAGE A champagne house will declare a vintage if the harvest that year was outstanding. The wine must be aged at least three years. The vintage year will show on the bottle.

TASTING NOTES: “The aromas of the 1999 Philipponnat Clos des Goisses (\$140) explode with notes of minerals, chalk, smoke, white peaches and flowers,” says Daniel Johnnes, wine director at chef Daniel Boulud’s restaurants.

C: ROSÉ Pink wine usually made by using the skins of red grapes to impart color

and add tannins.

TASTING NOTES: “Moët & Chandon’s Dom Pérignon Rosé 2000 (\$400) is detailed with precise flavors of strawberry and dark fruits,” says Stuckey. “A perfect balance of power and grace.”

D: BLANC DE BLANC Champagne made exclusively of chardonnay grapes.

TASTING NOTES: “Taittinger Comtes de Champagne 1999 (\$195) is a wine that really shows its stuff,” says Stuckey. “Ripe fruits folded in with veins of minerality.”

E: CUVÉE DE PRESTIGE A champagne house’s attempt to market a transcendent wine. Dom Pérignon was the first, bottled in 1921 and offered in 1936.

TASTING NOTES: “Try a Krug Grande Cuvée (\$170), which is powerful yet elegant,” says Johnnes. “Aromas of pears, spice, brioche and minerals.”



HOW TO MAKE A PLAYMATE SWOON

Our comely model, **MISS DECEMBER 2007 SASCKYA PORTO**, reveals her rules of seduction

My first boyfriend was on his game when it came to Valentine’s Day. One year he asked my best friend to help him pick out a pair of shoes for me. It was cute, and she did a great job because I loved the shoes. Honestly, the best gifts are the ones that perfectly fit my personality and style. Once a boyfriend gave me a bracelet with aquamarine stones. It was pretty, but it didn’t suit me at all. I gave it to my 12-year-old sister. That’s why a guy should always know his girl’s tastes. I love champagne. Flowers are nice, too, but I’d rather have something that lasts. Take me to Gucci—don’t give me roses! If you really want to win me over, surprise me with a trip. You know, somewhere warm with beaches, music, coconuts and me in a tiny little bikini.

GOOD TO KNOW Valentine’s Day dinner should be light, not soporific. Try lobster tails.

THE KIR ROYALE

A bubbling cocktail that every lothario should learn to master

STEP 1: Pour ½ ounce of crème de cassis into a flute.

STEP 2: Fill with champagne.

STEP 3: Garnish with a lemon twist.



LINGERIE

FOR EVERY OCCASION

Silky advice from PLAYBOY'S FASHION EDITOR

When you have money to burn. Bordelle's hourglass dress (\$805, bordelle.co.uk) will appropriately torch your wallet. So will a French lace and champagne silk Muse Corsetlette bra (\$275) and heart panties (\$175) from Kiki de Montparnasse. If there's still room left on the tab, add a pair of leather opera gloves (\$450) and pearl restraints (\$2,400, kikidm.com).

When she's totaled the car. Here's the silver lining amid all that wreckage: There will never be a better time to suggest she put on something risqué. So have her make it up to you in Agent Provocateur's adventurous Bullet playsuit (\$330) and matching star pasties (\$220, agentprovocateur.com).

When she's out of your league. Err on the side of modesty so as not to court overexcitement. A pleated baby doll (\$35, victoriassecret.com) definitely allows for a tantalizingly slow reveal.

When time is of the essence. Get where you need to go in a flash with the Love Game velvet push-up bra (\$36, bare necessities.com)—its front-ribbon closure invites easy access—and Trashy Lingerie's lace open-crotch thong (\$8, trashy.com).

When you're a leg man. Seductively dress her from thigh to toe in Wolford's Affaire 10 suspender stockings (\$170 with high-waist stocking belt, wolfordshop.com) and Christian Louboutin red-sole point-toe Rolando pumps (\$795, christianlouboutin.com).



BABY DOLL
Victoria's Secret,
\$35
The demure pick.



PLAYSUIT
Agent
Provocateur, \$330
The daring choice.



SILK BRA
Kiki de Montparnasse, \$275
A big-ticket option.



Hourglass dress, Bordelle, \$805

The

AFFORDABLE

DIAMOND

Make that plural—as in diamonds. Because it turns out the most bling for your buck comes in a shimmering mob. “A diamond cluster, a grouping of small diamonds, or diamond pavé, small diamonds so close together they obscure any metalwork, gives you a big-diamond look on a budget,” says Amanda Gizzi, a gems expert at the Jewelry Information Center. (At left: a pavé medallion from

Christopher Duquet Fine Jewelry Design, \$4,750, christopherduquet.com.) “Both a diamond cluster and a pavé setting sparkle impressively because each little diamond is cut and polished to release brilliance. They’re more affordable than larger diamonds because they’re less rare.” Your savings? “A one-carat total-weight pavé diamond ring can cost thousands less than a one-carat solitaire diamond ring.”



GOOD TO KNOW A typical diamond is 3.4 billion years old and formed more than 100 miles beneath Earth's surface.

THE HOLLYWOOD TOUGH GUY IS DEAD!

HE WAS **KILLED** BY
POLITICAL CORRECTNESS **AND**
THE GLORIFICATION OF
PALLID PRETTY BOYS

A MEMORIAL
AND A TOUR OF
THE GOLDEN AGE
OF GRIT

The **END** of **RICO**

BY
NICK TOSCHES

I remember what a guy I knew told me after his first prison stretch. "I used to believe in tough guys," he said. "Then they put me in that place, and all them tough guys cried for their mamas in the middle of the night just like me."

There are no tough guys, not really. There are only pretenders, posers and role players. As the limey said, "All the world's a stage," and anybody who can't see through a tough-guy act simply hasn't been around.

I've always found it interesting that Lucky Luciano, one of the most romanticized figures of the American underworld, was a habitual moviegoer, a somewhat sentimental trait that elicits the question: To what

extent did the so-called tough guys of real life emulate the tough-guy mythology of the moving pictures?

Gangster movies had been around for years before the world ever heard of Lucky Luciano, Al Capone and other tabloid fashion plates who were more celebrated but less effectual and cunning than the likes of the more important but less celebrated racket guys Johnny Torrio, Arnold Rothstein and Frank Costello.

D.W. Griffith had made his silent gangster picture, *The Musketeers of Pig Alley*, in 1912, and the first all-talking picture, Bryan Foy's *Lights of New York*, was a gangster picture. Released in 1928, the year





(1) Lillian Gish, Elmer Booth and Harry Carey in D.W. Griffith's *The Musketeers of Pig Alley*, 1912. (2) Fritz Lang's *The Big Heat* starring Gloria Grahame and Lee Marvin, 1953. (3) George Raft in the original *Scarface*, directed by Howard Hawks, 1932. (4) Burt Lancaster in *Brute Force*, 1947. (5) James Cagney, Mae Clarke and a grapefruit in *The Public Enemy*, 1931. (6) Robert Mitchum as the fiendish Max Cady in *Cape Fear*, 1962. (7) Leonardo DiCaprio and Gary Lewis in Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York*, 2002.

of Luciano's ascent, its gift to tough-guy mythology was the line, stiltedly uttered by Wheeler Oakman in the role of the cop-killer gang boss Hawk Miller, "Take him for a ride."

Luciano, for all his notoriety, was a *cafone* in a fancy suit. For him, *Oliver Twist* was a movie, but he seems to have been unaware that it was a book first. We'll never really know how much the words and ways of the moving-picture tough guys influenced the words and ways of real-life gangsters. But it's easy to see the appeal the moving-picture tough guys held for every common boy and man.

What adolescent didn't long to be free of fear, intimidation and everyday strictures by becoming a tough guy? What working stiff didn't long to blow away his boss, smack the stree-ish bitch of his discontent, break out of his mundane petty life, walk into a bar with a pocketful of \$1,000 bills (well, they stopped making those in 1934, so let's just say a thick folded sheaf of hundreds), claim the freedom

to be his own man and wave away the world with a violent *fuck you*?

The intrinsic hypocrisy of the transplanted *schmatte* racket known as Hollywood dictated that morality and the law win out in the end over amorality and lawlessness. But the make-believe movie tough guys, before that inevitable *schmatte* justice struck them down in *schmatte* righteousness, not only laid the lie to those shams called morality and the law—embodying Rimbaud's greatest words, "Morality is a weakness of the brain"—but above all gave every common boy and man something to aspire to, even if that aspiration would never be truly pursued, and they armed them with words and lines, scripted bullets, that could be parroted when the going got rough.

These movies were the church services for all who knew that society and government were but dirty spittoons but who lacked the nerve to spit down into them or kick them aside.

The actors who played the tough guys in these movies were what made

it all work. They were so good, they convinced. Up there, on that screen, they *were* tough guys.

It was in Mervyn LeRoy's *Little Caesar*, based on W.R. Burnett's novel of the same name and released in early 1931, that Edward G. Robinson brought inchoate definition to the tough-guy archetype.

In real life, organized crime in America was a Judeo-Christian consortium, but to the Jews from New York who ruled Hollywood there were and could be no bad Jews. So it was, through the great velvet-curtained synagogue of the moving pictures, that organized crime came to be popularly seen as an exclusively Italian affair with no connection to the devout and davening. And so it was that a Jew named Manny Goldenberg—Edward G. Robinson—became the ruthless wop Rico Bandello in the lead role of *Little Caesar*.

The actor had already been in several gangster pictures, but this role, in which he gave fuller force to his fictionalized portrayal of Al Capone in the 1927 Broadway play *The Racket*, brought him fame and brought America the (continued on page 100)



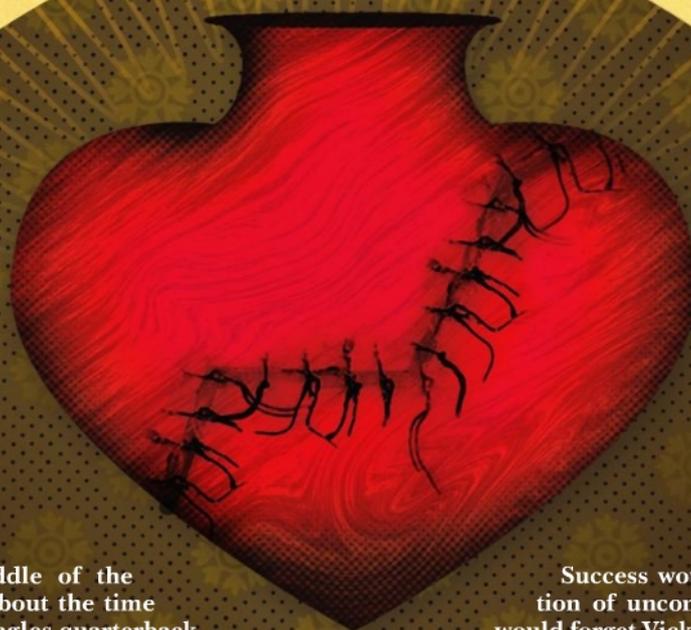
Olivia

"Who wants to take a ride on my pony...?"

Redeeming the irredeemable professional athlete is simple.

Nothing, it seems, beats victory

Just Win, Baby!



Around the middle of the NFL season—about the time Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Michael Vick was interceptionless and seemingly more elusive than ever—I had a candid, boozy conversation with a famous NFL writer about Vick’s astonishing transformation. “He worked his nuts off,” the writer told me. And this writer would know these sorts of things because, unlike other sportswriters, he interacts with the players on a personal level. So when he said Vick had “worked his nuts off,” it wasn’t hyperbole or a one-off meathead platitude; it was a genuine accolade. The writer further explained that Vick had used the 2009 NFL season—his first in the league after serving 18 months in federal prison for his involvement in a dogfighting ring—to reprogram his psyche and become the football player he never was: patient, humble, a film rat. “He’s really changed,” the writer said in a way that suggested reality trumped cliché in Vick’s case.

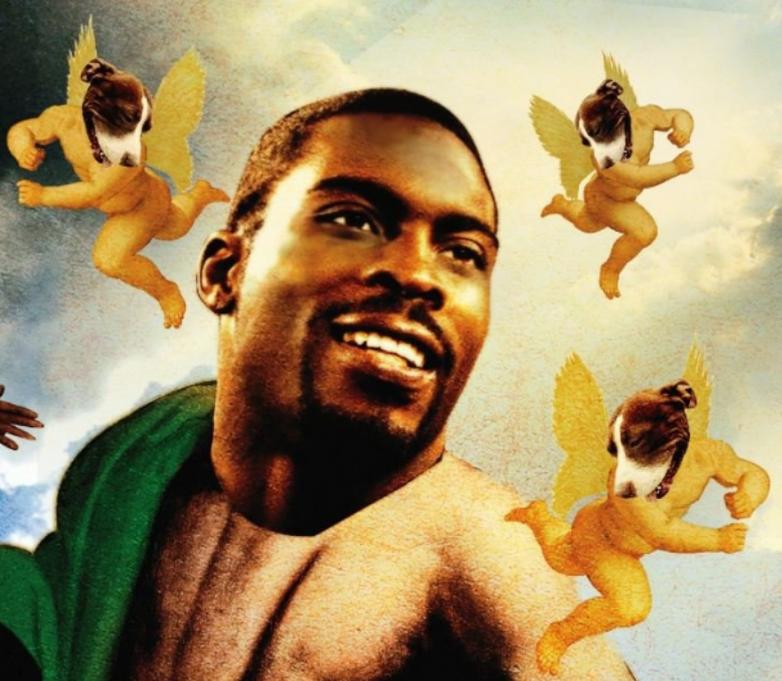
Most people did not wish Vick success. Success in Vick’s second stint as a professional football player would mean unconscionable sports fans would forget about the dogs he’d ordered hanged and drowned.

Success would mean a large portion of unconscionable sports fans would forget Vick had a capacity for evil most societies would define as threatening. But to me—an avid Eagles fan—the writer’s revelations justified the unconscionable sports fan inside me. Vick is playing as a changed, ridiculously productive quarterback on the team I love, and he is now my favorite player—one to whom I would express undying devotion even if he were to gut a border collie in the end zone. This guy will win us two Super Bowls, I thought. Fuck the dogs!

Welcome to the greatest moral dilemma in modern sports. Fans find themselves cheering for rapists, wife beaters, philanderers, steroids freaks, drunk drivers, thieves and, in the case of one Australian rugby player, a man who let a dog give him a blow job. And truth be told, the majority of fans compartmentalize their self-righteous outrage over a player’s off-field behavior whenever that player achieves on-field success. Kobe Bryant’s 2004 sexual assault case was dismissed, but he did not win an NBA championship for the next five seasons. He lost endorsements. He lost fans. He gained enemies—many of whom knew him only as the tall guy who’d trotted out his

By A.J. Daulerio

ILLUSTRATION BY CRISTELA P. TSCHUMY





VICK'S ATONEMENT: LEADING THE EAGLES TO WEEKLY VICTORIES, WHICH HAS INSPIRED THE TEAM'S FANS TO SHOW HIM SERIOUS BROTHERLY LOVE.

doe-eyed wife for a press conference so he could apologize to the world for nailing (consensually!) a 19-year-old hotel attendant. Sales of his number 8 Lakers jersey, which had always been robust, stalled. But time and championships—and in Bryant's case a new jersey number (24)—heal fan commerce. Bryant's jersey has been the NBA's best-seller since 2008, around the time the Lakers returned to the NBA finals. Even

If LeBron wins an NBA title, fans will flock back to him.

the chants of "Raaay-pist!" from the surliest road fans have more or less stopped. He's just that good.

The adulation of Bryant will end only if he leaves the Lakers and takes his talents to South Beach—à la LeBron James. Seriously. If there's one thing that will change a fan's allegiance to a player, it's betrayal. Cleveland sports fans, for all their lovable loserdom, turned into a pack of petulant lunatics after James announced on ESPN that he was leaving his hometown Cavaliers for the Miami Heat, thus extinguishing

all hope for a long-overdue championship. The Cavaliers' owner, Dan Gilbert, went public with his disgust for his former franchise player in radio interviews and a ridiculous letter to Cavs fans—written in the font Comic Sans, no less—in which he called James a coward and a deserter. "This shocking act of disloyalty from our homegrown 'chosen one' sends the exact opposite lesson of what we would want our children to learn and 'who' we would want them to grow up to become," Gilbert ranted. "But the good news is that this heartless and callous action

can only serve as the antidote to the so-called 'curse' on Cleveland, Ohio. The self-declared former 'King' will be taking the 'curse' with him down south. And until he does 'right' by Cleveland and Ohio, James (and the town where he plays) will unfortunately own this dreaded spell and bad karma."

LeBron jerseys were burned, his outdoor Nike ads were defaced and rumors that his 41-year-old mother had had sex with his former teammate Delonte West intensified. Whether West and Gloria James slept together is irrelevant, because soon after LeBron's dreadful *Decision* aired on ESPN, every single Cleveland resident believed that West had fucked her—a small, bitter victory for a city stiffed by a 25-year-old guy who had the gall to play basketball with his best friends in a balmy new locale.

Of course when you add actual debauchery to the betrayal of a city—watch out! Just ask Brett Lorenzo Favre, who spent 16 productive years in the good graces of Green Bay Packers fans despite being a pill-popping narcissist. Even during his first unretirement—when he was traded to the New York Jets in 2008—Favre was still destined to have a street named after him in Wisconsin. But when he unretired a second time and joined the hated Minnesota Vikings—a team he led to dual victories over the Packers and to the NFC championship game—

Favre's most devout fans began to turn on him. The hatred bubbled over early last year, aided in part by a former Jets sideline reporter named Jenn Sterger.

In early August, Deadspin, the sports website where I serve as editor in chief, reported that while quarterbacking the Jets, Favre had sent Sterger voice mails, MySpace messages and, allegedly, pictures of his semi-flaccid penis in hopes of seducing her. Two months later we

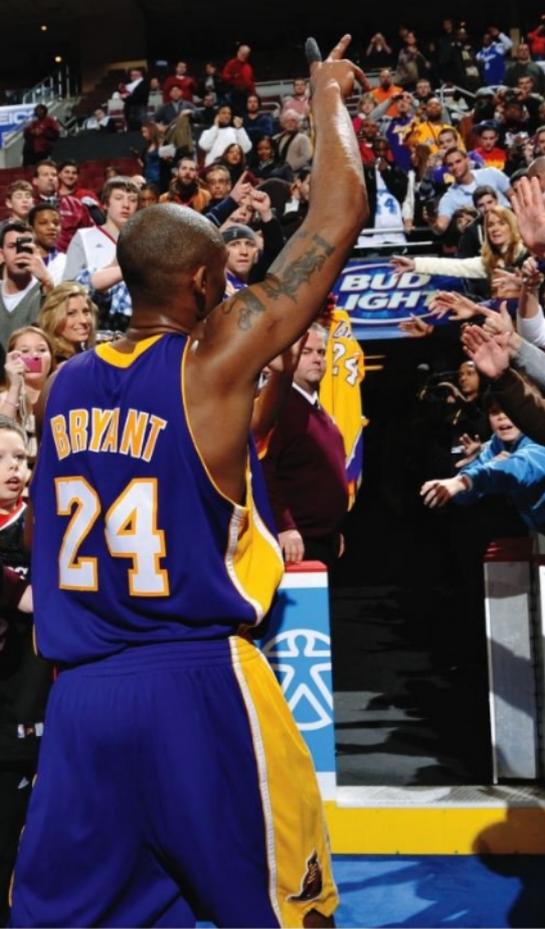


FAVRE'S SIN: ALLEGEDLY SENDING LEWD PHOTOS TO TV PERSONALITY JENN STERGER (ABOVE).

violated the sacred code of journalistic ethics by paying a third party for a portion of the voice mails, MySpace messages and, yes, those infamous pictures of what may be Brett Favre's junk—all still available at deadspin.com. The good-ol'-boy hotel propositions he left on Sterger's voice mail (which he reportedly admitted to in a meeting with NFL security) and the photos of what Sterger claimed was his penis (which he reportedly did not admit to NFL security) did



VICK'S SIN: BREEDING—AND ULTIMATELY KILLING—CANINES FOR A DOGFIGHTING RING HOUSED AT THIS VIRGINIA ESTATE.



an isolated incident: Favre and a former Packers tight end would regularly screw women in the Green Bay Regency Suites hotel bathroom; Favre drunkenly butchered a 2 Live Crew song while judging a bikini contest; a teenage Favre used to get drunk and streak naked through his small hometown in Mississippi; Favre paid someone to go to hospitals to get him pain medication.

Why did Deadspin double as a quasi-confessional for scorned Packers fans? It was the best way for many of them to rid themselves of that gnawing feeling of abandonment and spittle in their eye. Giving those stories to our site and furthering Favre's public embarrassment was the best revenge. So while I was saying "Fuck the dogs!" they were saying "Fuck Favre!" Now, had Favre still played for the Packers when the Sterger sexts became public, many of these stories would never have hit our in-box—that is, unless he was throwing interception after interception. Then, once again: "Fuck Favre!"

Likewise, when a team with high expectations vastly underachieves, some frustrated fans will create a soap-opera-like scenario usually involving one player sleeping with another player's wife or girlfriend as an explanation for all the losing. Next,

they will send the story to online message boards and e-mail it to friends—who cares whether it's plausible or not? (Believe me, eventually all this unsubstantiated gossip makes its way to me.) On the flip side, when a team is winning, most fans willfully ignore the fact that a majority of its players are assholes, adulterers and/or assailants. The anecdotal evidence stretches far beyond Philadelphia and Michael Vick. Look at Pittsburgh and Ben Roethlisberger. After another allegation surfaced last winter that Big Ben had sexually assaulted a coed in a college nightclub bathroom, few Yinzers

stood up for him—including the team's owner, Art Rooney II, who acknowledged in a letter to a concerned fan that his quarterback was pretty much a prick. To quote from Rooney's apology, "The vast majority of our players are good people who work hard to be the best that they can be." A truism only if you consider the benchmark for being a "good person" someone who does not pick up drunk, wobbly sorority chicks.

However, once Big Ben led a fourth-quarter comeback against the hated Baltimore Ravens with a comically broken nose and foot—in just his eighth game back after a monthlong suspension for his off-season misdeed—it was easy for the Steelers faithful to forgive the quarterback his sins. Across the field Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis certainly could relate. In January 2000 he may have watched two men get stabbed to death outside an Atlanta nightclub. But a year later all was forgotten in Baltimore because he delivered a Super Bowl championship to the city. So though it was cute of Tiger Woods to open a Twitter account recently in an awkward attempt to say "Hello again, world!" the best way to make the public forget about his humping a Perkins waitress in a parking lot would be by prevailing on the golf course. And if LeBron happens to win several NBA titles for the Heat (or another team) in the next few years, most fans will once again coronate him as his sport's king.

In fact, the legend of O.J. Simpson might be completely different today if he had been charged with murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and waiter Ron Goldman while he was still a star running back for the Buffalo Bills. Post-trial he could have come back to the NFL—after a four-game suspension from the league for violating its player personal-conduct policy, of course—and continued to amass yards at a record-breaking pace. No self-respecting Bills fan would set fire to Simpson's jersey or stage a protest against his playing for the team if he led them to a Super Bowl win. "We deserved this victory," they would rationalize. "We've suffered long enough." Besides, Simpson was acquitted. The Lombardi trophy says so.



serious damage to Favre's gunslinging family-man persona.

Due to the salacious possibility of a new Tiger Woods whorefest, the likes of both ESPN and *Access Hollywood* gave Dong-gate top billing. For a couple of weeks in October the story was unavoidable. The fact that these accusations surfaced when Favre was playing the worst football of his career didn't help matters. But everyone (including me—hey, I'm still a serious sports fan when I'm not making a living embarrassing athletes) hoped the Vikings' *Monday Night Football* game against the Jets, which took place at the peak of the Sterger-Favre imbroglio, would be the scene of Favre's redemption—i.e., a virtuoso five-touchdown performance that would turn the Vikings' season around. Yet it was not to be. The Vikings lost 29–20, and Favre threw a key interception at the end of the game to seal the victory for the Jets.

And so the open season on Favre's character continued. Here are a few allegations sent to Deadspin from Packers fans and former Favre devotees who gleefully shared some of his past transgressions to prove his clumsy sexting wasn't



BIG BEN'S ATONEMENT: TOUGHING OUT A BROKEN NOSE DURING A LATE-SEASON GAME AGAINST THE BALTIMORE RAVENS. **BIG BEN'S SIN:** ALLEGEDLY SEXUALLY ASSAULTING A DRUNK COED IN A BAR RESTROOM.



Winter Wonder

COME IN FROM THE COLD WITH MISS FEBRUARY

A Valentine's Day bouquet of smarts, looks and love, Kylie Johnson feeds her soul with an array of passions—from John Steinbeck to the Pittsburgh Steelers to screamo bands. “I was a cheerleader for years, but I was the cheerleader who listened to hard-core metal music,” says the straight-A nursing student. (“If I get a C, stay out of my way!”) Though born in California (the goddess-like marvel of an African American father and a mother of German descent), Kylie



grew up in upstate New York, where today she lives to snowboard at the region's famous Kissing Bridge ski resort. “How cute is that—the *Kissing Bridge*? Totally Valentine's Day, right?” So how does Miss February—who believes that being sexy means “being approachable and kind”—rock romance? “I'm very rock-and-roll, but I'm also very romantic. I'm always spreading the love—always! All I want to do is cuddle all day and convince you not to go to work the next morning. Let's romance each other.”



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
**STEPHEN
WAYDA**









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





MISS FEBRUARY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Kylie Johnson



PLAYMATE DATA SHEET



NAME: Kylie Johnson

BUST: 32D WAIST: 25 HIPS: 35

HEIGHT: 5'4" WEIGHT: 107

BIRTH DATE: 11/30/1990 BIRTHPLACE: Fort Ord, California

AMBITIONS: To complete my nursing degree, become an anesthetist and start my own family.

TURN-ONS: Established intellectual older men who can mentally, emotionally and sexually stimulate me.

TURNOFFS: Cockiness, of course, lack of ambition and irresponsible, out-of-control losers. Grr....

MUSICAL PASSION: Metalcore screamo bands like As Blood Runs Black and Miss May I never fail to thrill me.

FAVORITE NOVEL: The tragically beautiful Of Mice and Men. (Isn't it ironic that Lennie loves rabbits?)

MY DREAM VALENTINE'S DAY DATE: walk to a bistro for a romantic dinner, go home, pop in a movie and cuddle while listening to our hearts beat until we can't help but make love. Bliss! ♡



A beautiful brat.



My days as a cheerleader.



High school senior.

MISS FEBRUARY

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH





Kylie Johnson

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Why did God create man before he created woman? Because he didn't want any advice.

An elderly couple had been dating for several months when the man finally decided to broach the subject of physical relations.

"What are your thoughts on sex at our age?" he asked tentatively.

"I like it infrequently," she replied.

The man sat quietly for a moment, adjusted his glasses, leaned in closer toward her and said, "Just to clarify, was that one word or two?"

What do you call a man who has lost 95 percent of his brainpower? A widower.



One evening at a bar, a rich man and a poor man got into a discussion about the Valentine's Day gifts they planned to buy for their wives.

"This year I am buying my wife a diamond necklace and a Mercedes-Benz," the rich man said.

"Why are you buying her two gifts?" the poor man asked.

"Because," the rich man replied, "that way, if she doesn't like the diamond necklace, she can drive her Mercedes to the jewelry store to return it."

"Well," the poor man said, "I am getting my wife a pair of flip-flops and a dildo for Valentine's Day."

"Why are you buying her those gifts?" the rich man asked, intrigued.

"Because," the poor man replied, "that way, if she doesn't like the flip-flops, she can go fuck herself."

How do you make five pounds of fat look good? Put a nipple on it.

Two girlfriends were having lunch one day when one of them started to dish about her new husband.

"His penis is really small, but the sex is wonderful," she said.

"So," her friend said, "what you're saying is he's really rich."

"Exactly," the first woman replied.

The morning after attending a holiday work party, a man was lying in bed, nursing a terrible hangover, when his wife walked into the room.

"What happened last night?" he asked.

"As usual," his wife said, "you made an ass out of yourself in front of your boss."

"I did?" he replied. "Well, he's a jerk anyway, so piss on him."

"You did," his wife said, "and he fired you."

"Well, then screw him!" the husband yelled.

"I did," his wife said, "and you go back to work tomorrow morning."

What do politicians and diapers have in common? They should both be changed regularly, and for the same reason.

In an attempt to spice things up in the bedroom, a sexually frustrated wife decided to purchase a pair of crotchless panties. That evening she put them on underneath a short skirt, sat on the couch across from her husband and crossed and uncrossed her legs whenever he looked her way. After several minutes of this, her husband finally asked, "Are you wearing crotchless panties?"

"Yes," she answered seductively.

"Oh, thank goodness," he replied. "I thought you were sitting on the cat."

What do you see when the Pillsbury Doughboy bends over? Doughnuts.



An attractive woman was sitting alone at a bar when a man approached her and asked if he could buy her a drink.

"I'm sorry," the woman said, "but I have a boyfriend."

"Really?" the man replied. "I have a goldfish."

"What does that have to do with anything?" the woman asked.

"Oh, I'm sorry," the man said. "I thought we were talking about stuff that doesn't matter."

Our Unabashed Dictionary defines *getting your head above water* as receiving a blow job on a boat.

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



"Ready, everyone? Uh-one, uh-two...."



THE BERSERKER* OKEY TOWN

IN THE NHL, AN ENFORCER IS A PAID HIT MAN. THE GUY WHOSE JOB IT IS TO THROW AND TAKE PUNCHES FOR THE TEAM. NOBODY DID IT BETTER THAN AN ALCOHOLIC BRUISER NAMED BOB PROBERT, AND NOBODY PAID A HIGHER PRICE.

THE HARD LIFE AND HIGH TIMES OF HOCKEY'S ULTIMATE ASSASSIN
BY HEVIN COOH

Like many teenagers from the hard-luck town of Windsor, Ontario—which looks out over a dark gray river at the even harder-luck city of Detroit—Bob Probert left home at the age of 17 with little money and a big dream: to play for the Detroit Red Wings someday. He was headed 150 miles northeast to Wayne Gretzky's hometown of Brantford to suit up for the Alexanders, a junior club of the Ontario Hockey League. The gritty OHL was known for producing a certain brand of player: "enforcers," "goons," guys valued more for their fists than their ability to put the puck in the net.

Three years later, on November 6, 1985, Probert debuted in a Red Wings uniform at Joe Louis Arena. He realized his dream at 20, but his rise had just begun. By the time he retired, at the age of 37, he had become the greatest enforcer of the NHL's modern age, an era of blood and controversy, "the golden age of goons." Because of his pugilistic gifts, he found himself at the center of the game's glaring controversy: Why does the league allow players to commit acts of violence—in front of thousands—that would earn them prison sentences if they occurred off the ice? All the while Probert helped lead the lousiest team in the NHL—the "Detroit Dead Wings"—out of a 20-year drought and into a renaissance that morphed the city into what it is today: Hockeytown.

Probert paid a price for his fame. The warrior had a dark side. After numerous drunk-driving incidents he was busted for smuggling cocaine across the border in his underpants—Tasered, suspended, disgraced. But the NHL relented, and its top enforcer was soon back on skates, more intimidating than ever. When he died unexpectedly at the age of 45 last summer, the men he bloodied mercilessly were the pallbearers at his funeral. What greater honor could be bestowed on a man who left everything on the ice?

It all started with the Brantford Alexanders. Probert's father, Windsor police sergeant Al Probert, had died of a heart attack six days before the teenager left home—an ominous beginning.

JOE KOCUR, Red Wings teammate: Probie was 17, going off to his first training camp. He lost the one guy who might have straightened

*BERSERKER (N): A FEARLESS NORSE WARRIOR OF THE MIDDLE AGES WHO FOUGHT IN A TRANCE-LIKE RAGE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MIND-ALTERING SUBSTANCES.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ZACHARY JAMES JOHNSTON



Some connoisseurs of hockey fights consider Bob Probert vs. Tie Domi (December 2, 1992) to be the greatest of all time. "The buildup was like a heavyweight title fight," recalls ESPN's Steve Levy.

U.S. CUSTOMS AGENTS STRIP-SEARCHED PROBERT AND FOUND 14 GRAMS OF COCAINE HIDDEN IN HIS UNDERWEAR.

him out. He starting hanging with the wrong crowd.

BOB DUFF, columnist, *Windsor Star*: Off he goes to play juniors, thinking about his dead father. Sault Ste. Marie got him from Brantford, and those guys were into a party lifestyle—a lot of drinking, cocaine.... And Bob was more of a follower than a leader.

DAN PARKINSON, Probert's father-in-law: Did his risk-taking stem back to his father's death? His father was a police sergeant, and Bob always had a fascination with policing. He came from a police family and joined another one when he later married my daughter—I'm police chief of Cornwall, Ontario. It's interesting...with his personal difficulties he was never going to be in law enforcement, but he became an enforcer in hockey. Maybe that was as close as he could get to police work.

DUFF: When the Red Wings passed on him in the second round of the 1983 draft, Bob was crushed. But he lasted till the third round and then heard his name: "The Detroit Red Wings select Bob Probert." This was his dream come true.

In the early 1980s the Detroit Red Wings owner, Bruce Norris, sold the club after

more than 30 years of family ownership to Mike Ilitch, founder of Little Caesars Pizza. The team had recently moved from the Olympia Stadium into Joe Louis Arena. In that 1983 draft, the Wings selected three players who would change the course of the team forever—a young scorer named Steve Yzerman and a pair of forwards, Joe Kocur and Bob Probert, whom the fans dubbed "the Bruise Brothers." At the end of Probert's first season in Detroit, the Red Wings had the worst record in the NHL. Yet the team was among the league leaders in penalty minutes. The following season the team made the playoffs and won a playoff series for only the second time in 17 seasons. The player the fans loved to watch was not the guy scoring the most goals but the man whose style of play captured the imagination of the city. In low-down Detroit, here was a man who was going to fight back and win.

DUFF: The 1980s were a tough time in Detroit. Factories were closing and the franchise was teetering. They were practically giving tickets away.

BARRY MELROSE, former NHL player and head coach, now with ESPN: It wasn't Hockeytown yet. Detroit was depressed and depressing. The Tigers weren't winning. The Lions were no good. You'd look up and see 4,000 or 5,000 fans at Red Wings games, in an arena that seated more than 20,000.

DUFF: The Dead Wings were the laughingstock of the league. Other than Yzerman, they weren't a skilled bunch. **KOSTYA KENNEDY**, senior writer at *Sports Illustrated*: And it was the age of Wayne Gretzky—you've got Gretzky gliding around, making everybody else look like a statue.

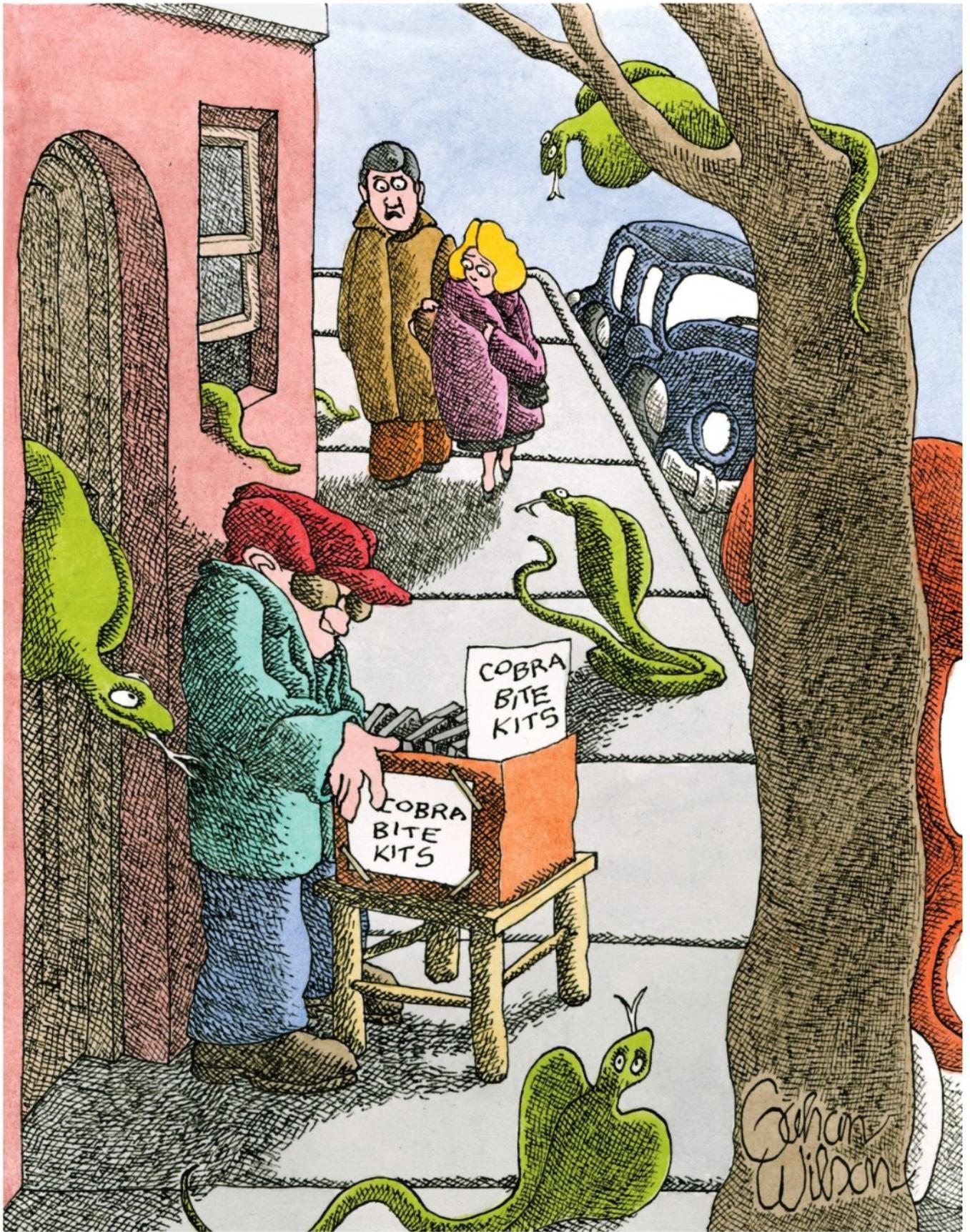
DUFF: So the Red Wings built a team that was excessively tough. That's how they fought back, and people in Detroit love that kind of hockey. It's a

blue-collar town, a workingman's town where skilled players aren't adored the same way the fighters are. When Red Wings fans talk about Gordie Howe, one of the most talented players ever, they talk about his toughness. Guys like Probert and Kocur really fit that tradition, which is one reason they're still remembered so fondly. Another reason, of course, is that they started winning. Today Detroit is the franchise everyone in hockey knows and admires. Those late-1980s teams were the ones that turned things around.

KOCUR: We came to compete. Everybody was a battler, and the fans responded. The city went wild for us. It's not like New York, where people don't recognize the hockey players. In Detroit, the Red Wings were royalty. When the team's doing bad, it's like a dark cloud over everything. But when you're winning—winning games, winning fights—they treat you great.

KENNEDY: Suddenly the Wings got good, partly because they had the most feared enforcer. Probert was a big man, six-three and about 230 pounds, but he didn't loom in the locker room. This gladiator, the guy who does the fighting for his teammates, taking punches in the face for the team, had a kind of sad look. Off the ice he was humble, never braggadocious or chest-thumping. This was hockey with a human face, a bruised human face, with those top front teeth missing. You knew he'd played through all kinds of pain and infinite hangers without complaining.

TONY TWIST, NHL enforcer, 1989–1999: Bob Probert became the measuring stick for the league, a gunslinger who never ducked a fight. Guys like me, who weren't as talented, figured it was an honor to fight him. We battled eight or nine times. With him you were in it for the long haul. *(continued on page 104)*



"So now we know who let loose all the snakes!"

THE

ICEMAN COMETH

2011 FASHION INSPIRED BY THE
HEROES WHO FORMED THE GOLDEN AGE
OF MOUNTAINEERING

STILL LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY BY
ZACHARY JAMES JOHNSTON

FASHION BY
JENNIFER RYAN JONES

STORY BY
STEVE GARBARINO



JIM
WHITTAKER
SUMMITTING
EVEREST
IN 1963.

GENTLEMEN MOUNTAINEERS had a peak moment in the 1950s and 1960s. These brave, educated, mostly upper-class fellows—some of them war heroes—traversed the world’s highest summits, such as the Himalayas’ Mount Everest, exhibiting timeless panache in the process. Englishmen Alfred Gregory and Colonel John Hunt and New Zealander Edmund Hillary were part of the first expedition to conquer Everest (1953), while Jim Whittaker was the first American to scale the mountain (1963) and stab a bayonet-like flag into its ice-capped top. Why chance life to reach the peak? As famed mountaineer George Mallory put it, “Because it is there.” In 2011 we see a resurgence in sturdy but stylish threads inspired by mountaineering’s golden age. Here are some of the goods and a nod to those sartorial summiteers of yesteryear.

ALFRED GREGORY AND COLONEL JOHN HUNT



Alfred Gregory (center), who wore now-coveted custom-made engraved Rolex watches, and Colonel John Hunt (far right) on their 1953 Everest expedition.



ABOVE LEFT Plaid flannel shirt, \$39, and buffalo-check shirt, \$49, by Woolrich. **ABOVE RIGHT** Vest, \$125, intarsia zip-front sweater, \$495, and plaid shirt, \$125, by Polo Ralph Lauren. **LEFT** Heated gloves, \$200, by Gerbing’s. Outland gloves, \$60, and UC Gore gloves, \$70, by Kombi.



LEFT Mountaineering glasses, from top: Micro-pores, \$140, Drus, \$92, and Sherpa, \$45, by Julbo. **RIGHT** Fair Isle sweaters, from left: Wool, \$245, by Polo Ralph Lauren; Nordic, \$145, by Vineyard Vines; 125th Anniversary, \$299, by Dale of Norway.



EDMUND HILLARY

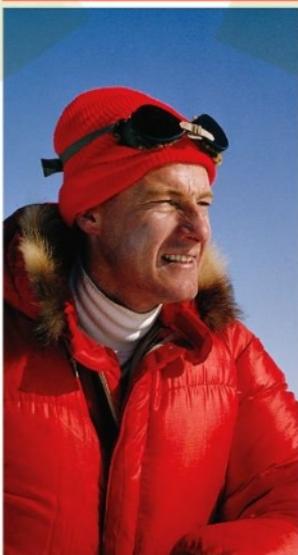


Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, before establishing Camp IX below Everest's South Summit in 1953. The pair were the first to conquer the mountain, on May 29, 1953.



WHY? "BECAUSE IT IS THERE."

JIM WHITTAKER



Jim Whittaker on Mount Kennedy in the Yukon Territory in 1965. Whittaker helped guide Robert Kennedy up the newly named summit two years after JFK's assassination.



ABOVE Kara Koram parka, \$269, and Sportsman wool sweater, \$79, by Eddie Bauer. Slaata scarf, \$74, by Dale of Norway. Explorer sunglasses, \$120, by Julbo.



ABOVE Core Extreme Everest Edition watch, \$429, by Suunto. **BELOW** Wilderness boots, \$300, by Merrell. Rogan hiker, \$298, by the Frye Company. Nordic hiker, \$120, by Timberland. Socks, \$29, by Robert Graham.



THE YEAR

The best in breaking up, busting out

TIGER CONFESSES TO 120 AFFAIRS

But he won't admit fling with neighbor's daughter that ended marriage for good



Shoulda left my wood in the bag!

HOW MANY CHICKS DID THE WOODS STUD FUCK?

Misbehaving athletes, chief among them Tiger Woods, hogged the headlines in 2010. His wife, Elin Nordegren (1), dumped him after having a screaming match about his affairs with, it would later be alleged, ex-porn star Joslyn James (2); L.A. cocktail waitress Jaimee Grubbs (3); Florida cougar Theresa Rogers (4); ex-New York nightclub manager Rachel Uchitel (5); porn star Holly Sampson (6), who claimed she nailed him during his bachelor party; Orlando cocktail waitress Julie Postle (7); Vegas model Jamie Jungers (8); call girl Loredana Jolie Ferriolo (9); and working girl and self-styled porn queen Devon James (10), who staged a fake sex tape with an unwitting Woods impersonator.



No passes to this tight end!

COOL YOUR JETS

Shapely TV Azteca reporter Inés Sainz found herself the butt of New York Jets teasing, sparking an NFL probe into the team's locker room antics.



DUKE'S HAZARD

In her "senior honors thesis," Karen Owen rated the performance of fellow Duke students—mostly athletes—she'd bedded; it became a web sensation.



TOO MANY WOMEN ON THE FIELD

Ex-Giant Tiki Barber lost his *Today* show gig when he left his wife, Ginny (inset)—then eight months pregnant with twins—for former intern Traci Lynn Johnson. Ginny had him blocked from the delivery room.



R I N S E X

t and spreading the love. Plus: jocks gone wild



I blanket my receivers.

EIGHT ISN'T ENOUGH

Jets cornerback Antonio Cromartie has some amazing stats: He has sired nine children in six states by eight different women—one of whom is his new wife, Terrika Cason (above).

NO SCORE

Karen Sypher was convicted of trying to extort \$10 million from Louisville coach Rick Pitino for an alleged quickie and subsequent abortion. Final numbers for Karen: \$0, 26 years in prison?



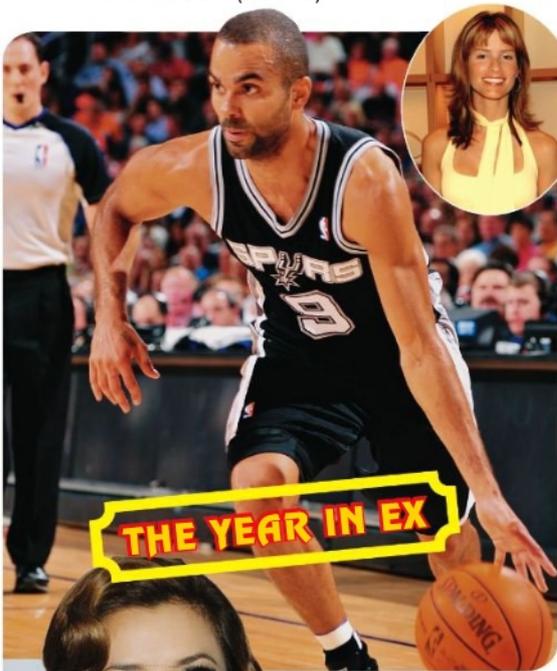
GESUNDHEIT!

Some 14,000 people showed up to watch naked sledding in Braunlage, Germany, causing epic traffic jams.



HOW ABOUT THEM VUVUZELAS?

Scandals nearly overshadowed noisemakers at 2010's World Cup. When Dutch porn star Bobbi Eden (1) vowed to blow Twitter fans if the Netherlands won, her followers jumped from 4,300 to 60,000. Zahia Dehar (2) starred in an underage sex scandal involving French players, and Larissa Riquelme (3) promised to run naked if Paraguay won. It didn't, but she ran anyway.



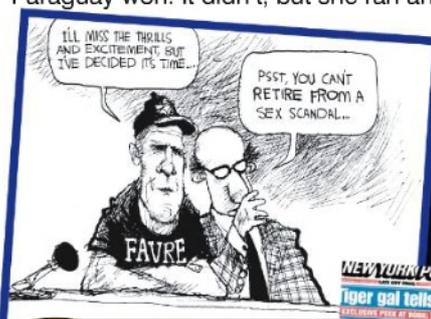
THE YEAR IN EX

REAL HOUSEWIVES OF THE NBA?

When *Desperate Housewives* star Eva Longoria filed for divorce from San Antonio Spurs point guard Tony Parker, the rumor mill



Wanna see the naked bootleg?



INCOMPLETE PASS

Sports personality Jenn Sterger posed for PLAYBOY in 2006, and there was much rejoicing. Brett Favre allegedly sent Jenn pictures of his junk, and sports fans said, "Eww." Favre copped to leaving voice mails but denied the pics.



quickly blamed the split on his flirtation with Erin Barry (inset), the estranged wife of former teammate Brent Barry. Official press releases ensued. Parker claims the relationship never went beyond sexting.

THE YEAR IN GAGA

THE YEAR IN SEX



Surf's up!



LADY TATAS
Lady Gaga thrilled fans and nonfans alike by bodysurfing at Chicago's Lollapalooza, posing for magazines and even warbling at New York's Plaza Hotel in a barely there costume during an impromptu Oak Room appearance.

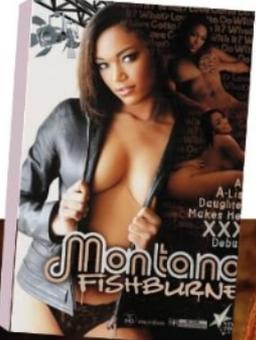
MISS EPIDERMIS

Pageant purists had fits over photos of Miss USA Rima Fakih and other Miss Universe hopefuls in body paint, released as part of a promotional effort.



POLITICS, UKRAINIAN STYLE

Ukrainian feminists resorted to stripping for women's rights and other causes. "We started out being dressed, but we found nobody took any notice," a topless protester said.



WELL, IT WORKED FOR PARIS
Reasoning that sex tapes boost careers, Montana Fishburne horrified her dad, CSI actor Laurence, by marketing a porn video.



AY, THERE'S THE RUB

No sooner had Al and Tipper Gore split than masseuse Molly Hagerty accused him, via the *National Enquirer*, of sexual assault in a Portland, Oregon hotel. She saved and later presented her pants as evidence, but they didn't pass the Monica Lewinsky test.



PRICKS ON PARADE



AY, THERE'S ANOTHER RUB

Art curators for the Time Warner Center mall in Manhattan have to keep retouching the eye-level penis on this giant sculpture by Fernando Botero: Passersby rub the organ for good luck, wearing off the patina.

HIP HIP HYPOCRISY!

Proving he still enjoys a good wedge issue—and despite his recent donations to antigay politicians—ex-GOP National Committee chairman Ken Mehlman came out of the closet.



PLEASE DON'T TOUCH THE EXHIBIT

This nude on a bicycle seat, the restaged 1997 showstopper *Luminosity*, aroused interest at the Museum of Modern Art's retrospective of performance artist Marina Abramović's thought-provoking works.



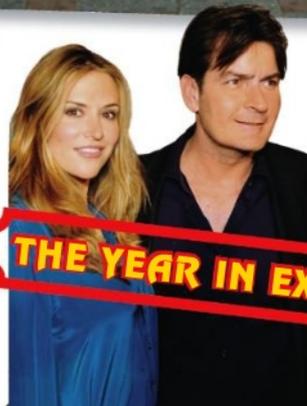
HANGIN' OUT WITH THE GUYS

For a fashion spread, GQ came up with the idea of "Pantless Saturdays!" The pixelated models are Jason Schwartzman, Michael Cera and Chris Evans.

ONE NIGHT AT THE PLAZA: SEVEN GRAND

Bad boy Charlie Sheen, fearing porn star Capri Anderson had heisted his wallet, trashed his Plaza Hotel room to the tune of \$7,000 while she locked herself in the john.

Days later he moved to divorce wife number three, Brooke Mueller.



THE YEAR IN EX



WHO SAID WHAT?

Various celebrities had some surprising things to say about their (and others') sexual proclivities and beliefs. See if you can match the personality to the quote:

- "I've explored obsession...strange, sexual fetish stuff."
- "I have a great ass, if I may say so."
- "Who would want to be with the same person for 80 years?"
- "Women like bad boys. That's been my experience."
- "I want to be a MILF."
- "I love to show my rear end in roles."
- "I'm not averse to being tied up with silk scarves."
- "I don't think [monogamy] is realistic."



A. Kate Hudson



B. Eva Longoria



C. Cindy Crawford



D. Alec Baldwin



E. Cameron Diaz



F. Gerard Butler



G. Nicole Kidman



H. Jude Law

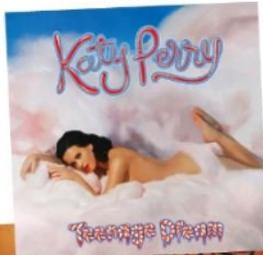
ANSWERS:

1. G; 2. D; 3. E; 4. H; 5. C; 6. F; 7. B; 8. A.

THE YEAR IN SEX

OUR KIND OF WORLD RECORD

To raise funds for breast cancer care, 102 bare-naked volunteers in an English amusement park roller-coastered their way to a Guinness World Records title.



JIGGLE ME ELMO
A duet between Elmo and sexy singer Katy Perry was deemed too cleavagey by Sesame Street bigs, who axed it. Katy fought back by putting her boobs in Elmo's face on *Saturday Night Live*.



THE YEAR IN KENDRA



THE MOM NEXT DOOR

How does she do it? New mom Kendra Wilkinson shrugged off a sex tape, starred on her own show, left husband Hank Baskett and his fellow Vikings' chilly Minnesota for L.A. and wrote a book—providing inspiration for mothers and fantasies for dads.



TICKLE ME ERIC

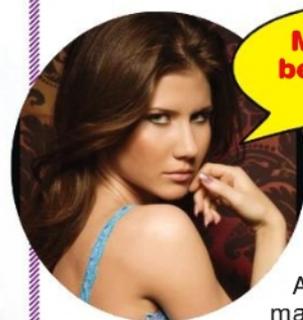
After various allegations from housemates and others, Democratic congressman Eric "Salty" Massa maintained that tickling male staffers and "snorkeling" former Navy shipmates was good clean fun. (You know, snorkeling—what you do is you take the guy's scrotum and....) Then he resigned.



DIESEL DO JUST FINE, THANKS

Brooklyn Law School officials got caught with their pants down when they thought Diesel was filming a jeans ad in the campus library—and were none too pleased to discover jeans-less models poring over their legal briefs.

Save these girls from dole queue



My heart belongs to Vlady.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVIN'

Spy hottie Anna Chapman returned from her compromised duty in the U.S. to a heroine's welcome and a Vladimir Putin sing-along in Russia—and within days a topless action figure hit the international market.



HIP HIP HYPOCRISY II

Virulently antigay Georgia bishop Eddie Long faces charges of sexually abusing four of his young male protégés. We hear the Vatican sent him a fruit basket.

WHY THE TORIES WON

When female Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders called for outlawing Page 3 girls, *The Sun* counterattacked with an appeal to vote Tory. No welfare checks for these birds.



WANTED: JESSE JAMES, BOOTY BANDIT

Sandra Bullock (1) left her biker spouse Jesse James by the side of the road when she learned he'd allegedly been balling tattoo artist Kat Von D (2), stripper Melissa Smith (3), tattoo model Michelle "Bombshell" McGee (4), photographer Brigitte Daguerre (5) and, it's reported, half a dozen other classy types. Nice try, J.J., but you're no Tiger Woods.

THE YEAR IN ASHLEY

ELIOT WHO?

She'll always be linked to Eliot Spitzer, but Ashley Dupré is blazing new trails—landing a gig as columnist for the *New York Post* and earning her real estate license. Best of all, she posed for *PLAYBOY*.

Looking for a hot property?



THE YEAR IN SEX

But wait... there's more!

ATTENTION, HAMID KARZAI

A naked woman jumped onto the roof of a London taxi that was stopped at a traffic light near the



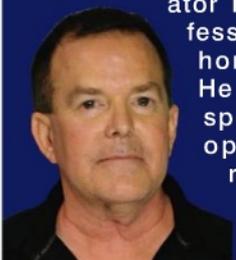
Houses of Parliament and staged a five-minute "yoga protest" against the war in Afghanistan (as if her behavior needed any explanation). Meanwhile, the war continued, and the unpaid cabbie was not amused.

CRASH AND RAZOR BURN

Despite having her license stripped and her car ordered impounded for drunk driving the day before, 37-year-old Megan Mariah Barnes was tooling down U.S. Highway 1 in her 1995 Thunderbird en route to Key West, where she planned to meet her lover. Wanting to be ready for the date, she started shaving her privates—as her ex-husband, in the passenger seat, reached over to grab the wheel. What could go wrong? The state trooper who investigated the ensuing 45 mph rear-end collision with a pickup truck observed, "I'm really starting to believe this stuff only happens in the Keys."

HIP HIP HYPOCRISY III

Arrested for DUI outside a gay nightclub, California state senator Roy Ashburn fessed up to his homosexuality. He said he had spent 15 years opposing gay rights because voters didn't want them.



FALLING, FALLING IN LOVE

Dumbstruck neighbors in Lübeck, Germany noticed a couple so in the throes of passion that they fell out a first-floor apartment window. It gets better: The lovers were taken to the same hospital where the woman's husband was recovering from an earlier fall from a roof.

LOCATION, LOCATION

Right where Russian secret service agents couldn't miss it, radical artists in St. Petersburg protested security measures by painting a 220-foot-long penis on the Liteiny Bridge designed to rise whenever the bridge opened.

TOO SEXY FOR THE CITI

Debrahlee Lorenzana claimed Citibank fired her because, forbidden to wear pencil skirts, turtlenecks and three-inch heels, she still looked too hot.

THAT'S PRETTY CHEESY

Tastier than Viagra? Brewmasters at Austria's Brauerei Egg have come up with a beer laced with whey, which they claim can help sexual performance.

HAS HE BEEN DRINKING CHEESY BEER?

So randy is the London Zoo's 70-year-old Galápagos tortoise that keepers have named him Dirty Dirk, for the *Boogie Nights* character Dirk Diggler. His mates prefer to remain nameless.



WE'VE HEARD ABOUT THE TWINKIE DEFENSE. HOW ABOUT THE BLANKIE DEFENSE?

In Bloomington, Illinois, Mathew Nelson was acquitted of sexual assault because it happened while he was sleepwalking.

NO-FAULT OFFENSE

After Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad warned that an earthquake might hit Tehran, senior cleric Hojatolislam Kazem Sedighi announced that such tremors are caused by scantily clad women. "What can we do to avoid being buried under the rubble?" Sedighi asked. "There is no other solution but to take refuge in religion and to adapt our lives to Islam's moral codes."

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

Miffed that Oracle exec Charles Phillips was returning to his wife, spurned mistress YaVaughnie Wilkins put up billboards of her and her erstwhile lover in New York, San Francisco and Atlanta.



SEX STILL SELLS

Shoes aren't the first thing we notice in this ad, which features Sean Lennon's model girlfriend Charlotte Kemp Muhl, but that's what footwear designer Sam Edelman is actually hawking. Now do you see them?

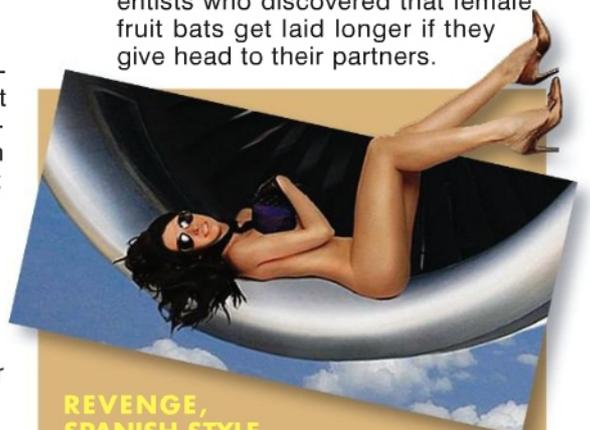
HI THERE, YOUR HOLINESS

A visiting Pope Benedict XVI was due to pass this statue on a roundabout in Luqa, Malta on the way from the airport, so Mayor John Schembri requested its removal. Too phallic for the pontiff? Nah—local artist Paul Vella Critien's work, which had been standing there since 2006, stayed, and the Holy Father attended to more serious matters: a meeting on priestly pedophilia.



WE'RE NOT SURPRISED

This year's Ig Nobel Prize went to a team of British and Chinese scientists who discovered that female fruit bats get laid longer if they give head to their partners.



REVENGE, SPANISH STYLE

Flight attendants of grounded Spanish carrier Air Comet claimed they hadn't been paid for nine months. So they took the only logical step: posing for a nude calendar to draw attention to their pecuniary plight. ¡OÍÉ!



"So...do you ever play any games that aren't on the computer?"

20Q

BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MATTHIAS CLAMER

★ AZIZ ★

ANSARI

THE UNLIKELY SOUTHERNER AND *PARKS AND RECREATION* GOOFBALL CLAIMS HE TRUMPS ROB LOWE IN THE LOOKS DEPARTMENT, VOWS NEVER TO SHAVE HIS BEARD AND SINGS THE PRAISES OF FRIED CHICKEN AND BISCUITS

Q1

PLAYBOY: On *Parks and Recreation* you play a small-town government employee named Tom Haverford. Like you, Tom is from South Carolina, and despite being Indian, he calls himself a redneck. Do you consider yourself a redneck?

ANSARI: I prefer to think of myself as a Southerner. I definitely have a huge affinity for Southern food. Not so much the racial issues. It's a weird balance. We've got delicious fried chicken, *but* the Confederate flag also hangs outside the statehouse. That's a compromise I'm willing to make. If somebody said to me, "Every day you're gonna be called the *N* word, but you'll also get a delicious fried chicken leg and a biscuit," I'd be like, "I'll take that trade!"

Q2

PLAYBOY: Tom Haverford once admitted his real name is Darwish Sabir Ishmael Ghani. Were you ever tempted to change your name to something less ethnic?

ANSARI: Wouldn't that be a waste of time? Who would I be fooling? Nobody is looking at me and thinking, Hey, I totally believe that guy's name is Brian Henderson.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Tom has a pickup technique called "peacocking," in which he wears something ridiculous, such as a raccoon hat, to make women notice him. Is that just crazy enough

(continued on page 108)





FANTASY FOOTBALL

THE MIGHTY WOMEN OF THE LINGERIE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
LEAVE THEIR SHOULDER PADS AND LACE IN THE LOCKER ROOM.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

A word of warning: Dismiss the jockettes of the Lingerie Football League at your peril. Like Brian Urlacher, they have a healthy appetite for inflicting pain on those who cross their paths, and like Rex Ryan, they love to talk trash once they've knocked you out. (And yes, like Tom Brady, they're awfully pretty, too.) So forget everything you know about football and allow us to offer you the book on how to hang tough—for the next few pages at least—with these goddesses of the gridiron.

Rule #1: Don't underestimate their athletic prowess.

Ask any LFL player about the



biggest misconception of her league and you'll hear the same answer. "People think it's just a bunch of prissy girls playing two-hand touch," says Vanessa Sanchez of the San Diego Seduction. Allow her to clarify: "We like to look hot, but we like to hit people, too."

"It's real athletes playing real football," adds Ashley Helmstetter of the Miami Caliente. "It's not just inexperienced models running around pretending to tackle one another."

"Most men are shocked and ask a million questions," says the Baltimore Charm's Stephanie Rollis. That, in fact, is her personal litmus test. "Any man who knows me will respond, 'That's perfect for you!' because he knows I am obsessed with playing football."

BY LING MA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG

Just another pretty what? Clockwise from left: **STEPHANIE ROLLIS** (Baltimore Charm) and **JEANNETTE MCCOY** (Orlando Fantasy) were both avid basketball players in high school. McCoy recalls, "I worked hard on my crossover dribble and had a deadly jump shot."

Meanwhile, **ASHLEY HELMSTETTER** (Miami Caliente), **TANYKA RENEE** (Philadelphia Passion) and **MIKAYLA WINGLE** (Tampa Breeze) have played everything from baseball to lacrosse. "I even played peewee football for a year," says Helmstetter. "But that doesn't really count."





To which NFL player would **STEPHANIE ROLLIS** (left) compare herself? "Ed Reed, the best safety, who plays for the best team, the Baltimore Ravens." **ASHLEY HELM-STETTER** admires New Orleans tight end Jeremy Shockey. "He's an amazing athlete."



Of her ideal date, **TISHA MARIE** (Dallas Desire) says, “I would love to go to a NASCAR race. There would be orchids on arrival and champagne afterward.”

Rule #2: Know your LFL history.

The league originated with the Lingerie Bowl, a pay-per-view event first broadcast opposite the 2004 Super Bowl halftime show. Today the LFL has 10 teams in 10 cities—the Baltimore Charm, Chicago Bliss, Dallas Desire, Los Angeles Temptation, Miami Caliente, Orlando Fantasy, Philadelphia Passion, San Diego Seduction, Seattle Mist and Tampa Breeze. The games—seven-on-seven full-on tackle football played on a 50-yard field—currently air Friday nights on MTV2.



“My perfect date,” says **CHELSE JORGENSEN** (Seattle Mist), “would be to have a bubble bath with candles and bath salts ready for me when I come home.”

Rule #3: Get over the dress code.

“Everybody thinks we’re running around in tiny little nighties,” says Mikayla Wingle of the Tampa Breeze. Not that she wasn’t nervous when she first heard about the league-mandated attire: “I was like, ‘I’m going to be wearing *what?*’” But she relaxed when she actually saw the uniform, which is more Sports Authority than Frederick’s of Hollywood.

“Once people get past the lingerie part,” she says,



“they’re just fascinated with the fact that there are athletic women playing football—basically, a guy’s favorite thing to watch.”

Rule #4: Beware of their competitive fire.

LFL players may not be swaddled in as much padding as their NFL counterparts, but they still compete with the same reckless abandon. “It hurts, but when you go out there and you’re playing, you don’t feel it. You’re trying to kill each other!” says Tanyka Renee of the Philadelphia Passion. “Personally, I prefer to knock my girl down before she knocks me down.”



Rule #5: Give credit where credit is due.

When Chelsie Jorgensen of the Seattle Mist talks about her football exploits, most men are skeptical at best. “They don’t believe me. They say I’m too small to play professional football, but I explain that all the girls in the league are about my size.” Whatever jabs come her way, ultimately Jorgensen knows the score: “I wouldn’t play football if it wasn’t real football.”

Clockwise from top left: **NADIA LARYSA** (Chicago Bliss) adheres to a punishing workout that includes 30 minutes of swimming. Things are less serious in the locker room: “On game day we always start with a pillow fight,” jokes **VANESSA SANCHEZ** (San Diego Seduction), snapping a towel at **STEPHANIE NOEL** (Los Angeles Temptation). As for postgame plans, **MIKAYLA WINGLE** wants only one thing: “Sleep!”

"Off the field we're sisters," says **TANYKA RENEE** (right). "But on the field my motto is 'Hit or get hit!'" **JEANNETTE MCCOY** (left) agrees. "I'm always the smallest one on the line, but the aggression that comes out of me is like a lion protecting its pride."





See more Lingerie Football League
players at playboy.com/lfl.

Girls will be girls. From left: **TISHA MARIE** hosts an online book club that includes nonfiction relationship tomes. **CHELSIE JORGENSEN** is a self-professed sweets addict who dreams of raiding a candy shop and renting movies with a special someone: "We could sit in bed, cuddle and eat until our tummies hurt!" That's nothing compared with **STEPHANIE NOEL**, whose sweet tooth has

inspired a unique nickname. "My coaches don't call me Cupcakes for nothing. Seriously, I'm always talking about or baking cupcakes." After wearing cleats 30 hours a week at practice, **VANESSA SANCHEZ** can't wait to take them off and treat herself to a pedicure. And for **NADIA LARYSA** there's nothing better than a love story. "I love watching romantic comedies. Chances are I'll end up crying."



END OF RICO

(continued from page 58)

first tough guy it would never forget. Robinson states the credo out of the side of his mouth at the outset of the movie: "Be somebody. Look hard at a bunch of guys and know they'll do anything ya tell 'em. Have your own way or nothin'. Be somebody." As for affairs of the heart: "Love! Soft stuff." As for friendship: "This is what I get for likin' a guy too much," muttered when, in a rare moment of weakness, he backs off from shooting his closest, oldest friend, Joe. There were no such trepidations when it comes to killing the crime commissioner and others, one of whom he guns down on the steps of a church. But, of course, like all the tough guys who were to follow, he must fall in the end. When he does, it is with the unforgettable line, the last words of his last, bullet-ridden breath, "Mother of mercy, is this the end of Rico?"

As refined and gentle as he was in life, Robinson was, as Rico, the first of the great mythic tough guys. Not much to look at as far as glamour-boy movie stars went, but then again he wasn't one of those at all. He was the real thing, in a world where nothing was real. And from the corpse of Rico a greater evil rose, and the tough guys just got tougher.

Later in 1931 came James Cagney in William A. Wellman's *The Public Enemy*. Though Cagney could speak Yiddish, having grown up in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in New York, he was of Irish and Norwegian descent, and the tough guy he brought to life in *The Public Enemy* wasn't Italian, though he wasn't a Yid, either. His name, Tom Powers, was nondescript, but he was far from that. As Jean Harlow says to him, "You don't give. You take. Oh, Tommy, I could love you to death." He is a killer not only of men but of a racehorse to boot. This is the film in which he famously grimaces and smashes a grapefruit into his girlfriend Kitty's face. Like Robinson before, in the end he falls, meanly reflecting "I ain't so tough" while going down with a bullet in the back.

In Howard Hawks's *Scarface* of 1932, with a script by Ben Hecht based on a novel by Armitage Trail, we return to Jews playing Italians. Here the tough guy, Tony Camonte, is played by the former Yiddish stage actor Paul Muni. Even Tony's mother says of him "He's-a no good." Whether lighting a match off a cop's badge or pronouncing singular tough-guy wisdom during police questioning—"I don't know nothin', I don't see nothin', I don't hear nothin'. And when I do, I don't tell a cop"—Muni is the star here. But the really tough guy, the character in the background, is Tony's henchman, the deadly, taciturn, unsmiling, compulsively coin-flipping Guino Rinaldo, portrayed by a bit player, George Raft, whose performance in *Scarface* brought fame and fortune. Inevitably, Tony goes down. The picture has two endings: In the original,

he falls to a barrage of lawmen's bullets; in the alternate, he is sentenced to death by the ostensibly more civilized judicial process—but not before murdering his right-arm man, Guino.

Born and raised in Hell's Kitchen by a father of German descent and a mother from Little Italy, Raft was the first Italian-blooded movie tough guy. He was also the first tough guy whose looks and bearing attracted women. Above all, he was the only tough guy who was actually mobbed up, with friends who included Bugsy Siegel, Al Capone, Frank Costello, Vito Genovese and other shadowland characters. The FBI maintained a file on Raft for more than 20 years. He was one of a kind.

From *Scarface* and Raft 15 years pass, to 1947, before we encounter the next tough-guy breakthrough: Burt Lancaster in *Brute Force*, directed by Jules Dassin and produced by Mark Hellinger, who had also, the year before, produced *The Killers*, in which, as the Swede, Lancaster is tough in his fatalism but doomed to be undone by a "double-crossing dame." Except for a series of brief scenes played out in the memories of Lancaster and his cell mates, *Brute Force* is set wholly within the walls of a prison whose corrupt, oppressive government so brilliantly and subtly reflects that of the outside world that the movie illuminates everything the tough guy is against by his very nature. And through the ruthless will of Lancaster, as Joe Collins, we experience the caged-animal desire to escape from the evils of the cage to the evils of society. As he says after emerging from solitary and being asked if he's okay, "Nothin's okay. It never was and never will be—not till we're out. Get that? Out." Collins never makes it, but he does manage to kill the warden before he himself is killed. As the prison croaker, Dr. Walters, observes in the movie's last spoken words, "Nobody escapes. Nobody ever really escapes."

No other picture comes closer to vindicating the tough guy and indicting the world, to which he is anathema and which is anathema to him. And no one could've asserted and embodied the vicious hatred at the heart of the tough guy better than Lancaster.

Henry Hathaway's *Kiss of Death*, with a screenplay by Ben Hecht and Charles Lederer, appeared within months. Though Victor Mature was the star here, as tough guy turned rat Nick Bianco, it was a newcomer to the pictures, Richard Widmark, as meaner-than-mean Tommy Udo, who stole the show in a wider-than-wide-brimmed fedora and dark shirt and pale tie, adapted from the bold sartorial brushstroke of George Raft, who is reputed to have been the first guy without a Seeing Eye dog to wear a black shirt and white tie. Whether killing an old lady—"ya lyin' old hag"—by shoving her down the stairs in her wheelchair or countering every threat with the smarmiest, most sinister snicker ever heard, Tommy Udo was the first tough guy without any hint of a

soft spot for anyone or anything, the first tough guy who neither folded nor allowed the slightest intimation of redemption to desecrate his life or his death.

Within another few months came Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past*, starring Robert Mitchum. Like Lancaster as the Swede in *The Killers*, Mitchum, as Jeff Bailey, is tough enough, but—"How big a chump can you get to be? I was finding out"—he falls for the "soft stuff" in the form of Jane Greer as Kathie, who is tougher than he and every other hard guy in the picture and who in the end shoots him dead.

Nineteen forty-nine offered Robert Siodmak's *Cross Cross*, in which Burt Lancaster, as Steve Thompson, delivers his interior monologue on love: "A man eats an apple, gets a piece of the core stuck between his teeth, ya know? He tries to work it out, some cellophane off a cigarette pack. What happens? The cellophane gets stuck in there too. Ah, what was the use?" The real tough guy here is Dan Duryea as Slim Dundee, who kills both Steve and the stuff stuck between his teeth, the ever duplicitous Anna, played by Yvonne De Carlo.

Then straightaway came Cagney again, taking it all a step further as Cody Jarrett in Raoul Walsh's *White Heat*. This is the one everyone knows—or should know. Previous tough-guy movies included the presence of a loving mother or maternal figure, or that of a Good Woman, or both. (The avaricious old Italian lady Ma Magdalena, who provides a hideout, at a price, in the back of her fruit store for Rico in *Little Caesar*, is the rare exception.) Here, in *White Heat*, Ma is every bit as evil as her son, who is the sort of guy who, when a hostage in his car trunk begs for air, riddles the trunk with lethal gunfire, saying, "Stuffy, huh? I'll give ya a little air." To clarify things for the moviegoer, a cop comments on Cody's "psychopathic devotion" to his mother. Equaling Ma in evil is Cody's unfaithful wife, Verna—whom he kicks off a stool for making a crack about his mother—who disposes of Ma by shooting her in the back while Cody is doing a stretch. (It's interesting that this picture was based on a story by a woman, Virginia Kellogg.) After Ma is in the ground, Cody asks the undercover rat who will bring him down if the rat's mother is still alive, saying, "I was just walkin' around out there talkin' to mine," then asking threateningly, "That sound funny to you?" Then, reflecting on this unholy communion with his dead Ma, he muses calmly, "Maybe I am nuts." But Ma is with him until the end, when, atop a refinery oil tank, he blows it and himself to hell with the cry "Made it, Ma! Top of the world!"

Cagney followed in 1950 with Gordon Douglas's *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye*, based on Horace McCoy's novel. As Ralph Cotter he more than lives up to a prosecutor's description of him as "the most evil man of all," scheming his way through a world of corrupt lawmen and a murderous

Don Madden



"Oh, good! I was afraid we'd be too late for happy hour."

broad—whom he whips with a wet towel and who in the end shoots him dead.

The Big Heat of 1953 is certainly not to be remembered for its star, Glenn Ford, who plays a fucking cop, or for the character of the crime boss Mike Lagana, who dwells beneath a portrait of his mom, but for Lee Marvin as henchman Vince Stone, who, like Richard Widmark in *Kiss of Death*, blows everybody else away by bringing new dimension to the figure of the tough guy, assaulting his dame—“You lyin’ pig!”—and disfiguring her with scalding coffee. But, alas, as ever, that lie called justice triumphs in the end.

Almost nine years later, in early 1962, the culmination of it all: J. Lee Thompson’s *Cape Fear*, based on and bettering John D. MacDonald’s 1958 novel *The Executioners*. It is here that Robert Mitchum, as Max Cady, recently released from prison after eight years, four months and 13 days, comes to wreak retribution on the lawyer, played by Gregory Peck, whose testimony robbed his life of those years, months and

days. Mitchum (who, like Raft, had served time in the real world) is Cady, evil incarnate, and he can express it through his eyes and tone of voice like no other actor who ever lived. The only light moment in this picture is when Mitchum, being strip-searched, stands there in his boxer shorts and panama hat advising a cop, “Hey, you better check that shirt. I got a couple jolts of horse stashed under the collar.” It’s light only because all else is so relentlessly dark. His terrorizing of Peck and his family includes intimations of the rape of Peck’s wife and adolescent daughter, and of things even more unspeakable and unimaginable. When Peck tries to buy him off, the words Mitchum delivers on the meaning of just value constitute the alpha and omega of what the tough guy represents. It could go no further than this, and it would not.

Some of the earliest tough-guy movies had been framed in cheap hypocrisy. *Little Caesar* opens with a title card quoting that Jesus jive from Matthew 26:52: “For all that take up the sword shall perish by it.” *Scarface*

presents itself as an “indictment of gang rule” and “of the callous indifference of the government,” going on to remind us—the big imposture—that we, the people, are the government. The only thing that renders *Cape Fear* imperfect as the last and ultimate tough-guy movie, aside from the ending, in which Peck kills Mitchum rather than the other way round, is that there is no antithetical framing to give voice to its true message, such as the removal of the word *false* from the Ninth Commandment, revising it simply to “Thou shalt not bear witness against thy neighbor.” Or more meaningfully, “He that bears witness is a rat.” But then again, we’re talking about the movies.

So where have all the tough guys gone? Mitchum and Lancaster sang beautiful swan songs to them: the former in *The Friends of Eddie Coyle*, Peter Yates’s 1973 adaptation of George V. Higgins’s great novel of that name; and the latter in Louis Malle’s *Atlantic City* of 1981. Brian De Palma and Al Pacino looked back in anger at what had been lost in their *Scarface* of 1983. Malcolm McDowell paid lovely tribute from across the sea in Paul McGuigan’s *Gangster No. 1* of 2000. But it was true: It was the end of Rico.

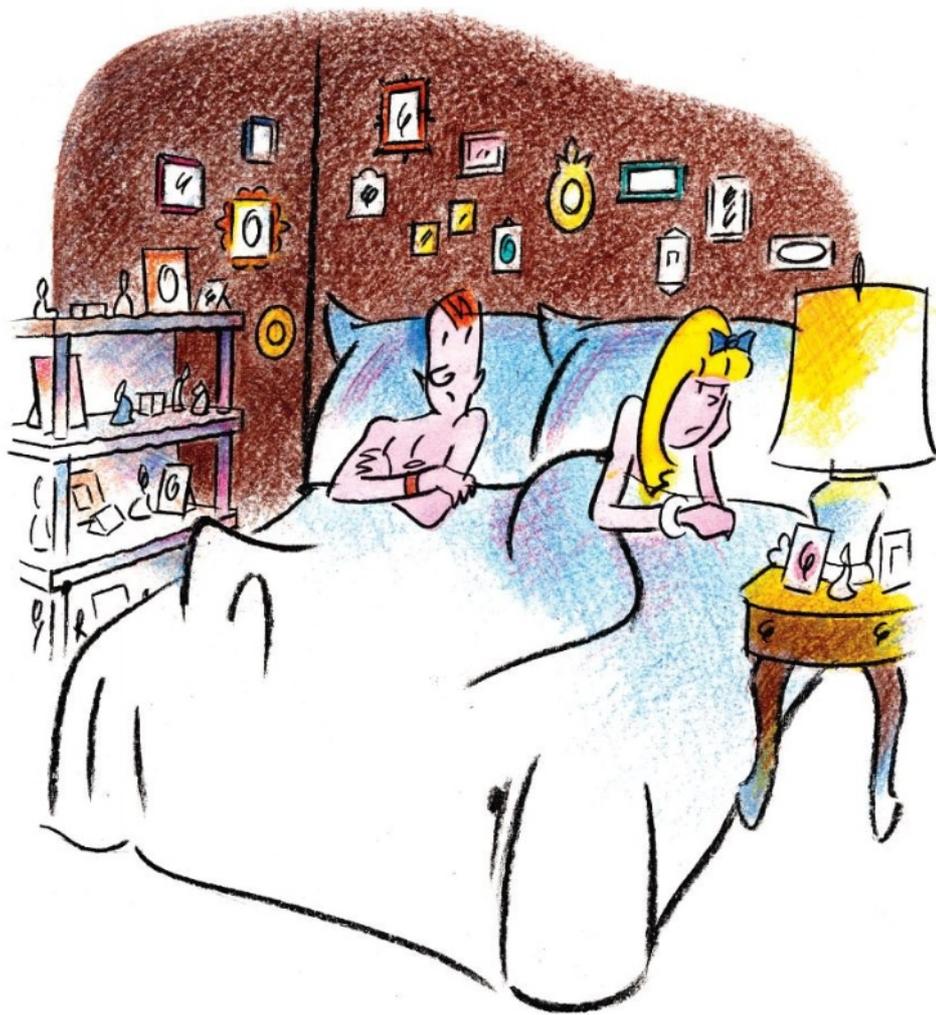
The Godfather appeared 10 years after *Cape Fear*. I remember laughing with Mario Puzo over the far-fetched fabulist nature of his novel—everything from his reinvention of the word *godfather* as an underworld term to the ridiculous codes of ethics by which his make-believe tough guys abided. Yet this grand entertainment became the new paradigm of the yuppie tough-guy manqué. Fifteen years later, Vito Corleone had been replaced by Gordon Gekko.

Most tough guys smoked and drank. Many who saw *Casino Royale* of 2006 may have noticed that, while Ian Fleming’s James Bond smoked 60 cigarettes a day, the James Bond portrayed otherwise quite well by Daniel Craig did not smoke at all.

What had happened? Gangsters who lived by Sunday-school codes of morality? Toff arbitrageur swindlers as enemies of the establishment, when in fact they were the establishment? Rogue secret agents with licenses to kill but careful not to inflict the dangers of secondary smoke? These guys embodied the lie of morality as embraced by the world, not its sworn enemies. A politically correct tough guy is no tough guy at all.

Adolescents—the ADHD (no such thing until 1987), multicolor-medicated blob brat children of the yuppie damned—now aspired to be Gekkos or worse, and older working stiffs pretended to be Gekkos while clinging in pitiable desperation to the enslavement they despised and listening every once in a while to the love theme from *The Godfather* performed by a balding bar mitzvah band at a catering-hall wedding reception.

And from there it just got worse. While characters like George Raft and Robert Mitchum caused their share of moviegoing panties to be laundered, they did so with an element of primal danger that excited as much as their looks. Their kind has been replaced by pretty boys. Who could believe Leonardo DiCaprio as a tough guy in *Gangs of New York*? Even a blow across the face by a two-by-four would have left him seeming



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more the victim of a homosexual-bias attack than a gang leader. And all the other tough guys, unless they're the fall guys in some dumb-ass good-versus-evil nonsense, are cartoon pinup boys who work for, rather than against, government authority. Could Matt Damon scare you? How about—stand back—Tom Cruise? What can one say about these squirts (to pluralize one of Tommy Udo's favorite words)? That they're oh so cute when they're butch?

Characters such as these wouldn't even be seriously considered as rough trade for leather boys. The girls in the old tough-guy movies were tougher than they are. As I've heard it said of George Clooney: He's not half the man his aunt Rosemary was. Where's Ma Jarrett when we need her? Who is there to throw steaming coffee into Angelina Jolie's haughty face? Come on, Brad, quit sucking up to politicians; shoot a few of them instead, and get that non-fair-trade coffee brewing. Your morning facial can wait. I mean, like, until the mortician comes.

"Pity the country that needs heroes," wrote Bertolt Brecht. And now cops—fucking cops—are "heroes." The tough guys tried to set us straight, but we didn't listen. Their inspiration, their call to amorality and individuality, lasted only as long as the popcorn. These "tough guys" today—these do-good sissy-boy "heroes"—are they any example to set before our youth? These punks would be more convincing in pin-afores than in pinstripes. They all look and act as though they bench-press 200 pounds, curl 50 pounds, then go out and drink half a pint of semen.

What can we expect in an age in which

people want to excel in, rather than escape from, their pathetic lives? An age in which "going green" is taken as anything but a cheap commercial carny con? An age in which politicians are believed and laws are slavishly followed? An age that strokes itself with humbug such as "self-empowerment" and a belief in change and a better world? Is Spider-Man the Scarface of today?

Yes, the end of Rico has come to pass, and our own ends will be more ignoble by far than the end of Eddie Coyle.

If it's any consolation, in case you haven't noticed, the lie of your life has outlived the lie of this gone-dead, collapsing world. So fuck it. There's still time. Spit, swear, smoke, drink, smash your cell phone on the pavement, disrespect all laws as much as politicians, lawmakers and lawmen do, and be cool. I would advise you to dust off a cop or two also, but, like me, you probably lack the balls. However, you can at least be as disrespectful as possible to them, and always bear in mind the sound of how Tommy Udo would have said the word *hero*. And, gals, you can, and should, do this stuff too. Live it up, like the tough gals did. If they could kill off Cagney's Ralph Cotter and Lancaster's Swede, just imagine what you could do to these pussies.

Subversion is all we've got left. And remember: It wasn't Jesus or any of them other hocus-pocus assholes who died for your sins. It was Rico and Cody and Cady and the rest who died for your transgressions against sin, your very freedom to perceive transgression as something other than sin.



BERSERKER

(continued from page 78)

He'd take a few punches, then start dishing them out. With no fear in his eyes—ever. He looked as though he enjoyed it. He had real hockey talent, too; if Steve Yzerman flipped him the puck, Probert could pass or score. Not like me. I was a hired hit man. My only job was to fight.

ROSS BERNSTEIN, author of *The Code: The Unwritten Rules of Fighting and Retaliation in the NHL*: Maybe the first modern enforcer, Probert watched game film to see who was a lefty or a righty, what punches they threw, how they moved.

TWIST: The fans wanted a fight. And let me tell you, when it happens—when you're at center ice, dropping the gloves, with 20,000 people on their feet, screaming your name—that's exciting. You're a rock star.

KENNEDY: It's not like Probert fought because he was angry or tuggish. That's what people outside hockey sometimes think, but it's not so. The enforcers don't fight because they hate one another. They fight because that's their role. They fight to keep order. When Marty McSorley was the Oilers' enforcer, he beat on anybody who laid a hand on Wayne Gretzky. Because Gretzky was golden. Wayne couldn't fight his own fights even if he wanted to. What if he breaks his hand? Season over! So McSorley, the enforcer, fought for him, and he might not even fight the guy who messed with Wayne. He'd fight the other team's enforcer, even if they were friends. That's how players policed the game.

During the off-season the Red Wings' trainer sent the Bruise Brothers, Probert and Kocur, to work on their left hooks with boxing trainer Emanuel Steward, a local who trained Detroit fighter Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns. When Probert fought at Joe Louis Arena, "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" would blare over the loudspeakers. Fans wore shirts with his face and the maxim GIVE BLOOD. FIGHT PROBIE on them. Thanks to the winning, bruising style of play in Detroit, violence spread through the league like a contagion. In Dallas, fans could now watch fights on huge monitors while listening to "Macho, macho man! I want to be a macho man!" When Philadelphia Flyers enforcer Ed Hospodar was penalized for an infamous elbow to an opponent's jaw, he told reporters, "It was worth it." With the arrival of cable TV, highlight reels spread the gospel: The NHL was a game to watch. Not everyone was onboard. "Curbing the fighting will mean more skillful play, more scoring, more excitement," argued Harry Ernest, then-owner of the St. Louis Blues. But it seemed the fans disagreed. And so the referees let it go. And finally, in Probert's third year in the league, the Red Wings won their division.

WAYNE GRETZKY, from *Gretzky: An Autobiography*: Hockey is the only team sport in the world that actually encourages fighting. I have no idea why we let it go on. Fights probably bring a lot of people into the building. But how many people do they keep out of the building? I've met people in L.A. who say, "Well, we don't go to the games because it's too violent." To me that's just sad....



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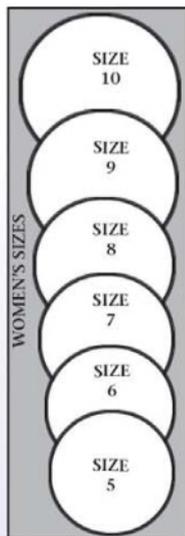


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Every time I bring it up with the league, they point to these studies about how many people want fighting.

MARTY MCSORLEY, NHL enforcer, 1983–1999: The league never knew what to do with us tough guys. Put us on a poster or be embarrassed by us? But they couldn't keep Bob Probert off the All-Star team.

KOCUR: He joked that he was gonna start the first fight in the All-Star Game. He had my back. Everyone knew if they came to Detroit and tangled with one of us, they'd have to fight us both. They'd feel a little uneasy lacing 'em up before the game, and Steve Yzerman could feel safer.

BERNSTEIN: Even when Probert's team was bad, he created drama. He sold tickets. Why? Because fans like fights. Every time the Olympics come around, you hear, "Oh, what lovely skating, with no fighting. Why can't the NHL be like that?" Here's the answer: Nobody would watch! It's part of what's great about hockey. I mean, there's a reason the goalie's the only one with a face mask. The other guys risk their faces and teeth—that's the code. They're accountable. If you spear an opponent, trip him or high-stick him, you might get smashed in the face. Not necessarily by the guy you speared, especially if he's a star like Gretzky or Yzerman or Sidney Crosby. The other team doesn't want its stars getting hurt or thrown in the penalty box. But the enforcer, he's more expendable. And he's coming after you.

STEVE LEVY, ESPN: They were the gladiators, the guys who sacrificed their bodies for the team. That's why they were loved. And Probert was Maximus.

BERNSTEIN: It was a legendary role, the old-school enforcer. Fans love you because you're

the biggest, baddest man on the ice. Your teammates love you because you're selfless. You fight so they don't have to. But it's also the hardest job in sports. These guys were walking ice bags. You're constantly injured, your hands most of all. But you have to play or they'll replace you with some kid from Moose Jaw or Medicine Hat. It's tough to replace a Gretzky or a Crosby, but they can always find another tough guy.

TWIST: Your hands always hurt the worst. I'd spend the whole off-season trying to toughen up my hands. I'd start with sand—fill two pails with sand, put 'em on the floor and pound away at the sand. Then pails full of lead pellets—that hardened my hands a little more. And then I'd punch the floor. Not hard enough to break bones, just to condition the hands. They swell up, then you ice them. It tightens up the tendons and ligaments. You have to remember, we weren't like boxers who fight twice a year. We'd fight twice a week with no gloves. And we lived for those fights! But you do get aftereffects. I'm 42, and my hands have so much scar tissue, they'll bleed when I bump into a wall. It's as if the skin's about to fall off.

BERNSTEIN: A lot of enforcers led troubled lives. A lot of them were single—drunks, druggies. Some had mental problems. It's not a normal life. You sit on the bench most of the game and then get sent in for a minute, just to fight. The job was constant stress. You're waiting for a tap on the shoulder from your coach or your captain. Or it might be subtler than that. They might say, "I can't believe they hit Steve like that." That's your signal.

So tell me—are you going to go straight home and read bedtime stories to your kids? No, you're icing your hands. You're as beat

up as any pro football player. Taking painkillers. Drinking to come down after the game, or if it's not booze it might be drugs. You may need uppers to get going in the morning, and the cycle starts again.

KOCUR: In the morning you'd start with a red-eye. It's a Canadian thing, beer and tomato juice.

KENNEDY: That's a preemptive hangover fighter. Those guys drank more beer than anybody alive.

Throughout Probert's career, his drinking was legendary. The club paid a private detective to follow him from bar to bar to keep tabs on him. He started missing practices and team flights. He roughed up a cop in a bar and bolted from the Betty Ford Clinic. When Probert got caught drinking at two A.M. the night before a game that ended the team's 1988 campaign, coach Jacques Demers told reporters the Red Wings might have advanced in the Stanley Cup playoffs if Probert had stayed sober. In 1989—seven years after Probert first left Windsor—U.S. Customs agents caught him driving from Canada into Detroit in a car littered with beer cans and an empty booze bottle. They strip-searched him and found 14 grams of cocaine in his underpants. That got him three months in prison. Suspended from the NHL, then reinstated, he went on to crash his Harley into a car. His blood alcohol level was triple the legal limit, with traces of coke. The Red Wings let him go. "The Bob Probert saga is over," said fellow Bruise Brother Joe Kocur. But Probert still had plenty of fight in him.

KOCUR: With his NHL buddies, Probert was okay; we kept him out of trouble. When he went back to Windsor to see his old friends, that's when he got messed up.

MCSORLEY: I'd been suspended myself [for an infamous hit on Vancouver's Donald Brashear], so the media came to me. I said, "Let him rehab, get healthy, get back in the game. Isn't that what we do when politicians get in trouble?" But nobody wanted to hear it.

MELROSE: I saw him at his lowest, when all the shit was hitting the fan. Same Bobby. Did we hug and have a heart-to-heart? No. He was hurting, but he didn't want to show it. I said, "Bobby, it's good to see you. You doing okay?" He smiles and says, "You know me, Barry. I'm still here."

PARKINSON: Bob still had to learn how to walk away from a drink. He knew that was his Achilles' heel.

DUFF: He was married by then. His wife, Dani, has to be close to a saint for all she went through. I got the impression she was tough on him, but she defended him when he was down. When he was arrested at the border, thrown in jail, she stuck with him.

PARKINSON: We're a police family, and his troubles with the law certainly raised eyebrows in my professional circles. But if you believe in a marriage, like my daughter does, you go through it good and bad, thick and thin. The lowest point came when he was in prison in the States, away from his family and friends.

Probert returned to the NHL on March 22, 1990. To the surprise of many, rather than cracking down on fighting, the league seemed to get even more violent. Said Glen Sather, president and general manager of the Edmonton Oilers,



DON OREHEK

"Mrs. Murphy, I wish you wouldn't use the Lord's name in vain!"

in 1991, "I don't think there is anything wrong with the game today. The buildings are almost full. It's an exciting game. If it's not broken, don't fix it." Probert moved over to the Chicago Blackhawks and immediately became a target for every enforcer coming up in the league.

RICK TELANDER, columnist, *Chicago Sun-Times*: Probert signed on with the Blackhawks in what was likely to be his last chance in the NHL. I was baffled by the guy. He'd go over-the-top as a fighter but was quiet and courteous off the ice—when he wasn't wasted on alcohol or cocaine. Like most sportswriters, I was sick of athletes lying about how they'd changed for good, gotten clean and sober. So I arranged to have dinner with him. I ordered a shot of tequila and placed it on the table, close enough for him to smell it. We looked at the drink. Finally he toasted me with his Coke and watched me throw the shot back. He was smiling, but I knew it was hard for him. Real hard.

KENNEDY: It was weird for Red Wings fans when he went to Chicago. That was a heated rivalry between two of the league's original six teams. By then, late in his career, he was more one-dimensional, more of a goon. But they didn't even hate him in Detroit. He was unhateable.

KOCUR: We fought that year. You want to know how it happened? I was out of the league; nobody had offered me a contract. Probie came to Detroit with the Blackhawks, and I pulled him aside. "You gotta do something to get me back in the game," I said. Well, that night he speared everybody, did everything he could to make the Wings miserable. The next morning's newspaper said RED WINGS MUST GET TOUGHER. So Scotty Bowman, the coach, brings me back. My second game's against Chicago. Awkward? Yeah, but I knew my role. You can see it on YouTube. We dropped the gloves and went at it hard, really battling, doing our jobs. Finally the fight's over and we're lying on the ice. I gave him a little hug and said, "Thanks for getting me back in the game." Probie laughed and said, "No problem."

DAVID SINGER, founder, HockeyFights.com: If you created a Hall of Fame for enforcers, he'd be in the first class. John Ferguson, Dave Brown and Dave Schultz are up there too, but when we started giving our biggest award to the best fighter of the year, we called it the Bob Probert Award. We've got a Probert page that lists hundreds of his fights at HockeyFights.com, and he won most of them. Some are legendary, like his 1992 rematch with the Rangers' Tie Domi. Domi had showed him up in their first fight—Probert got cut, and Domi skated off gloating, pretending he was wearing a championship belt. Everybody knew a rematch was coming. When the Red Wings came to New York, Madison Square Garden was absolutely wild.

The first time Probert fought Tie Domi of the Rangers, he was still playing for the Red Wings. The brawl was so violent, even fans were shocked. The New York Times ran a headline: RANGERS AND RED WINGS IN A TIE ON BRAWL WAY. After the game, Probert said, "He's a goon. I'll get that little dummy back in Detroit." Domi followed up, "He keeps calling me 'dummy.' He's not known to be a rocket scientist." Before the rematch, on

December 2, 1992, Domi told a reporter, "You know how much I've been looking forward to this game. If it's a good fight, it still may pick up the league and get the real game back." Less than a minute after face-off, fans got what they wanted—arguably the greatest fight in hockey history.

LEVY: I was there. The buildup was like a heavyweight title fight. People had been talking about it for weeks. Usually the Garden didn't fill up till 10 minutes into the first period, with Wall Street fat cats rolling up late in their limos. But that night every seat was full, everybody standing. Probert was on the ice from the start. The Rangers sent Domi out after the first whistle, less than a minute into the game. They dropped the gloves and it was on.

BERNSTEIN: It was an epic battle. Domi was short and relentless, like a pit bull. Probie was taller; he had a hard time getting a good shot down on Domi, but he got his shots in. About 50 of them.

LEVY: Probert was in a tough spot. He towers over Domi—if he clocks him, mops up the ice with him, well, he's supposed to. He's Bob Probert. I'm sure there are Rangers fans who'll say Domi won, but I thought Probert got the best of it. And you know what? I bet I'm like those fans in one way: I can describe that fight from memory, but I couldn't tell you who won the game.

Bob Probert played eight more seasons in the NHL, retaining his unofficial title as the game's heavyweight champ for most of them. He suffered miserably from years of fights and injuries, and his wife had to control his access to painkillers. When he became a father all his friends agreed he changed. He stopped drinking, stopped getting himself into trouble. "He was absolutely crazy about his kids," says Duff, "tucking them in with those big, aching hands. He loved his Harley, but after his kids came along he started restoring old Chevelles. He said, 'You can't take four kids for a ride on a Harley.'" Probert stayed involved in the game as an NHL alum. On July 5, 2010 he was with his in-laws and his kids, boating on Lake St. Clair. At about two P.M. he developed chest pains. He collapsed. His father-in-law performed CPR on him but was unsuccessful. Probert was pronounced dead at Windsor Regional Hospital that afternoon. He was 45 years old.

KOCUR: I was a pallbearer at his funeral. I looked up and saw all the NHL guys he went to war with. They all showed up. When the funeral was over they lined up in two rows, like a tunnel. We carried the casket between them so they could all salute Probie. The funeral was beautiful. Us old players sat around telling Probie stories, laughing and crying. At the end we put the casket on a special sidecar of this custom Harley, and off it went.

LEVY: His funeral was the essence of hockey. It was a reunion of the tough guys' fraternity, the ones who used to beat up one another and then go out for beers together. Will we see Probert's like again? No. Not with the rules of the modern game. But you have to ask the question: Who's ever going to stand up more than he did, endure more pain, give up more heart, to win?



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AZIZ ANSARI

(continued from page 90)

ANSARI: I got the idea from the Neil Strauss book *The Game*. And that stuff works, man! If you go to a club and some dude's wearing a weird thing, people will go up and talk to him. I haven't seen anyone take it to Tom's level, of wearing a raccoon hat. But I'm telling you, if it's cold outside and you pop a raccoon hat on your head and go to a bar, people will pay attention to you. Even if they're pointing at you, laughing and saying, "Look at that goofy asshole," they still want to talk to you. You're halfway there!

Q4

PLAYBOY: Rob Lowe and Adam Scott recently joined the cast of *Parks and Recreation*. Do you feel you're still the handsomest guy on the show?

ANSARI: Do Rob Lowe or Adam Scott have nice well-trimmed beards? Fuck no! Of course I'm still the most handsome guy on *Parks*.

Q5

PLAYBOY: You grew up in a rural town in South Carolina where your family members were some of the only Indians. Did you feel like an outsider?

ANSARI: Not at all. We didn't move from a town with a big Indian community to a town with nothing but white people. I had no frame of reference, and I wasn't treated differently. Occasionally I got teased, but that stuff happens to every kid. If it's not about your ethnicity, it'll be about your weight or your acne or something else. Kids are fucking assholes.

Q6

PLAYBOY: You seem very proud of your beard. Under what circumstances would you shave it?

ANSARI: I wouldn't! I know it's weird for an actor to be so attached to facial hair. I guess it's a point of pride. I shaved it only once, just to see what it felt like. And I *hated* it. Some people can go back and forth between having a beard and not having a beard, but I'm definitely not one of those people.

Q7

PLAYBOY: You and your *Parks and Recreation* co-star Amy Poehler both started on comedy sketch shows—you on *Human Giant* and she on *Upright Citizens Brigade*. Have you ever exchanged war stories?

ANSARI: We're sometimes just in awe of the budget differences of network TV versus a cable sketch show. We did a scene on *Parks* with a dinosaur-themed restaurant called Jurassic Fork. If it had been *Human Giant* or *UCB*, you'd see maybe a couple of dinosaur posters and some action figures. On *Parks*, our art department brought in a full-size animatronic T. rex and stegosaurus. It was the coolest shit I'd ever seen. We've also traded stories about standards and practices, the gatekeepers that tell you what you can and cannot say on TV. I think we both had to deal with sending penis sketches for approval.

Q8

PLAYBOY: Penis sketches? Please explain.

ANSARI: For *Human Giant* we were working on a scene about a bunch of guys trying to stay awake, and one draws a dick on somebody else's face with a marker. MTV's standards department was like, "Well, you have to draw the dick in a particular way. It can't be too graphic." So we faxed over four dick drawings, and they sent back this hilarious memo: "Dick Number One, you can't do that. Dick Number Two, that looks good."

Q9

PLAYBOY: You've worked with everyone from Zach Galifianakis to Seth Rogen. Are you a comedy good-luck charm?

ANSARI: Those guys all have this weird rash on their forearms since working with me, so definitely not. When I did *Funny People* with Seth it was quickly clear we had a similar sense of humor. I kept pushing myself to make Seth break by doing the dumbest stuff I could—humping chairs and yelling random stuff in my DJ voice, like picking up a yellow M&M and screaming "Yellow!" I got him to break a few times, and that was always a nice reward.

Q10

PLAYBOY: You've been on the road with your Dangerously Delicious stand-up tour, playing some big venues. What's the difference between doing comedy for a hundred people and doing it for a thousand?

ANSARI: I'm always high energy, so it doesn't matter how big the audience is. Because of *Parks and Rec*, I'm a lot more recognizable. People see me and they're excited just because they've seen my face on television. I walk onstage and they start screaming. I don't do any jokes, really. I just talk about whatever I ate that day, and they go wild.

Q11

PLAYBOY: When you're onstage you have an awful lot of swagger and confidence for such a little guy. Where do you get your bravado?

ANSARI: I've always been inspired by comics like Chris Rock and Louis C.K. I'm in awe of Louis. He'll say some absurd idea and the audience is like, Well, I definitely don't agree with that. But then he *forces* them into submission with his jokes. By the end you think, Well, okay, I guess he's right. That's incredible power. To pull off something like that you have to be very confident.

Q12

PLAYBOY: You've done stand-up at the Sasquatch and Bonnaroo rock festivals. How are rock crowds different from stand-up comedy crowds?

ANSARI: I don't notice much of a difference, except maybe a few more of them are stoned. They've got that look in their eyes as though they have no idea what's going on. And at Bonnaroo sometimes hippies bring their babies to the show. That can be a little disconcerting. I'm doing bits about fucking a Cinnabon, so I don't know if a baby is really my ideal audience.

Q13

PLAYBOY: You've socialized with hip-hop

stars like Kanye West, MIA and 50 Cent. Do they expect you to be their court jester?

ANSARI: Naw, it's not like that. One time I was at Kanye West's place and he asked me to do my act in his living room for some of his friends, but that was kind of an isolated incident. And he didn't say, "Do some jokes or you're out of my house!" He was just, "Do some jokes, please. Do some jokes, please. Do some jokes, please." And finally I was like, "Okay, fine!" It went over really well. It was just Kanye and maybe 30 other people. And if anybody was making too much noise in the next room, Kanye would jump up and scream, "Yo! Shut the fuck up! Homey's over here trying to tell some jokes!"

Q14

PLAYBOY: While hosting the MTV Movie Awards you did a spot-on impression of R&B singer R. Kelly. Given the chance, would you trade careers with him?

ANSARI: Are you kidding me? Who wouldn't want to have his career? The guy sings his songs and ladies throw their panties on the stage. It doesn't matter how good I get at comedy, I'm never going to have anything like that. Someone at Bonnaroo asked me, "Do you want to be the Jay-Z of comedy?" And I was like, "No, I just want to be Jay-Z!"

Q15

PLAYBOY: Your dad is a doctor. Was there ever pressure to follow in his footsteps?

ANSARI: Not at all. My parents have always been supportive. As long as I went to college, they didn't care. I majored in marketing because it didn't seem like much work. Marketing is just a bunch of fancy jargon for common sense. By the time I was a sophomore I realized I wanted to be a comic, but I stayed in school to avoid a big argument with my parents about dropping out.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You got into a fake feud with Justin Bieber, claiming the teen pop crooner had stolen one of your songs. Any other celebrities been stealing from you lately?

ANSARI: Bieber's best bud, Usher, has stolen about 10 fedoras, four sequined vests—two black and two silver—and nine necklaces that say USHER on them from me. Not cool, Usher.

Q17

PLAYBOY: You're a known Chick-fil-A fanatic. Why?

ANSARI: I *love* Chick-fil-A! I grew up in South Carolina eating there all the time. But there aren't any Chick-fil-A outlets near me in Los Angeles. When I see one of the restaurants now, it's a really big deal. It makes me nostalgic. I don't know, maybe it's a good thing they're not everywhere. The scarcity of it makes it more valuable and personal to me.

Q18

PLAYBOY: You and a few other comics started a group called Food Club in which you dine together at high-end restaurants and wear captain's hats. Is that your idea of recreation,

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or is it bizarre performance art?
ANSARI: [Laughs] A little of both. It's fun to get dressed up and put on suits and silly hats and eat amazing food. We also give out a plaque to our favorite restaurants and chefs, and we've been pretty selective. It's already three times more prestigious than the Michelin star.

Q19

PLAYBOY: The critics have been mostly supportive of you. Do you worry about a backlash?

ANSARI: Not at all. You can't let what other people think about you get into your head too much. And with comedy you don't need reviews. If it's good, I'll know it. I read some review of the *2010 MTV Movie Awards* that said my monologue didn't go over well. And I thought, I was *there*. I got an

applause break after every joke I did. That is the *definition* of doing well for a comedian. Don't tell me I didn't do an amazing job. The laughter proves you wrong.

Q20

PLAYBOY: You spend a lot of time on Twitter. What's the appeal?

ANSARI: Twitter is just a big time waster. It's a dumb thing to occupy your time when you're bored or waiting in line at the grocery store. But it does give you access to people you never had access to before. A decade ago, if you wanted to get a message to Diddy you'd have to go through 10, 20 people. Now just write a message on Twitter and there's a pretty good chance he will actually read it. That's crazy!



CRIME STORY

(continued from page 51)

to get Doma to come home with me but she told me in the gypsy cab that she was on the first day of her period. I don't know what I would have done with her in the morning anyway. Uhuru had told me that the one time he took her home she stole \$200 out of his wallet. I couldn't get U-Man to drop her off on the way because we would barely have enough time to make the flight and, anyway, he hated Doma for stealing from him and he wouldn't have liked it if I was fucking her either. But in spite of all that—if Doma wasn't on the rag I would have brought her home and fucked her like a goddamned conquering hero. Maybe I would have stayed up in bed with her all morning and blown off the services. I had no business going there in the first place.

It was 18 months, two weeks and three days past my 40th birthday, and in 12 minutes Uhuru would be honking downstairs. U-Man was like a Chinese death sentence—always on time. And there I was with my drawers down around my ankles holding on to the wall so as not to fall off the porcelain toilet seat.

Fathead had been declared dead and his mother called U-Man on the throwaway phone that the premed criminal mastermind had given him. I threw my phone away but U-Man held on to his. Mrs. Robbins had left the invitation to the funeral/memorial on Uhuru's voice mail. When he called her back she told him that she didn't know any of his friends from New York and wanted at least one at the service. He didn't know where she got the number. She told him that she couldn't find Fathead's old girlfriend's number.

U-Man should've thrown the damn phone away but, I don't know, it must have felt like a summons from some high court: If he didn't go there'd be a warrant issued for his capture and imprisonment. And when he asked me to come along with him, what could I say? The three of us weren't really friends but in a way we were closer. I at least owed it to Fathead, the cold fuck, to go there for his mom when she was all broke up because her son had disappeared. Nobody had seen or heard from him in nearly a year.

The cops don't know jack shit about anything. They had no idea what happened to Mr. Brandon "Fathead" Robbins. They probably just told his mom that he was dead because she kept calling them and they didn't have the time to hold the hand of some poor black woman blubbering over her nappy-headed, fat-assed son. They didn't know a thing. The newspaper report said that they found an XXXL T-shirt with a little blood on it that could have been his, in a car he might have stolen that had been gutted by fire; from that they said he was probably dead. But they didn't do a DNA test or find any witnesses or evidence. They just said *foul play* and not to expect to see him again. They didn't give a damn about



"I'm not actually a nurse—they just sent me in to help raise your blood pressure."

Fathead or his grieving mother or all his sad brothers and sisters, cousins, aunts and uncles. They didn't care about his fatherless illegitimate children or their mothers or the money the state was going to have to pay to miseducate, unemploy and incarcerate those kids.

A horn honked down below. I staggered through the bedroom to the living room where I could lean out of the open window.

"Come on up, U-Man!" I shouted. "I need a couple a minutes!"

I hunkered down on the floor with my back against the west wall of the front room. I was spent from all the vodka and cigarette smoke, from the blunts and lines of coke, too.

You couldn't smoke tobacco, much less do drugs, in any legal establishment in New York anymore, but I had found places in the last year that were unlicensed, places where you could smoke, do blow or have sex in your booth and nobody would give you a second glance. Pressing my back against the wall I pushed myself up, almost fell from a dizzy spell and then blundered to the bedroom, where I sat on my one piece of furniture, a pine chair. I stepped into the pants lying there and stood up, pulling them to my waist. I had just snagged my ruby-red silk shirt from the floor when the doorbell, which sounded like the recess bell at my old elementary school, rang out so loudly that my teeth actually chattered. It was a long walk back through the living room, past the open kitchen and down the long hallway to the door. I stopped there feeling like an abused animal at the end of his chain.

The school bell rang again and I yanked the door open.

"Man, Friend, you look like dog shit" were the first words out of Uhuru's mouth. "No, no, no, no...you look like dog diarrhea."

U-Man was a few inches taller than I, and a shade or two darker. People sometimes asked if we were cousins.

Closer, I once answered, cut from the same triple-X cloth.

"You out at the Russian's last night?" Uhuru asked as he passed me walking into the sublet condo of the half-occupied building.

"Uh-huh."

"You ret to go?" Uhuru said.

"Do I look like I'm ready? I'ont think I could make it, man."

"Uh-huh." His grunt was an indictment. "That's why I told you the flight was at 11. It's really 12. I knew you'd be all hung-ovah from the Russian's. I told you 11 so I could come ovah an' get you up. So th'ow yo' ass in the shower and let's get this bad boy on."

I had to sit on the floor of the shower. It was a fancy stall in a high-priced building. A stockbroker had bought the unit but didn't want to move in yet, not until the building and the neighborhood had risen up to his standard. I knew a guy working as a porter in the place—Roger. Roger wanted them to make him a doorman when they finally had a permanent staff.

He didn't have much ambition but he knew the hustle.

I paid Roger \$500 to lie me in, and then I gave the stockbroker \$2,500 a month under the table so I could sit on his semiopaque green shower tiles trying to keep from heaving. The water ran over me like downpours must fall on rain forest aborigines along the Amazon. Hot water on exhausted flesh in between drug-induced orgies, hunting forays and turf wars.

"You gettin' it together in there, Friend?"

"Yeah. Yeah. I'm havin' a good ol' time in here."

Even though we'd only been acquainted for a year U-Man knew me better than I knew my own father, which, all things considered, isn't saying much. Even though he'd only just turned 30 Uhuru could read me like I read most books. I think he liked me because of my education. I had three years and some change at CCNY, almost enough for a degree. I never finished, but that didn't matter because of my felony conviction: just one of those things.

Back before my arrest my mother was on disability and my sister worked at this hamburger joint. She, my sister Wanette, had two kids and was pregnant again. It was only a three-room apartment my mother had. I was selling bootleg movies on East 153rd Street to keep food on the table and maybe save enough to get a place of my own.

It was all good.

I'd hit the street at seven in the morning, take a break from 11 to two and then come back around three. That way I got people going to work and school and those coming back home. I was clearing a couple hundred dollars a day until Maxwell Hardison came up on me. I never even heard of the motherfucker before but there he was telling me that I had to move because his man was going to sell movies there from now on.

Most businesses in this country are protected to a certain degree by guilds, mobsters, unions, big government agencies, city councils and cops. But up in Harlem, all over Brooklyn and in the Bronx you had to take matters of protection into your own hands. And that's what I did.

I pulled out a hardwood baton from under my crate and put a few dents in Maxwell's head and sides. After that I whacked at his legs and he ran from my corner screaming. How was I to know that he was an undercover cop? How was I to know that he was setting up his own man to bring down the supplier? I told the police when they picked me up that I was just trying to protect my business. I told them that I hadn't hurt the man and I sure didn't know he was one of them. They didn't care. I got beat so bad that my lawyer had to get three continuances before I was able to show up in court. During that time my mother got evicted and Wanette lost her baby; the state came in and took the two kids that were left.

The judge had to find me guilty; she had to. But she suspended the sentence and made the cops that nearly killed me apologize for what they'd done. The apology just made them hate me more. That's why I moved to Brooklyn....

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"You okay in there?" Uhuru called.
 "Out in five."

It was maybe 10 when I came out of the bathroom and into the bedchamber of the unfurnished condo. Tall, dark and naturally thin, U-Man was standing in the middle of the room as if he were in the process of going from one place to another. I could see that my mattress had been pushed and the books under the window were out of order. None of that was a surprise. U-Man was always looking for clues to what I had done with my share. I don't know what he would have done if he'd found out, but that didn't matter because he wasn't ever going to find out. One thing I learned when I was very young was how to keep a secret secret.

"You ready?" he asked.
 "Can I put my pants on first?"
 "Ain't nuthin' much to hide anyway."
 "More than enough for your sister."
 "Come on, Friend, let's go."

Again, I put on my black silk trousers and the ruby-red shirt. There was an orange hat to go with the ensemble but that seemed a little over-the-top for a funeral.

Homeland Security had a field day with me that Tuesday. Everything from my belt buckle to the cell phone I forgot was in my pocket set off their damn machine. My driver's license was old and frayed—and therefore suspicious. I didn't have any luggage, not even a briefcase, and that was some kind of red flag too. I tried to tell them that I was just going up to a funeral.

"In a red shirt?"

"Man, this is what I got. I don't have no funeral suits up in my closet or no cotton pants like you got on. All I own is party clothes 'cause that's mostly what I do."

They didn't like me, but the supervisor couldn't find anything wrong. She stared at me long and hard, though. My eyes must have been nearly as red as my shirt.

I slept at the gate until U-Man dragged me onto the plane.

"Is he all right?" a flight attendant asked.
 "My man been partyin' hard 12 months straight," U-Man explained.

I remember opening my eyes when we were in a rented SUV driving down a suburban road. We passed a sign that said LEXINGTON 4 MILES. There were houses on either side of the highway-like road. At one point I saw a hornet's nest hanging from a power line stretched across the road. I remember that I was going to point it out to U-Man but then we passed under it and it was gone.

When I closed my eyes it was like I was asleep and awake at the same time, in between the real world and the world that was me. I was remembering my sister begging me to help her kidnap her kids. She knew where Tanya and Little John were living in the Bronx and planned to take them and go down to Tampa, where our mother had gone to stay with her sister, Bertha. Aunt B had seen the light and become a minister in the Universal Church of Christ Incorporated. I told Wanette that that was the first place the cops would look and that Bertha would give her up in a heartbeat. Wanette walked out of my rented room that day and never talked to me again. She refused to understand that I was trying to stay out of trouble. That was back when I thought I could get around the felony conviction and get a good job working for a bank or some other business....

The engine cut off, leaving a peaceful feeling in its wake.

"Friend," Uhuru said.

A cool breeze wafted in from the window. That pleasant draft revived me a little, reminding me of a spring day when fat Brandon Robbins dropped down on the other side of me at a table in the City College library.

"Friend Williams, right?" he asked.

"Who're you?"

"They call me Fathead." He made about a nickel's worth of small talk and then said,

"I heard it that you beat the shit out of an undercover cop."

"So?"

"That's some bad shit, man. I mean either you a fool or some kinda hero. Either way that's just what I need."

"You need?"

"Uh-huh. That's right, brutha," he said. Fathead had a very intelligent face. It was like he was seeing every possible angle, every second. He was in the biology department, doing a premed major. "I need and you do too."

He left it at that, but on the following day he came to my table again and explained that he had noticed a basement apartment on his old block of 164th Street. That apartment, he said, was frequented by many different drug dealers. They went in at all hours with nothing in their hands and left the same way. Finally, Fathead would see that late on Wednesday nights a little guy with two big guys stopped by the basement meeting place and would walk out with one or more big suitcases.

"It's got to be money, man," Fathead said, "big money too. You know it don't make sense that the drug dealers be droppin' off product and they don't evah leave with nuthin'. That apartment on 164 is the bank."

"Why you tellin' me this, man?"

"'Cause I don't know you but I know about you."

"What kinda sense do that make?"

"If we gonna take that money down, people can't be able to put us together. I figure I need two dudes to take that money wit' me."

"An' you think I'ma just follow you like some kinda fool?"

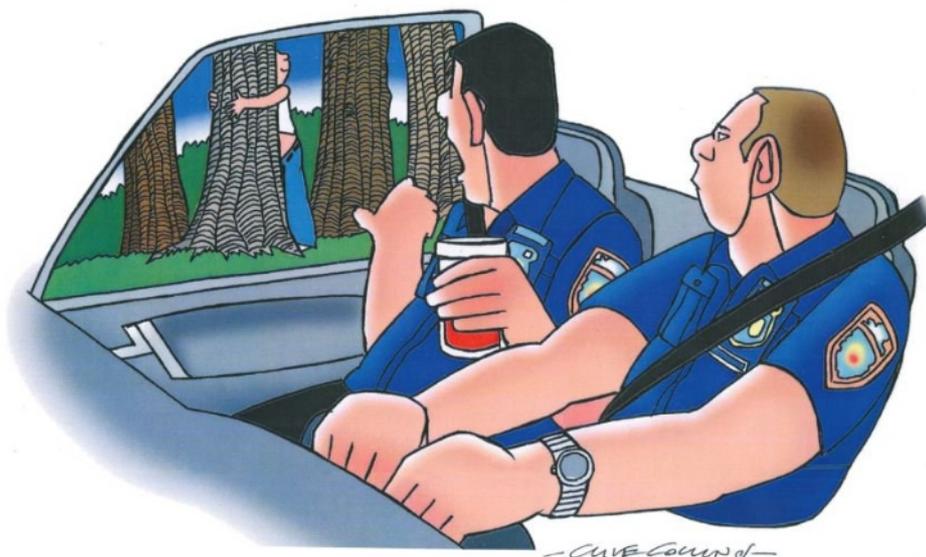
"Big suitcases, Friend. Big. You'n me both know what that means. That's med school and a house on the beach in Jamaica for me."

The third man was Uhuru. He was from the East Village, where it was common knowledge that he'd killed a neighborhood bully for raping one of his childhood girlfriends. Fathead thought that he needed somebody who had killed before in case his plan went awry. He brought us to a roof on the 165 side and from there we spied upon the basement apartment one block over. A lot of people went in and out of there and for three Wednesday nights straight a black Lincoln with three men would come by at three in the morning. These men always carried away at least one large suitcase, sometimes two. During that time Uhuru and I became friends. We never hung out together in our regular places and so it was pretty intense between the three of us. Many days Fathead went off on his own to put together the materials we needed for the heist. U-Man and I would get pizza and sit on the roof watching the bank. I told Uhuru that I came late to college and he told me that he couldn't read all that well. I tried to give him some pointers. He appreciated the help and I just liked him.

U-Man had told Fathead up front that he didn't want to hurt anybody in a permanent kind of way.

"Three mild headaches for a whole lotta cash, brother," Fathead said. "That's the trade we gonna make."

Fathead, who was short and weighed



"Pull over, Charlie. I'm not sure the guy's just hugging that tree."

at least 300 pounds, had moved off that block within a few days of realizing what that apartment was. He was a very smart guy, but he had no personality, no personal human connection to the world around him. Everything about him was a plan: from his education, to the girl he was dating and intended to marry, to the robbery. He could work with strangers because other people were just moving parts to him. I could work with him because I knew that this was the only chance I would ever have to get some serious money in my hands; U-Man felt the same way I did.

Fathead had gotten a job at a midtown parking garage that he was supposed to close down every weeknight at midnight. That gave him the choice of any car parked overnight.

On the night of the robbery he took a maroon station wagon with Jersey plates and picked us up in front of a fancy diner on 57th Street.

Fathead drove us to 165th Street. From around the block on 165 Uhuru and I went and climbed down into the shadows of a basement entrance a few buildings away from the bank. Fathead had left ski masks and baseball bats in a trash can down there.

The Lincoln always parked in the same place and the men walked the same route (right past our hiding place). When they pulled up I called Fathead on his cell. He answered and I said, "They're here."

The men went into the bank, spent their predictable seven minutes and came out again—carrying three suitcases. As they passed us I whispered, "Now," on the cell phone and U-Man and I ran out, bashing heads as we went. I hit the biggest guy while U-Man swung on the other guard. His guy went down and out but mine only fell to one knee. I hit him again while Uhuru chased the little dude a few steps before turning out the lights on him. My heart was beating so fast that I worried I might have a heart attack or faint. But then the station wagon pulled up and my thinking got straight again. We should have left one of those suitcases. But we were greedy enough that Fathead took the time to run out and help us.

We shoved the luggage into the back of the wagon and drove off—all in under two minutes.

That night we counted over \$3 million in

the empty parking garage. Three million. I never expected to make (much less see) that much money in my entire life. Fathead had new suitcases for us and we divvied up the cash at lightning speed. The bankers had bundled it into \$10,000 packs of hundred-dollar bills. I waited until nine and then went out to the storage place where I'd rented a room and put my money, my \$1,162,000, in a place that only I knew about.

Later that morning my phone rang.

"Friend?"

"U-Man?"

"Fathead called. Said that somebody runned out from the bank and seen him. They lookin' for him all ovah Harlem."

"How did they recognize him?"

"Did you tell Friend about this?" was the first thing Fathead asked when he got into the front seat.

"Naw. But why shouldn't I?"

"He don't trust me. He probably think I'd turn him ovah if I was caught."

That's when I reached around from the backseat and stabbed him in the neck. He shrieked like some kind of animal, a pig or something, and I felt the blood on my hand. It was very warm and thick. I had never killed anybody before. Even then Fathead wasn't fully dead right away. He was struggling, but I held him back against the seat until he stopped moving, until he died. Right after Fathead had expired U-Man and I looked at each other. Now we had murdered a man together; you can't get a closer bond than that. Uhuru drove a few

blocks to a car he had borrowed and I took the wheel of the stolen car. He followed me to a bog I knew about a few miles outside of Riverhead, Long Island. It was a place this white girl I once dated used to take me. She said it was our secret place, but I knew that she just wanted to fuck me in the backseat of her car where her boyfriend would never find us.

We buried Fathead's body deep. After that we drove to a deserted beach out toward Montauk and torched the stolen car with gasoline. Before we burned the car we took Fathead's bags from the trunk. There was no reason to burn his share, just like there was no reason for him to expect us to trust him in the first goddamn place....

Luxuriating in the breeze I opened my eyes onto a huge, mazelike parking lot.

"This it, Friend."

"It is?"

"Uh-huh. Yeah. All we got to do is walk down them steps over there. Come on. Wake up."

"I'm sick."

"Get up, man. You know you better not be late to no funeral."

We started walking together, but I was moving slow and U-Man pulled ahead. The cemetery and chapel were at the bottom of a fairly long, simple wooden stairway. Uhuru was already a couple of dozen steps down when I got to the top stair. I stopped because from there I could see the sky. It was beautiful. The



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air was clean and cool and I was the closest I'd been to sober in a long time. I felt almost good....

While U-Man's shoes were clattering down the stairs, bound as always to be on time, I was, in a single breath, deciding to change my life. I would find Wanette, help her get her kids back, and move down to Tampa, maybe even become a deacon in Aunt B's incorporated church.

I heard a woman's voice and U-Man answering. Another man, in a brusque tone, said something, and a chill entered my daydream.

A muffled shot sounded and I looked down just in time to see maybe my only true friend crumple to the ground. He had turned to run back up the stairs. A woman, I couldn't tell her age, and two men stood over my friend's prostrate form; all four of them were black like me. One man looked up and my heart lurched. I turned to run. That vast blue sky was in my chest and legs. I was past the rental car and out on the road so quickly that I was disoriented for a moment. There was a shopping mall across the street and, beyond that, an undeveloped lot that led up to a hill that still had trees covering it.

In less than a minute I crossed the road and passed up into the scant wood. There

I laid down flat and opened my eyes wide enough to take in three skies.

The two men that shot Uhuru James came out from the cemetery driveway. They scanned the area with practiced efficiency. One of them gazed up at my little woods. I swear he was looking right at me. It took everything I had not to jump up and run.

The woman came up then and the three of them conferred. They couldn't stay long. There was a man shot, maybe dead, and they had the weapon on them. A minute passed and then another. The assassins made their way back to the parking lot.

A few minutes later a broad-faced dark green Chevy rolled out of the driveway.

I stayed on my belly for two hours. Then I crawled through the woods and down into a junkyard on the other side of the hill. I crossed that devastation to another street, called a taxi that took me to Boston's Chinatown. From there I took the \$10 Chinese bus back to New York.

The men who ran the bank must've gotten to Fathead's place after they recognized him. They must've found the phone numbers of the cell phones he gave us; maybe he had Uhuru's name next to it. U-Man had said that there were a lot of voice mails with nobody speaking. U-Man never answered and only used the phone when he really

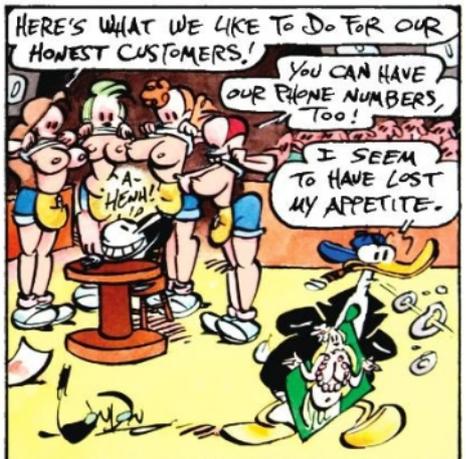
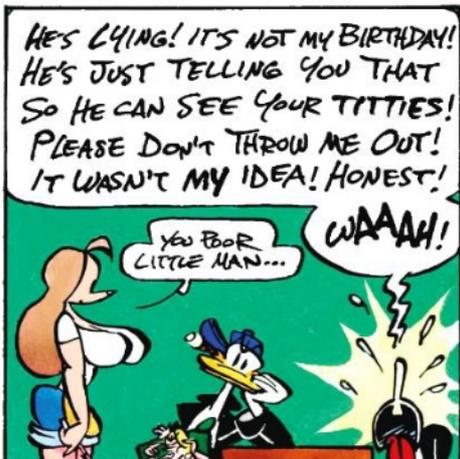
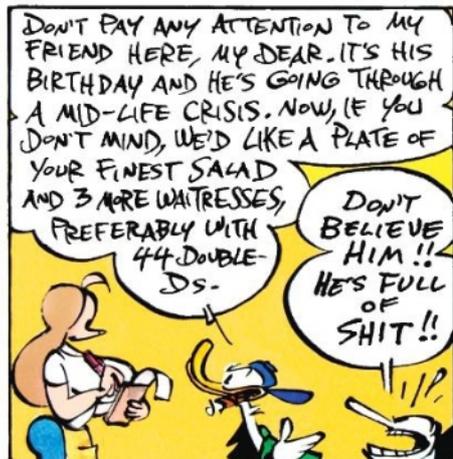
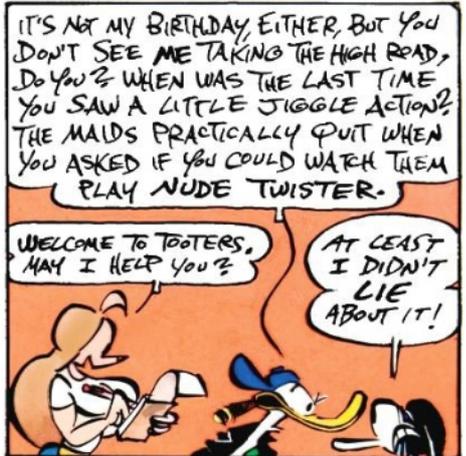
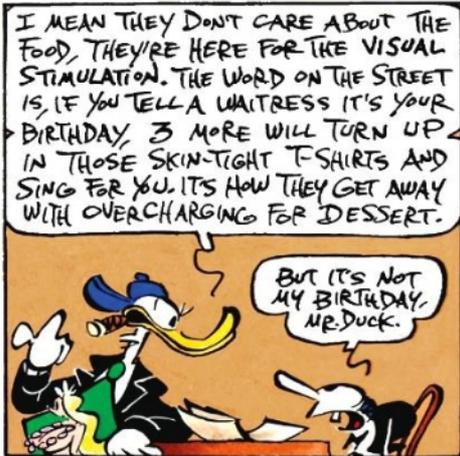
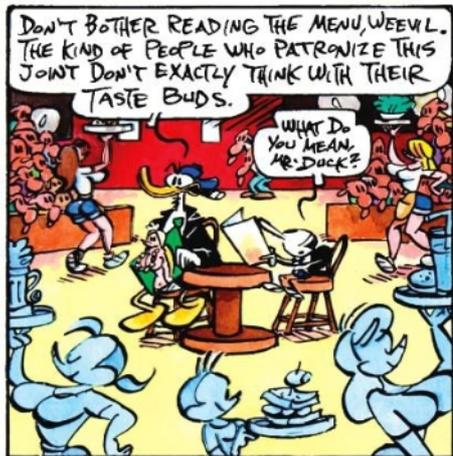
needed it. He was a poor man down in his bones and couldn't throw anything of value away. Then the woman calling herself Fathead's mother left her lie about a funeral. It was all a setup and it worked—they got him and almost got me.

It was a long bus ride—eight hours—and that was good because I had time to think. Sooner or later somebody was going to figure out who Uhuru was. And we'd been running together since the heist because, we believed, no one could connect us to Fathead. And even though I'd spent a lot of money in the last year it was mostly what I got from Fathead's share. I had dodged a bullet and was still rich. I racked my brain trying to remember what Uhuru said about the woman who called him. I thought that he said that she called him U-Man. Uhuru told me that Fathead had made up that name for him. Fathead didn't want to use real names. And even if he had used my name it sounded like it was made up.

That was the turning point of my entire life. If I wanted to survive I had to leave everything I knew, just walk away.

When I got home I sat up the rest of the night wondering about where I had never been and where no one ever expected me

Dirty Duck ^{by} Bobby London



to be. At seven the next morning my new life was set. I boarded a train headed for Montpelier, Vermont that afternoon with two suitcases in my possession. I called them Mom and Dad and kept a close eye on them for the whole ride. A week later I had an apartment at the corner of State Street and Main in the middle of town.

This morning I woke up with my head pressed up against the headboard of my bed, the pressure reminding me of the morning of the last day of my life after 41 years, six months, two weeks and three days of living like a sleepwalker wandering up and down the streets of New York.

I've been here, in Montpelier, for a year. Not too many people of color living in the Green Mountain state capital but the white people leave me alone. Ruby says it's because they never had slavery in Vermont.

"They don't hate you because they don't feel guilty about slavery," she whispered before kissing my chest.

I tell anyone who asks that I'm living on a small inheritance left by my mother.

There are colleges all around the tiny city and bookstores where I can find my reading pleasure. Nobody knows me except this one young woman—Ruby. She's white, of course, a waitress who doesn't ask many questions. I have anonymity in Vermont; I mean I stand out like a sore thumb, but nobody knows me. That obscurity, I now realize, has been my entire life. My one success, Fathead's heist, only underscored the vagueness of my existence.

I always thought that the only thing holding me back was not having any money. But now I realize that was never true.

My biggest score was like winning a vacation to a South Pacific island, only nobody told me that the destination was deserted and the ticket was one way. And so here I sit, sober and aware that one day someone is going to kill me; either they will find me and send their assassins, or I'll finally go home, or maybe down to Tampa, and they'll be waiting. But in the meantime I've read a dozen novels and seen about a hundred movies.

Every once in a while I audit a class lecture but I never sign up because someone might question my identity.

I've shaved my head and grown a beard.

I walk the few blocks between my front door and the capitol building twice a day. On that route I wave to people and even say hello now and then. Every time I see a new black face my heart races and my skin goes cold.

I bought a .45 pistol and a .30-30 hunter's rifle at Zeke's Guns and Ammo. I keep them both loaded and next to my bed. I don't smoke or drink, inhale or inject anything anymore. I am completely sober and aware in the small apartment, in the dark...alone except for when Ruby comes over after the late shift, sometimes.

She's a nice young woman but I plan to move on in another year or so, maybe up to Burlington or down to Brattleboro, someplace where nobody knows me, where a low-budget black man on the run can read his books and watch his movies in peace.



LAMAR ODOM

(continued from page 38)

ODOM: I was living the rock-star lifestyle. Things were happening. And that's probably the most popular, biggest stress reliever we have next to alcohol.

PLAYBOY: Should it be legal?

ODOM: It's probably not my place to say as an athlete because it's going to rub some people the wrong way. Some of this game is political. But if you go to the best hotels nowadays, the minibars have alcohol in them. A lot of people die from that stuff. You can go to the store right down the street and buy something called cancer sticks. You know what I'm saying? It's whatever floats your boat. But in my business you can't do it. It's dead wrong and a no-no for guys who want to play in the NBA.

PLAYBOY: In 2003 you were traded to the Miami Heat. You later credited coach Pat Riley for having saved you. How did he do it?

ODOM: I finally had someone to tutor me and walk me through it. He let me know, "Hey, you can go out, but if the bar closes at two A.M., why don't you go home at 1:30 since you've got to get up anyway? I need you at your best. I'm paying you to be at your best. This is what I expect of you." I had somebody who truly cared about me as a person and as an athlete and who wanted both of them to succeed in life. It gives you confidence when the right people vouch for you.

PLAYBOY: A voucher from Riley holds weight in the NBA.

ODOM: When he says, "I'm letting you guys know, you guys who didn't like him or wrote bad about him, that this is my guy and I got him and I'm going to take care of him, and if you like me, you like him." This is Pat Riley speaking up for you. When he speaks up for you, people listen.

PLAYBOY: Riley originally wanted to draft you out of college. He said you were the first player to come into the league who had the ability to play like Magic Johnson, your hero growing up. What did you like about Magic?

ODOM: Magic had the flair of a guard but in a big man's body. He made his teammates better by passing the ball. A lot of people do it only by scoring, but he understood how to get the most out of his teammates.

PLAYBOY: The same has been said of you, that you're an unselfish player who spreads the ball around. You were the eighth-fastest NBA player to reach 3,000 assists and 6,000 rebounds.

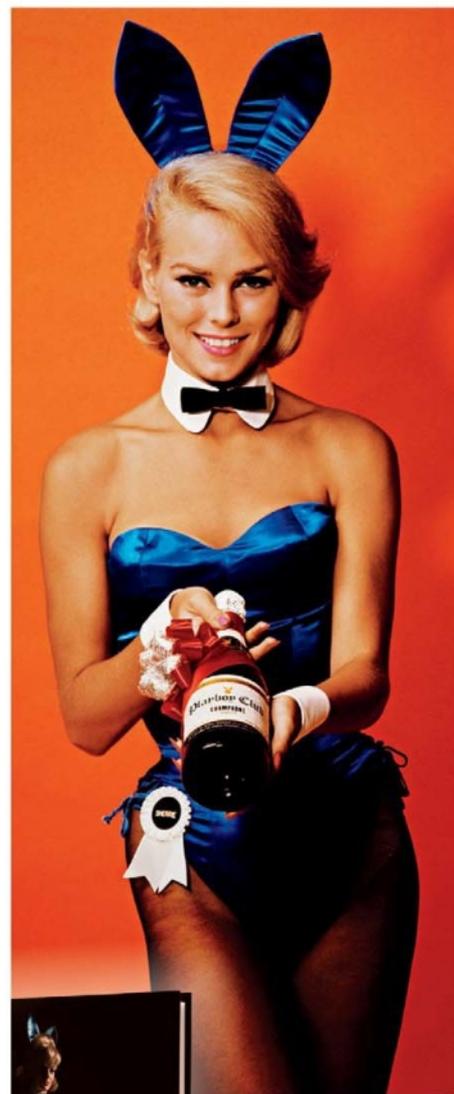
ODOM: Yeah. I pattern my game after that. It's a team sport. If you know how to involve everybody, you have a better chance of winning.

PLAYBOY: Riley loved you, and the Heat made the playoffs. Were you shocked to be traded after one season?

ODOM: Not for who it was for!

PLAYBOY: So because it was for Shaquille O'Neal it was okay?

ODOM: I told Pat, if I had the opportunity to trade Lamar Odom and Caron Butler at that time, in 2004, and get Shaq, I would have too. It's part of business. I could have avoided the trade and told them no, but I understood what his goal was. And if there's one team I would do it for, it's the Lakers. Only good things could happen.



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PLAYBOY: The Heat won the championship two seasons later. Did that hurt at all?
ODOM: That's what he did it for. They better win for that trade-off. But I knew I was going to get mine. Come on, I'm playing with Kobe, and then the next year Phil comes. Something good was going to happen.
PLAYBOY: Riley is known for being a fiery coach, whereas Jackson is very cerebral. How different are their coaching styles?
ODOM: Their styles are completely different. You could have two uncles, and the way they go about disciplining you and what you learn from them is very different. They're just two different people. Their mind-sets are different. Pat is very hands-on and confrontational. He tries to nip things in the bud. Both are good people.

Both are loyal people. But their styles are completely different.
PLAYBOY: When you joined the Lakers did at any point Kobe say to you "We are going to win a championship"?
ODOM: He didn't. That's the thing about being around here—it isn't even something that has to be said. It's a feeling. There's a quiet confidence. It's the way we work, the way we learn together. We meditate together. Anytime you're around a dude like Kobe, you're going to pick up certain habits. His focus is something I can say I've probably picked up throughout the years, and he focuses on being the best.
PLAYBOY: You and Kobe meditate together?
ODOM: Well, no, we do it as a team. We sit there and put ourselves in whatever place

we want to be. The meditation is done together, but who knows what one is meditating about? It's kind of a form of prayer. You block everything out and put yourself in that place you need to be.
PLAYBOY: That sounds like a Phil Jackson thing.
ODOM: That's a Phil Jackson thing. We call it living in the moment. You're living that moment. If you take a shot and miss it and you're not able to put it behind you or put it past you, then you're probably going to miss your next one as well.
PLAYBOY: Bryant has a reputation for being volatile and critical. Did you have to learn to deal with it?
ODOM: I respected it. After a short period I understood that Kobe's trying to accomplish what most people would be scared to even admit.

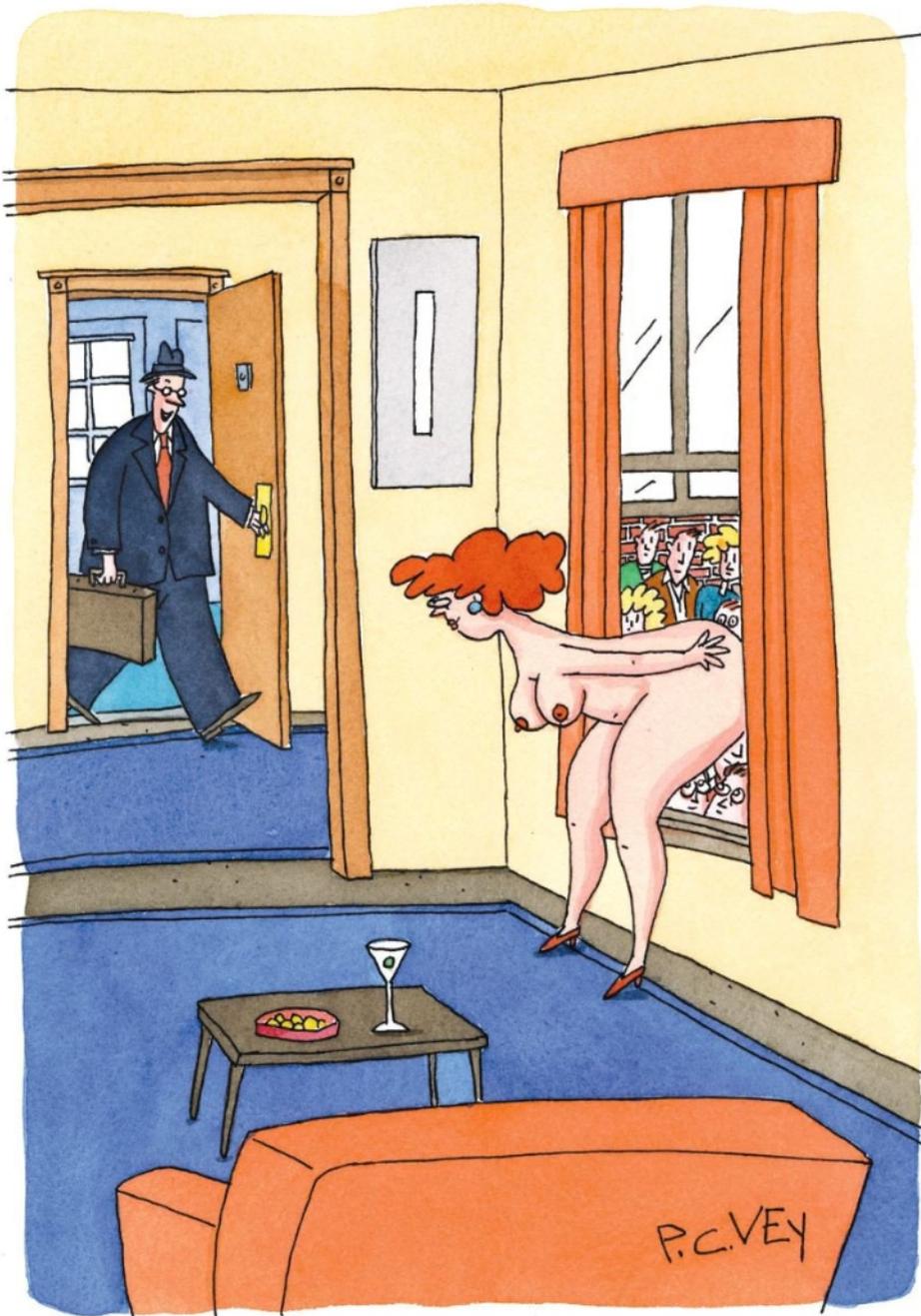
PLAYBOY: And what's that?
ODOM: He wants to be better than Michael Jordan. Most people would be scared to admit that because that guy was that good and did that much. So you have to understand that what Kobe's trying to get as a basketball player and what it takes to get there, a lot of us don't even have the gall, the balls, the will. If you walk into a barbershop right now you can start that argument. He's doing those things to start that argument.

PLAYBOY: You two had an explosive argument during a 2005 game in Washington. Rumors said it almost came to blows.
ODOM: It was nothing. It was blown out of proportion terribly, and when it was over, it was over. It was good. I've seen a lot of teammates come and go. He lets me know in his own way that he appreciates me. But that's that Washington locker room again. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: That's the same locker room where Washington Wizards player Gilbert Arenas allegedly pulled a gun on teammate Javaris Crittenton during a dispute over a gambling debt in 2010. Have you ever seen a gun in an NBA locker room?
ODOM: No. People may have one, but who knows? I don't expect anybody to have a gun and use it. If somebody had a gun in my locker room and I saw it, I'd think he was probably going to target practice. What NBA player is going to shoot somebody, especially a teammate?

PLAYBOY: The Lakers are known for their celebrity fans. Who do you like seeing in the stands?
ODOM: I was surprised at how much Jack Nicholson enjoys the game. He loves the game. To be honest with you, [producer] Joel and Karyn Silver and Denzel Washington as well. Sometimes you think it's just a show from the outside looking in, but being there, you're surprised by how much they get into it. Dyan Cannon yelling, "Play your defense! Play defense!" You're surprised at how much they love to represent that team. They love the city. They love the team.

PLAYBOY: Who yells the most from the stands?
ODOM: Jack. He gets on the refs. He gets on the refs hard. He rides them. He lets them know if they're messing up or if they missed a call. It's as though he's in the game.



"Hey, honey, you won't believe this! There's this gal sticking her butt out a window, with a big red heart drawn on it."

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PLAYBOY: The Lakers' rivalry with the Boston Celtics is legendary. Do you mark those games on your calendar?

ODOM: You don't mark them on your calendar, but you understand they're going to be really intense, especially after they beat us in the finals in 2008 and then with us winning last year. Games this year were really intense. The level of competition just steps up. The game moves at a different speed, gets a little more physical.

PLAYBOY: What's it like to play in Boston?

ODOM: Crazy. You walk around and somebody driving his or her car yells, "Hey, Odom, fuck you! We hate you!" They say it like they mean it, too—not like they're rooting for their team but like they really don't like you. There and Utah, the fans are nuts.

PLAYBOY: Utah? We had them pegged as polite.

ODOM: Everything anyone knows about me that isn't cool, they know. [laughs] They bring up all kinds of things. You'd be surprised. But the one thing I do respect about those places is that they know basketball. They know the game. You hit a nice bounce

pass, you might hear "Oh!" That's when you know you did it.

PLAYBOY: You have two children with a former girlfriend. A third child, your son Jayden, died from sudden infant death syndrome in 2006 at just six months old. How did you deal with that?

ODOM: It was tough. Being a spiritual person helped me get over it. My grandmother passed away in 2003, and my son passed away three years later on the same day she passed away. In fact, it was on her 80th birthday. I was like, damn, maybe she was telling me she got him or something like that. I just thought there was some significance. That's a hell of a coincidence. That helped me get over it, for real, because of my belief in God. People who live like my grandmother and give themselves to God are in good hands. He was a baby. He didn't do anything wrong. A baby's got to be the closest thing to an angel. So my belief helped me get through that, because that was at a time when I was really close to saying "Fuck this shit" and just spazzing out.

PLAYBOY: You said at the time that you

considered leaving basketball. How serious were you?

ODOM: I was serious, but it's hard to give up. I have two other children I have to live for, secure their future, so I had to grip up.

PLAYBOY: During your first game back, against the Phoenix Suns, you had to leave the court and compose yourself. What was happening?

ODOM: It was during the first game of the year. We played Phoenix. I was kicking their ass, you know what I mean? After my son passed away, I was like, "I ain't doing shit." I went to training camp and didn't do anything. I was out of shape. But when I was playing, I was busting their ass. Just the feeling of playing became overwhelming for me. That's when I went, Oh man, maybe he's with me. It was definitely joy.

PLAYBOY: A lot of the stories about you focus on the rough things you've been through. Do you ever wish someone would write about what a fun guy you are?

ODOM: But you know what? They're all parts of me. It's so funny. People on my team are like, "Damn, your life is nuts." But I think I'm funny. I always make people laugh.

PLAYBOY: You seem like a very positive person.

ODOM: Thank you. People are intrigued by that type of shit. People who know me are even intrigued that things like that have happened to me. I seem very happy and easygoing and fun to be around, but if you read a biography of my shit you'd think I was tough and angry. My whole shit is a contradiction, an enigma. I don't know what people gravitate to sometimes. A lot of people identify with fucked-up shit.

PLAYBOY: Knowing your past probably makes it easier for a fan to relate to you. Would you agree?

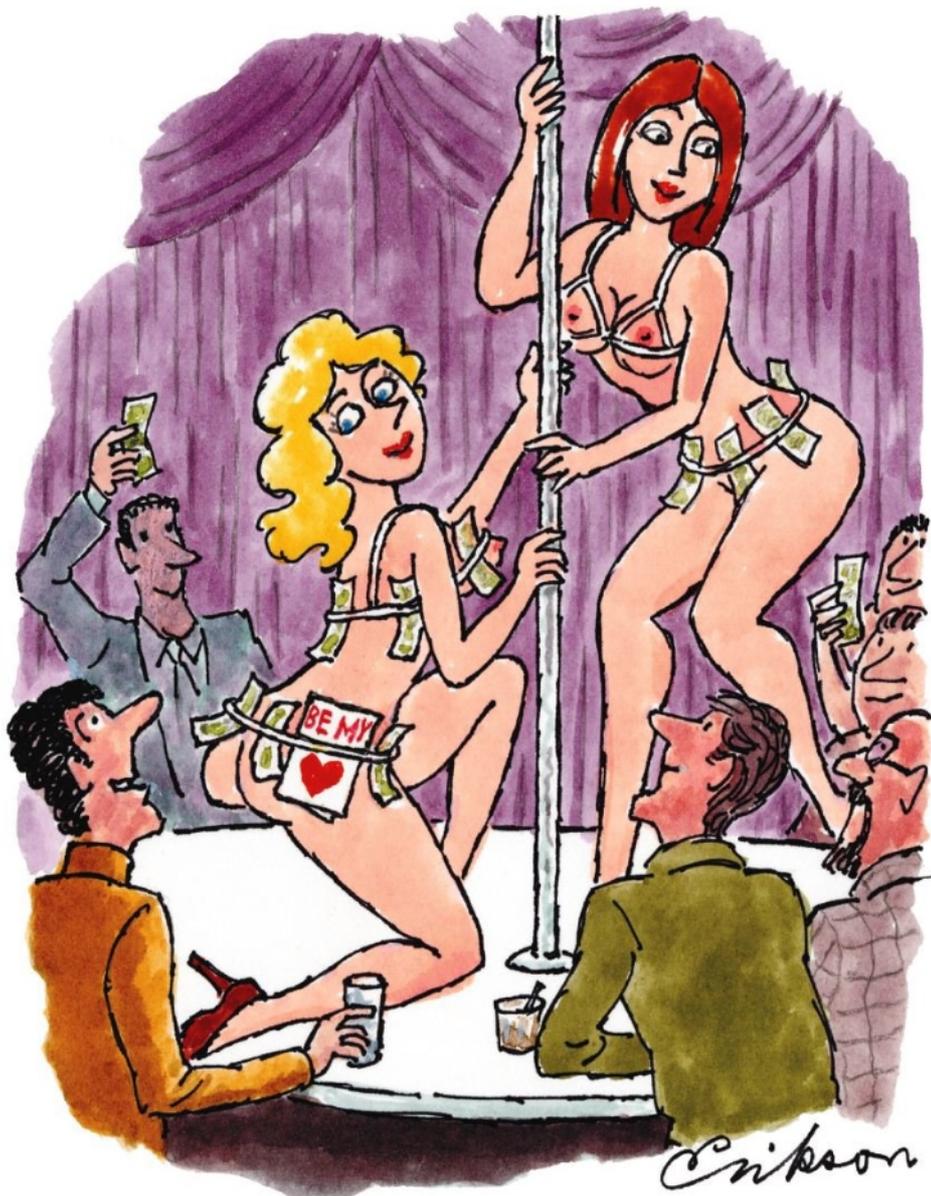
ODOM: Being down-to-earth is the most important. I'm neighborhood, not Hollywood. I love Hollywood. I love L.A. I'm from New York. I get to live in L.A., but I'm a neighborhood type of dude. Those principles and morals never leave me. I could fit in anywhere because of them.

PLAYBOY: You've spent more than 10 years in the league, won two championships and this summer won a gold medal in the 2010 FIBA World Championship. Would it be easier to walk away from basketball now?

ODOM: No. I need to work a little bit more. I still have a couple more things I want to do. There are never enough championships.

PLAYBOY: Some writers have said this season has been some of the most confident ball you've ever played. What do you credit it to?

ODOM: I think it's because I had a summer of work. I'm older and a bit more mature. I'm also in a place and time in my life where all I want is to get better at everything I do, whether it's fatherhood or being a husband or my craft. I'm 31. Who knows how much longer I have to play? I want to be remembered as one of the most versatile and complete players to ever play the game. And I'm at peace, man. That helps. I'm at peace. I'm happy. I'm focused.



NARCO

(continued from page 44)

Calderón and others in the Mexican government have claimed that these murders are mostly a consequence of cartel gangsters killing other gangsters. In fact, the victims comprise a broad swath of Mexican society—women, children, policemen, businessmen, public officials and journalists—leading some observers to note that what is happening in Juárez as a result of the drug war is the full-scale disintegration of civic society.

I arrive at the border crossing on the El Paso side on a hot August morning at six A.M. My guide is an hombre we shall call Christopher. Although Christopher is a gringo, he knows Juárez like the back of his hand. For seven years, from 1997 to 2004, Christopher lived as a heroin addict in one of Juárez's toughest *colonias*, or slums, situated on the hillside overlooking downtown and across the Rio Grande into El Paso.

My intention is to get a visual sense of the *colonia* known as Felipe Angeles, believed to be a home base of the Azteca gang, which has been identified as the culprit behind the murders of Enriquez, Redelfs and Salcido. My guide tells me, "We must go early, before most people are awake, like the Comanche used to do it."

We cross through the checkpoint on foot, passing over the brackish, bone-dry Rio Grande, then grab a bus in downtown Juárez. The bus rumbles through the mostly deserted streets of downtown, along Avenida 16 de Septiembre toward Felipe Angeles. After 10 minutes we exit the bus and walk the rest of the way, up a steep hill into *el barrio*.

We pass a police station, where half a dozen municipal cops are arriving for work. They look at us, two gringos walking alone through *el barrio* before the sun has risen, as if we must be escapees from a mental institution. Curiosity becomes hostility; we are outside the norm and therefore suspicious. A few minutes later I notice a police jeep following us at a distance.

"We are being clocked," I tell Chris.

"No big deal," he says. "The way we're going, they won't be able to follow."

Chris leads me off the streets to narrow gravel pathways, up rocky cliffs and down hills that no car or jeep could traverse, on our way to find an old friend of his by the name of Chavito. At this hour the only inhabitants are goats, mangy dogs and runaway chickens.

We find Chavito, whose home is more like a garage than a house. In the yard is the shell of an abandoned ambulance. We rustle Chavito out of bed. He and Chris embrace.

Chavito is around 50 years old, grizzled, with many missing teeth and a sweet disposition. His stomach is alarmingly distended, he says, from a recent surgery gone wrong. He occasionally winces in pain.

Chris and Chavito talk about old times. Excitedly, Chavito tells a story that is both shocking and familiar:

When Chavito and Chris were at the rehab clinic down the street, they became friendly

with two recovering addicts named Carlos and Juan Pablo. Eventually, Carlos and Juan Pablo left and organized their own rehab clinic, a converted house in downtown Juárez that they named El Aliviane. Eventually, Carlos relapsed and again started using heroin; he also became a member of the Aztecas.

The Aztecas have a rule about dope: You can sell it, but if you become a user yourself, oftentimes you are killed. Carlos was targeted for execution. According to Chavito, Juan Pablo met with leaders of the gang and said, "Please don't kill Carlos. In fact, your policy of killing the addicts among you is wrong. It is inhumane. Please let me take in the Azteca dope addicts and I will show you that they can be cured. They can be saved."

The Azteca leadership agreed. A number of gang members, including Carlos, were allowed to stay at El Aliviane, which supplied a mattress, a place to sleep and a roof overhead.

The problem was that a rival drug organization caught wind of the fact that a number of Aztecas were now residing at El Aliviane. One night in early September 2009, the Sinaloa drug cartel, which is engaged in a turf war with the Juárez cartel for control of drug distribution routes, sent a team of *sicarios*, or assassins, to the clinic. Wearing hoods and carrying submachine guns, they busted down doors and stormed the house. Although only five or six of the 20 people present were Azteca gang members, the assassins did not discriminate. They rounded up the rehab patients—including Carlos—and made them line up against a wall, then slaughtered them with staccato blasts of machine-gun fire.

Chavito fights back tears as he says, "Most of the victims were innocent. They were not *vatos locos* [gang brothers]. They were addicts trying to get better. They did not deserve to die."

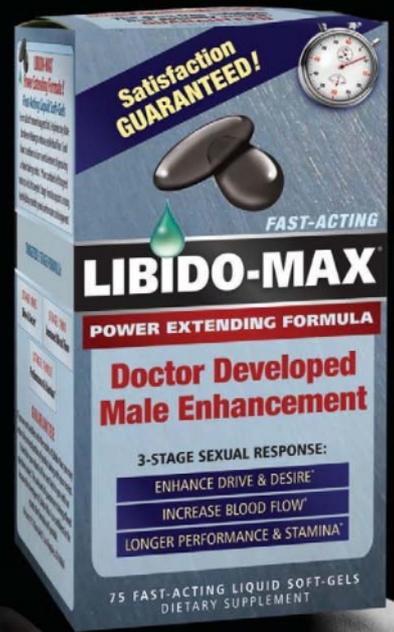
As we ride the bus out of Felipe Angeles back toward the border crossing to the U.S., Christopher tells me he is saddened but not entirely surprised by Carlos's death. "I always had the feeling he needed to be part of a group, to belong to something," he says. "He was big on group identity and group loyalty."

The Barrio Azteca gang, like most street-level criminal organizations, was founded on the concept of group loyalty and identity. Its origins are on the U.S. side of the border, in the Texas state prison system, where, in the mid-1980s, the Aztecas formed as an amalgam of various street gangs. As *vatos* were paroled or completed their sentences and returned to the streets, they became prominent in neighborhoods in El Paso and other cities in Texas and parts of New Mexico. Some of the gang members were Mexican nationals who, upon release from prison in the U.S., were deported to Mexico, where they formed Azteca chapters in Felipe Angeles and other barrios, as well as in the prison systems in Juárez and elsewhere in the state of Chihuahua.

"The gang spread like a virus," says David Cuthbertson, special agent in charge of the FBI's El Paso Division. "In a short time they became the dominant street organization that sold narcotics in El Paso and conducted

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other criminal activity such as collecting *cuota* ["tax"] from nonaffiliated drug dealers."

Given the gang's cross-border affiliations, it was natural that the Barrio Azteca would be absorbed into the preeminent cartel in Juárez, led at the time by the ambitious drug lord Amado Carrillo Fuentes. Carrillo died on the operating table in 1997 while undergoing plastic surgery to alter his appearance. While he was alive, Carrillo put the gang to work as street enforcers and contract killers. If anything, the role of the Aztecas under the cartel's current overlord, Amado's brother Vicente Carrillo Fuentes, has grown. The gang organizes and carries out most of the cartel's major hits and also plays a key role in narcotics distribution and sales.

"If you think of the cartel as a corporation," says Cuthbertson, "with a CEO and directors overseeing different aspects like logistics, production, transportation and so forth, then the Barrio Azteca represents the security wing. Structurally they are more in the nature of a paramilitary organization, with capos, sergeants and foot soldiers. They serve as contractors for the corporation, but they also do things on their own; they are not obliged to do crimes only on behalf of the corporation."

Many Barrio Azteca gang members on the U.S. side of the border have a distinguishing tattoo: Stenciled somewhere on their body are the numerals 2 and 1, representing the second and first letters of the alphabet, B and A, which stand for *Barrio Azteca*. Others may bear Aztec symbols on their skin.

As with most street gangs of any ethnicity, the quickest way to rise within the Azteca structure is through acts of criminal daring and violence.

One person whose pathway into the gang and ascension within its ranks followed the usual pattern is Jesús Ernesto Chávez Castillo, whose nickname is El Camello, the Camel. Chávez was born in 1969 in Juárez but moved to El Paso with his family when he was 17. An early brush with the law came in 1995 when he was arrested attempting to sell marijuana to undercover officers from the El Paso Police Department. He pleaded guilty to a reduced charge and was given probation. Later, in 2001, Chávez was charged with "intoxicated assault"; he

was driving drunk when he crashed into another vehicle, seriously injuring four people. Again, he pleaded guilty, but this time he was deported from the U.S. to Mexico.

Chávez seems to have moved back and forth between Juárez and El Paso on a semi-regular basis. He had two marriages in the U.S. and fathered three children. In February 2003 he was detained on the U.S. side of the border. When he lied to border patrol agents about his status—a federal offense—he was charged with illegal reentry.

Chávez's lawyer at the time was Carlos Spector, a renowned El Paso immigration attorney who recently represented several Mexican journalists seeking asylum in the U.S. on the grounds that their lives had been threatened not only by gangsters but by members of the Mexican military. Spector remembers Chávez as "a tough hombre, obviously a guy from the streets" but not a high-ranking or connected member of any cartel or gang. The manner by which Chávez, a lowly street thug, became the notorious El Camello is a tale that Spector says could be called "the making of a *sicario*."

After being found guilty of illegal reentry, Chávez received a mandatory sentence of 20 years. He was sent to the notorious La Tuna Federal Correctional Institution, ruled from within by the Barrio Azteca. By the time Chávez was released after serving five years, he was a hardened gangster with criminal contacts on both sides of the border.

A spokesman for the Mexican Federal Police in Juárez says that Chávez confessed not only to his role in the killing of Enriquez, Redelfs and Salcido in March but also to the January slaughter of 15 people, including 11 teenagers, at a birthday party in the Villas del Salvarcar barrio of Juárez. That killing, authorities say, was a case of mistaken identity; Chávez participated in the slaughter believing the students were members of a rival gang known as *Artistas Asesinos* ("Artist Assassins").

Since his arrest, Chávez has been paraded on Mexican television, and his confession is cited as a major victory for the forces of the law. But for some who follow the narco scene in Mexico, the confession has a bad smell. It is not uncommon, they say, for a member of the Barrio Azteca to step up and take

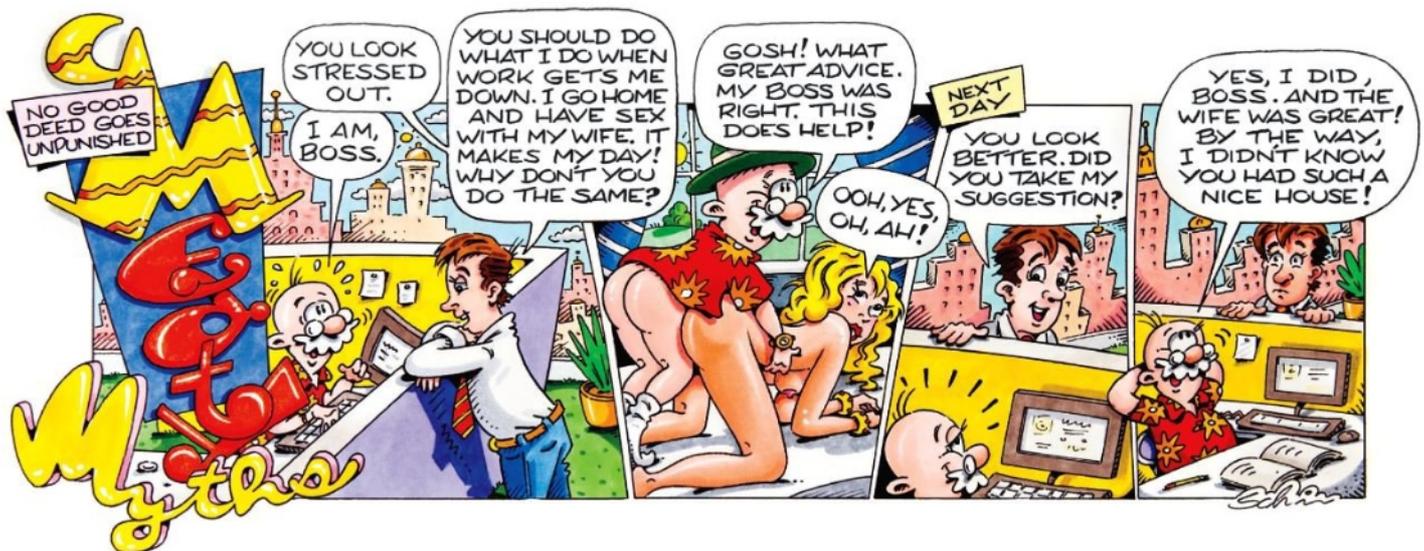
the fall for a crime he may or may not have committed, simply to satisfy the demands of the system. It is an arrangement designed to benefit both law enforcement and the gang: Government authorities get to parade the "perpetrator" before the public, and in return the investigation goes no further.

The gang member who is put forth to take one for the team goes off to prison, which is, in fact, the central base of operations of the Barrio Azteca. He enters prison revered by his fellow gang members for having sacrificed his freedom, and he leaves prison an even higher-ranking member of the gang than he was before he went in.

FBI special agent Samantha Mikeska, who heads a special unit devoted solely to investigating the Barrio Azteca gang, is aware of the quandary. Like many cops and agents working the borderland, Mikeska has a personal as well as professional imperative. In 2002, while participating in a sting against thieves who targeted cargo trains at the border, Mikeska and another agent were brutally assaulted with sticks, rocks and a baseball bat until a fellow agent arrived and opened fire, chasing the gangsters away. Mikeska suffered a fractured cheekbone, a fractured orbital bone of the left eye, retinal hemorrhaging, a fractured vertebra, a ruptured cervical disk and wounds to her face and body. When she returned to work six weeks later, it was with seven plates and two pins in her left eye area and a plate and four screws in her neck.

"I got my butt kicked," she says. "Afterward there were psychological issues, physical issues, but you have to learn to separate what happened from the responsibilities of your job. This is what I do; I'm sworn to try and make the world a better place. You adapt and overcome."

In 2008 Mikeska was part of a task force that arrested and successfully prosecuted six Barrio Azteca leaders and associates on RICO charges. "To be honest," she says, "I sometimes think we made them stronger. We basically put them in the same area, where they are not 100 percent monitored. At least when they were out on the street, we could monitor them; we knew what they were up to. Prison commingles them into one big unit, and they have access to smuggled



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telephones, letters, phone privileges; they have a line of communications within the prison system that is strong.”

Since the 2008 convictions, Mikeska and her unit have been on the hunt for one Azteca in particular, Eduardo “Tablas” Ravelo, believed to be the gang’s boss on the Juárez side of the border. Ravelo is currently on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list. There is a warrant out for his arrest in both the U.S. and Mexico. “He is a thug and a ruthless killer,” says Mikeska. “His power is based partly on the fact that he has a lot of law enforcement in his pocket. As we all know, there is some corrupt law enforcement over there. Things are not investigated to the fullest.”

Given the nature of corruption in Mexico, I ask Mikeska if she is able to share information with her counterparts across the border. She looks at her supervisor, who has been sitting in on our interview, and asks, “How do I answer that?”

“Carefully,” says the supervisor.

Mikeska smiles ruefully and says, “I don’t share anything with the Mexican government. I really don’t. I have not been successful in gathering information from that side. A lot of the investigation I do is strictly in the U.S. Ravelo’s name comes up; we know he is in Juárez. The names come up, but to actually go over and pursue investigative techniques in Mexico is pretty much impossible. Does that answer your question?”

In the narco-sphere, things are not always what they appear to be. Four months after the killing of the U.S. consulate worker and her husband, an incident occurs in Juárez that, at the time, represents a new downward demarcation in the narco war. On Avenida 16 de Septiembre a car bomb is detonated, killing four people and injuring 11 others. It is the first use of a car bomb in Mexico’s drug war, evoking the tactics of Iraqi insurgents and the narco-terrorism that wracked Colombia in the 1990s.

The bombing is the result of a diabolical deception. Earlier that day, gangsters affiliated with the Juárez cartel kidnap the owner of an auto repair shop, dress him in a police uniform and then shoot him—not to kill him but to fill him with bullet holes so he bleeds profusely. They then leave him incapacitated near Avenida 16 de Septiembre and Bolivia Street. A doctor in a nearby office hears the man screaming for help and responds to the scene. A policeman also responds, arriving to aid what appears to be a fellow officer in distress. What they do not know is that the gangsters placed a call to emergency services to bring officials into the trap and that they have planted 22 kilos of C-4 explosives in a nearby car, which they detonate via cell phone. The doctor, policeman, rescue worker and a bystander are blown to smithereens.

Almost immediately, Mexico’s federal police issue a statement that the ambush was perpetrated by La Línea, a wing of the Juárez cartel, in retaliation for the arrest days earlier of a prominent cartel leader. Soon after, a statement—understood to be from La Línea—appears pinned to the fence of a local primary school. It claims responsibility for the

incident but states it was in response to corrupt Chihuahua police intelligence officials acting in consort with La Línea’s main rival, the Sinaloa cartel. The statement reads, “FBI and DEA, start investigating officials who give support to the Sinaloa cartel, because if not, we will use more car bombs [against] those federal agents.”

For those who closely follow the narco war, La Línea’s accusations of corruption have a familiar ring. Ever since President Calderón unleashed the Mexican military to become more directly involved in the conflict, La Línea and the Juárez cartel have been taking a beating at the hands of the Sinaloa cartel. Led by Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán—a ruthless drug lord who, according to *Forbes* magazine, is one of the wealthiest men in the world—the Sinaloa cartel has emerged as the most powerful criminal organization in all of Mexico. Compared with the Juárez cartel, it has experienced remarkably few crackdowns at the hands of Mexican military police. The Sinaloa cartel appears to be operating with near impunity.

Some in the press—including National Public Radio, which broadcast an investigative report in May—have suggested that the Calderón administration has formed an alliance with the Sinaloa cartel. A benign interpretation of the theory is that by establishing hegemony in the narco trade, officials feel one cartel in charge will cause less mayhem and murder across the land. Calderón’s administration has denied the accusation.

The car bombing in Juárez is followed by events that seem to be aimed at U.S. interests in Mexico. A series of threats forces the closing of the U.S. consulate in the city for periods of three and four days throughout the summer. After La Línea’s demand that the U.S. government investigate connections between corrupt Mexican officials and the Sinaloa cartel or by a specified date there will be a massive bombing, the U.S. consulate closes. When the date passes without incident, the consulate reopens.

The question arises: Why is the Juárez cartel and its security arm La Línea focusing their wrath on the U.S. government?

One organization that is very interested in this question is Stratfor, an Austin-based company whose team of intelligence professionals analyzes world events for business leaders, investors, law enforcement officials and government agencies. In August, in an internal report entitled “Mexico’s Juárez Cartel Gets Desperate,” Stratfor notes that the actions of the Juárez cartel appear designed to prevent the Sinaloa cartel from taking over “the Plaza.”

In Mexican narco-speak, the Plaza refers to a cartel stronghold, secured by the complex set of relationships among traffickers, law enforcement agencies and local governments that makes it possible for an organization to control the narco trade in a given region. Whoever controls the Plaza by paying off police and public officials—and through extortion, intimidation and murder of the civilian population—reigns as the supreme overlord of crime in that area.

“As we noted some months back,” states the Stratfor report, “there have been persistent rumors that the Mexican government has favored the Sinaloa cartel.... Whether

or not such charges are true, it is quite evident that the Juárez cartel believes them to be so, and has acted accordingly." In a reference to Jesús Ernesto Chávez Castillo, alleged mastermind of the Enriquez-Redelfs hit, the report adds, "According to *El Diario* [a daily newspaper published in Juárez], the arrested Azteca member said that a decision was made by leaders in the Barrio Azteca gang and Juárez cartel to attack U.S. citizens in the Juárez area in an effort to force the U.S. government to intervene in the Mexican government's war against the cartels and act as a 'neutral referee,' thereby helping to counter the Mexican government's favoritism toward El Chapo and the Sinaloa Federation."

The Stratfor conclusions resonate throughout U.S. law enforcement; many agents I interview tell me it is a "solid theory." It is also an advanced state-of-war strategy in which lives are cruelly sacrificed for a larger objective and events are presented in the public domain in a way that is often a deliberate obfuscation of the manipulations and maneuverings for control that lie below the surface.

It is a sweltering afternoon, and I am back in Juárez. This time my guide is José Mario Sánchez Soledad, a former assistant to the mayor of Juárez and former head of the city planning commission who is now a proud member of the Juárez city council. Sánchez is erudite and passionate. Along with his career in politics, he is an opera singer and the owner of a modest-size furniture-manufacturing business.

Like many people born in Juárez, Sánchez grew up on both sides of the border. "I used to tell people I was very lucky. I grew up in two cultures: the strong family life of Mexican culture and, on the other side, the economic and educational opportunities of the United States." In the borderland it is common for families and family businesses to exist in a binational universe, but with the narco terror have come drastic changes. According to Alfredo Corchado, who covers the border beat for *The Dallas Morning News*, Ciudad Juárez has lost more than 10,000 private businesses in recent years. Many have closed or moved across the border to El Paso due to extortion and kidnappings by gangsters. The climate of violence has brought

about a mass exodus; the civilian population has decreased by about 200,000 since late 2007.

"It is heartbreaking," says Sánchez. "We can feel our city slipping through our fingers, and there is nothing we can do about it."

The devotion that Sánchez feels for Juárez is infectious; he begins his tour downtown, near the Mission de Guadalupe, with a treatise on the historical forces that shaped what has traditionally been Mexico's most unique and thriving border culture. It is the middle of a workday afternoon. Traffic on the streets, which used to crawl with migrant *comerciantes* ("merchants") from all over Mexico, as well as with U.S. tourists and soldiers from Fort Bliss across the border in El Paso, has slowed to a trickle. Fort Bliss discourages its soldiers from crossing

de Septiembre, my guide casually points out the location where, three weeks earlier, La Línea detonated its car bomb. The sidewalk has been blown away, and the wall of a nearby building is pockmarked with shrapnel from the explosion. It looks like exactly what it is: an urban street corner that has been hit by a bomb.

We head out of the city into the desert. Sánchez wants to show me the maquiladoras, the massive factories that expanded exponentially in the wake of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Sánchez is not entirely critical of the factories; he acknowledges that right now they are the only form of steady employment in the area. But he notes that they have sucked the economic life out of the city center. The working population has been lured

into the desert by multinational corporations to work the assembly lines and manufacturing plants for wages as low as \$4.21 a day. The multinationals pay low taxes and are provided cheap labor. Business is good. In the last year and a half, the Juárez maquiladora industry has added more than 22,000 new jobs.

Meanwhile, back in Juárez, the manufacturing base of the city has been gutted. Into the breach have stepped drug lords and gangsters who shoot it out with one another, as well as with municipal police, *federales* and the military, on a nightly basis.

"The city has been left to die," says Sánchez. "There is no movement toward urban planning or commercial development. Is there any wonder that those

who are left behind in the city turn to illegal activities? The illegal activities in Juárez are thriving, while legal commercial employment is going away."

Even more depressing than the hulking factories in the desert is the tract housing that has been constructed for the maquiladora employees. Squat, confining, monotonous by design, the desert projects are a crass form of human warehousing. In the city, *colonias* like Felipe Angeles are poverty-ridden and perilously unsanitary, but at least they feel like communities compared with the maquiladora industrial parks, where company buses pick workers up for their shift and take them to the factory and back in a soul-destroying cycle of cheap labor and subsistence.

(concluded on page 126) 123

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the border. The reasons for this were made clear in October when a soldier from the Texas National Guard, Private First Class José Gil Hernández Ramírez, 22, was shot dead on a street in south Juárez. The reasons for his killing are being investigated but remain unknown.

Unsolved murders contribute to a mood of fear, which descends over Juárez as the day wears on, with people hustling to take care of business and cross over to the U.S. side before nightfall. After dark, the sound of gunfire is not uncommon; the bodies of murder victims are dumped in streets, in parks or on the dusty banks of the Rio Grande.

Pointing out the sites of narco murders, body disposals and other criminal atrocities is a familiar parlor game in Juárez. In Sánchez's car, as we drive along Avenida 16



PLAYMATE NEWS



THE LADY IS A STAMP

Eat your heart out, Gmail. In the U.K., Miss December 2005 Christine Smith gives philately a new jolt of sexy as her smiling face adorns these collectibles. “My fans send them to me to sign,” she says. But how did a Utah girl find herself on countless British envelopes? Her appearance on a U.K. radio show charmed a British stamp maker. Buy them at her website (christinesmith.co).



ORIGINAL SHOWGIRL

In October, the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* named Miss April 1958 Felicia Atkins one of the best showgirls of all time. The native Australian began her 19-year run as a member of the Follies Bergere topless revue at the Tropicana Las Vegas hotel and casino just after appearing in our pages. “You held your breath when you saw her,” a former rival company manager told the *Review-Journal*. “She did not have any classical training, but she made up for that. She was very well-endowed.”

FLASHBACK



Twenty-five years ago this month we met Miss February 1986 **Julie Michelle McCullough**. These days, Julie (a.k.a. the Funny Bunny) performs stand-up comedy around the country; she has even traveled to Afghanistan to make our troops laugh. Allow her to share a joke about her silver anniversary with **PLAYBOY**. “Here’s the problem with being an older Playmate: When I’m at the Mansion and a guy is interested in me, a younger Playmate will clam jack me—the female equivalent of being cockblocked.”

Want to SEE MORE PLAYMATES—or more of these Playmates? You can check out the Club at club.playboy.com and access the mobile-optimized site playboy.com from your phone.

DID YOU KNOW ?

The winner of the college poker tournament at GR88.com gets to party with PMOY 2010 **Hope Dworaczyk**.

Miss April 1978 **Pamela Jean Bryant** passed away in early December at the age of 51.

The first sign you’re getting older is “when the Playmate of the Month is younger than you,” says screenwriter **Aaron Sorkin**.

Miss November 2010 **Shera Bechard** says she



grew up geeky and without friends or dates. "Guys were like, 'Ugh!'" We bet the men of her small Canadian hometown would choose their words more carefully today!

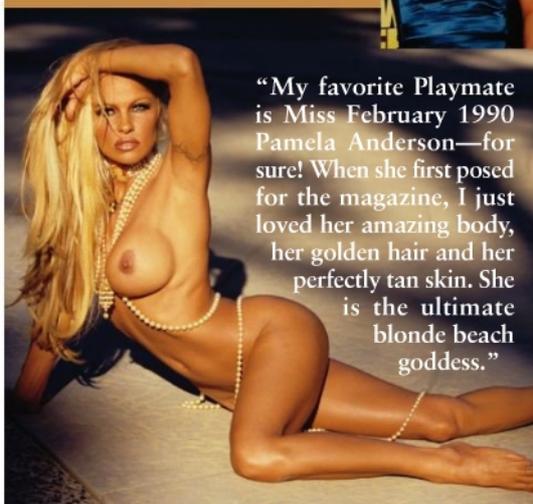
AURAL PLEASURE

"Music is something I need. I wouldn't know what to do without it," Miss July 2003 Marketa Janska told us before she made her debut on iTunes in November. The Czech-born Playmate collaborated with an all-star producer who had previously worked with American songstress Christina Aguilera. Marketa's music is a combination of folk and pop; her influences vary from Mariah Carey to the Cure to Bob Dylan. Her inspiration comes from the heart—especially when it's broken. "I write about relationships, heartbreak and longing—that sort of stuff."

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

BY RILEY STEELE

—adult film star and actress in *Piranha 3D*



"My favorite Playmate is Miss February 1990 Pamela Anderson—for sure! When she first posed for the magazine, I just loved her amazing body, her golden hair and her perfectly tan skin. She is the ultimate blonde beach goddess."



PLAYMATE GOSSIP

The most powerful woman in the world, Oprah Winfrey, invited Miss December 1979 **Candace Collins** (now Jordan) to dine with her at Chicago Cut Steakhouse, where the talk show host graciously ordered an expensive bottle of wine for the table. The night was surreal, reports Candace.... What's better than celebrating your 21st birthday in Las Vegas surrounded by Playmates? Nothing.



Just ask Miss March 2010 **Kyra Milan**, who celebrated her milestone day in Sin City with Miss May 2010 **Kassie Lyn Logsdon** and Miss April 2010 **Amy Leigh Andrews**.... The Playmate Dancers—Miss June 2004 **Hiromi Oshima**, Miss November 2002 **Serria Tawan** and Miss May 1998 **Deanna Brooks** among them—dazzled our armed forces during the second annual Salute the Troops Festival in Woodlake, California.... A bevy of Playmates



modeled sexy Halloween costumes on *Good Day L.A.* With host Steve Edwards are Miss September 2009 **Kimberly Phillips** dressed



as a gangster, Miss July 2000 **Nefertari Shepherd** as a Native American princess, Playmate of the Year 2009 **Ida Ljungqvist** as the Queen of Hearts, Miss December 2009 **Crystal Harris** as a pirate and Miss August 2004 **Pilar Lastra** as a cop.



PLAYMATE ATTACK

Earlier in the winter Playmate of the Year 2007 Sara Jean Underwood filled in as guest co-host of G4's geeky news program *Attack of the Show!* "I hope I don't mess up my lines live on air," she tweeted beforehand. She needn't have worried—believe it or not, the producers actually required her to belch throughout an entire segment.

PMOY 2008 **Jayde Nicole** ended her relationship with Las Vegas nightclub impresario Jesse Waits.

Miss February 2003 **Charis Boyle** (now Burrett) attended the birthday fete for designers To-Tam and To-Nya Sachika.

DID YOU KNOW ?



NARCO

(continued from page 123)

Of the desert housing complexes, Sánchez says, “Many of these projects have become prime locations for recruitment by gangs like the Aztecas and Artistas Asesinos.”

We continue farther into the desert. It is Sánchez’s intention to show me the flimsy, near-comical border fence, which runs for a few miles and then abruptly ends in the middle of the desert. He points out surveillance posts and border patrol checkpoints, where vehicles are routinely stopped and searched for illegal contraband. As we drive along through fields of brown desert soil and sagebrush, I ask Sánchez about living with the fear and threat of violence that is so prevalent in the area.

“Most of all,” he says, “we worry for our children.”

He tells me a story: One night, his two teenage sons attended a birthday party outside the city, not far from where we are now driving. The party was held at a friend’s house. There were close to two dozen guests, all of them teenagers. Two of the attendees, friends of Sánchez’s sons, left the party early—around nine P.M.—to return home. As they were driving back through the desert, they were forced off the road by another car. Gunmen got out of the car, pulled the two teenagers from their car and executed them along the side of the road. Like many killings in Juárez, it made no sense: It is believed that the murders were a case of mistaken identity.

“It was horrifying,” says Sánchez. “My sons were in shock.”

As he remembers these events and relates them to me, Sánchez begins to cry. He is a grown man, driving through the desert with a recent acquaintance, and he is weeping uncontrollably. The sense of tragedy is overwhelming.

Sánchez gathers himself, wipes the wetness from his eyes and says, “I want you to know, I am not crying for myself or even for my children. I am crying for my city. I am crying for Mexico.”

After two weeks of investigation in Juárez, I am not satisfied. The Mexican authorities’ acceptance of Chávez’s explanation that Lesley Enriquez was murdered because she was corrupt is typical, part of a dubious pattern. In Mexico, when a prominent person is murdered, authorities often present to the public that the victim was in cahoots with the cartels and therefore his or her death was perhaps inevitable. I speak with Redelfs’s former partner, a corrections officer in El Paso named Mike Hernandez, who worked alongside Redelfs for five years. “He was a total professional,” Hernandez says of his murdered partner. “He was a good family man and great all-around guy. What [authorities in Mexico] have said about him is bullshit.”

A memorial service for Redelfs and his wife is held at a Mormon church. Redelfs was active in the church (Enriquez was not a member) and the couple appeared squeaky clean, according to those who knew them.

I am prepared to believe they are innocent victims who have been slandered in death, but then I hear from a source in the DEA who has agreed to pass along the results of an internal investigation. He is an active special agent currently on the job; I am not able to use his name because he is not authorized to communicate with me.

Of Enriquez and Redelfs, in three simple words the DEA source says, “They were dirty.” I ask for more details, which he declines to divulge, saying only that a federal law enforcement investigation in the U.S. confirms what the Mexican authorities

have alleged: that Lesley Enriquez and her husband were on the take.

I speak with Phil Jordan, the retired DEA director who spent more than 30 years investigating drug trafficking. I tell him I am still having a hard time accepting Enriquez and Redelfs as having been in bed with the *narcotraficantes* when, by all outward appearances, they were, as one source told me, “goody two-shoes.”

“Well,” Jordan says, “don’t you think that if you were involved in corrupt activities with narcos, to present yourself as upstanding citizens and religious people might be the best possible cover?”

By fall 2010 their murders are no longer a major news item. A story that had initially riled the righteous indignation of U.S. officials, including the president, a story of innocent U.S. citizens and federal employees gunned down for no good reason, has evolved into something far more complex and disillusioning. As is often the case in the war on drugs, it turns out that corruption was the heart of the matter after all.

The shocking level of violence has accelerated. In late July eight severed heads of murder victims are found neatly lined up along a highway in the state of Durango. No one knows how they got there. In that same month it is reported that the warden of a Durango prison allowed inmates to leave the prison, carry out murders for the local cartel and then return safely to their cells. This story is presented as a positive development, seeing as the warden was arrested for the crime. In late August the bodies of 72 people who were attempting to enter the U.S. are found in a mass grave, one of numerous such sites discovered in the desert in the past year. This particular massacre is attributed to Los Zetas, a fearsome cartel composed of former members of the Mexican military who were originally trained by the U.S. military.

In late November, Mexican authorities arrest a man they claim is the leader of the Azteca gang in Juárez. The suspect allegedly tells federal police that he is responsible for 80 percent of the city’s killings since August 2009. This is given major play in the press, including *The New York Times*, even though U.S. agents say this man’s name does not appear anywhere in their records of known Azteca leaders.

A victory for the forces of the law or a cheap PR stunt? It is hard to know. Meanwhile, the cycle of violence continues to escalate, partly because the governments of Mexico and the U.S. have committed themselves to a strategy of all-out war from which they say they will never back down. In the public domain, the fog of war hovers along with the pollution and dust that sometimes engulf Ciudad Juárez. When atrocities occur, key details are omitted from news reports, public officials put forth versions of events that are incomplete or outright lies, people are terrified and afraid to tell anyone what they have seen or what they know. There appears to be no end in sight.

Welcome to the narcosphere.



“I’m not flying anywhere...I’m just here for the strip search.”

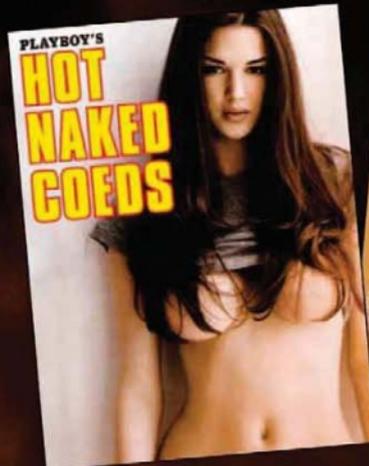




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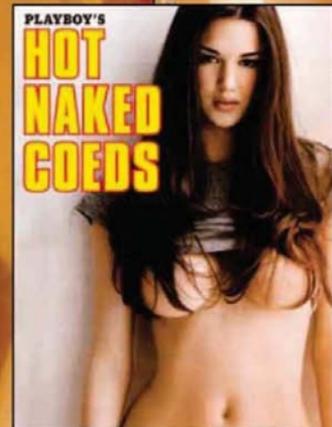
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PLAYBOY FORUM

THE FOLLY OF AGE

WE HEAR MORE ABOUT THE WISDOM OF THE ELDERLY AS OUR POPULATION AGES. BUT WHAT'S SO SMART ABOUT BEING OLD?

BY SUSAN JACOBY

As the oldest baby boomers turn 65 this year, we are basking in a predictable barrage of “forever young” propaganda proclaiming that *our* old age won't look anything like that of our parents and grandparents. It's easy to maintain this cheery outlook as long as we remain among the so-called “young old,” as demographers classify people under the age of 80. But if we live longer than any previous generation and 90 doesn't turn out to be “the new 50”—the absurd premise of a panel at the World Science Festival several years ago—we can still aspire to that hoariest of clichés, the “wisdom of old age.” The trouble with this reverential, socially correct view of aging is that there is about as much proof of the wisdom of old age as there is of the medical efficacy of holy water from Lourdes.

I am not talking about people who have lost their memory to dementia (which afflicts nearly half those over 85, with Alzheimer's the most common form) but about the lucky 50 percent who retain their mental faculties and remain engaged with life. But keeping one's wits does not necessarily lead to wisdom. Since both profound wisdom and common sense are relatively uncommon at any age, it seems illogical that these desirable qualities should manifest themselves more frequently among those of advanced age.

The healthy old, in private and public roles, seem to me to be exactly who they were in earlier adult life—only more so. A parent who bullied his or her children at 40 does not turn into a compassionate, empathetic grandma or grandpa through the magic of longevity. A politician who made disastrous mistakes exercising power in middle age does not become a wise elder statesman simply by surviving for several decades after leaving office (though Americans often act as if this were the case).

Consider Henry Kissinger's memoir *Crisis*, written at the age of 80. Kissinger's push to extend the Vietnam war into Cambodia in 1970 is widely regarded (except by the far

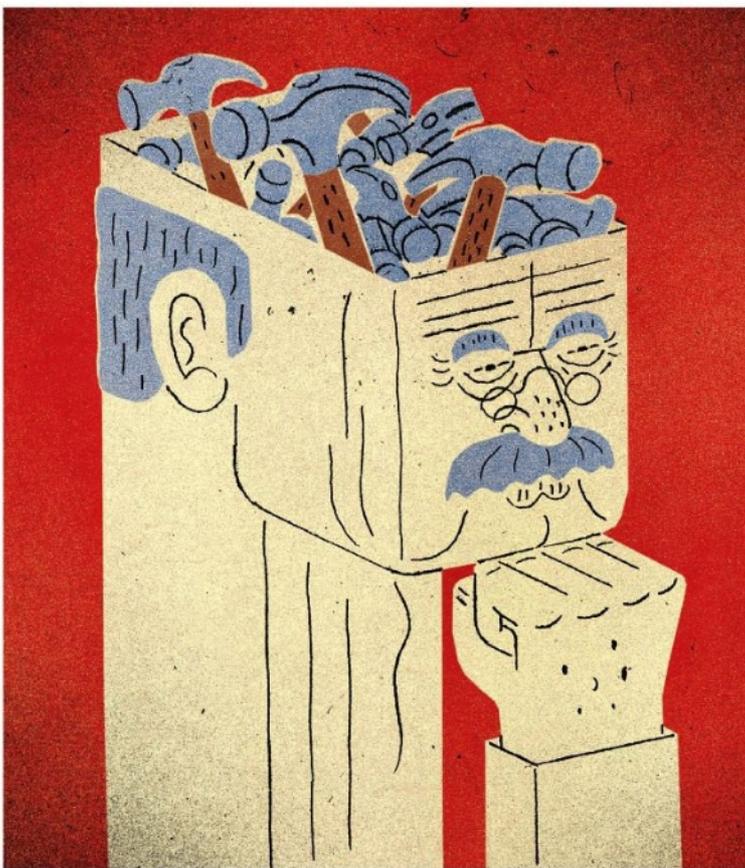
right) as one of the major American foreign policy disasters of the 20th century. Justifying himself endlessly, he concludes, “For the sake of our long-term peace of mind, we must someday undertake an assessment of why good men on all sides found no way to avoid this disaster.” It never occurs to Kissinger to wonder whether he and his boss, Richard Nixon, were really good or wise. In short, he is as arrogant in his 80s as he was in his 40s. But you'll never hear a reporter ask him a tough question when he deigns to comment, in the role of wise elder talking head, about a new foreign policy crisis.

Two fundamentally misguided assumptions feed the myth of old-age wisdom. The first is the idea that personal experience is always the best teacher. The second premise, which simultaneously sentimentalizes and patronizes the old, asserts that older means wiser because the old (certainly the oldest of the old) have risen above the ambitions and passions of youth and middle age. They're wiser because they have been ruled out of the race and so have time to contemplate eternal verities.

Is experience the best teacher? It is if you're capable of reassessing your assumptions, and it isn't if you're not. When the personal computer revolution began to affect everyday life in

the 1980s, age itself—and not just old age—was a barrier to understanding the fundamental nature of the change. I was then in my 40s, an independent scholar and the author of four books. What did instantaneous real-time communication have to do with me, a writer of serious books? Yes, I actually said that to a friend who was one of the pioneering tech nerds at Microsoft.

Ironically, my extensive experience in the world of print was the reason I was so wrong. I thought of the computer as a super-typewriter and the web as just another tool rather than as a medium that, while it would offer unprecedented access to information, would also fragment everyone's attention span. The chief lesson I took away



DAVID FLUNKERT

HOTEL CONGO

DARKNESS CASTS A LONG SHADOW OVER
THE WAR-TORN AFRICAN NATION

BY GÉRARD PRUNIER

Educated Congolese hate to hear any mention of *Heart of Darkness* in relation to their country. Joseph Conrad's classic novel—and its cinematic transposition, *Apocalypse*

are presumably there to protect civilians somehow look the other way.

Rwanda, for its part, discreetly runs the show. Its government, through various militia groups and proxies, controls

was that one of the greatest intellectual dangers of aging—I write this just after my 65th birthday—is the temptation to interpret everything new in terms of what you have already seen.

Even more problematic is the notion that old-age wisdom rests on some transcendent immunity to the intense longings of younger adults. The geriatrician William H. Thomas envisions “Eldertopia” as a magical land in which the old “intervene at critical points to ensure that the [younger] adults take into account perspectives that are too easily ignored by those gripped by the fever of rank and wealth.” Elkhonon Goldberg, a neuropsychologist, preaches in *The Wisdom Paradox* that the old should aspire to “the image of a sage” and that a “restless octogenarian is the epitome of life unfulfilled, of a life cycle not completed, of striving for ‘too little too late.’”

**PROFOUND
WISDOM AND
COMMON
SENSE ARE
RELATIVELY
UNCOMMON
AT ANY AGE.**

Why does so much of this puffery on behalf of ancient sages come from people in mid-life—certainly no older than their 60s? Perhaps it is more comfortable for those actively engaged

in the world of work and love—still in search of power, glory, money and passion—to think about older people as contemplative noncontenders, recusing themselves in favor of the young and rewarded by the peace that passeth all understanding. After all, a wise old patriarch or matriarch would certainly never compete with a 45-year-old for a job or a sexual partner.

Life as an Eldertopian sage sounds like the apotheosis of boredom to me. Should I live into my 80s and 90s in full possession of my mind, I don't expect people to listen to me because I have been around long enough to have seen it all. I *want* to be a restless octogenarian, a discontented work in progress eager to learn and understand what I do not know. While there may be no one sager than a sage pushing 100, there's also no fool like an old fool.

The great French writer Colette observed, “We never look enough, never exactly enough, never passionately enough.” If the price of becoming a sage is outliving one's striving and passions, the price is too high.

Susan Jacoby is author of Never Say Die: The Myth and Marketing of the New Old Age.



Now—concentrates, in their eyes, everything wrong with the world's perception of the Congo.

The two Kivu provinces of the eastern Congo that border Rwanda and Burundi can't escape comparison with Conrad's tale of colonization and exploitation. With two recent wars—one that began in 1996, the other in 1998—and with the most lethal conflict anywhere in the world since World War II, bloodshed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has claimed more than 4 million lives.

In the two Kivu provinces, armed militiamen control clandestine mines, planes land on abandoned airfields and money changes hands. The roughly 20,000 blue-helmeted UN soldiers who

much of the mining activity in North Kivu (and a few spots in South Kivu) and does so in an often violent manner. The guilty memories of Rwanda's 1994 genocide ensure its government a de facto license to deal in the export of minerals, the origin of which is never explicitly defined. Eight hundred thousand dead bodies are a powerful tool to divert indiscreet questions.

The illegal mining of cassiterite, columbite-tantalite and wolframite—minerals used in our smart phones, laptops and digital cameras—is worth an estimated \$95 million per year. The two Kivu provinces are beautiful: rolling green hills, gentle climate, tropical flowers and lakes of crystalline water. It's one of the few places in

the world where one can see a mountain gorilla in its natural habitat. But on the rough roads cut out of the red laterite soil, mysterious planes with undeclared cargo take off for and land from distant foreign markets.

All this would be for the best in this most picturesque corner of Africa if so many men were not getting killed and so many women were not getting raped. The gangland-style mining operations could explain the killings, but why the rapes? Because raping women humiliates the men without stopping them—particularly the *creuseurs* (mine diggers)—from working. But the women of the Kivus don't need reminding of that.

Such assaults have become a regular tactic of the young boys who fill the militias. And with a Kalashnikov comes free sex and free food—though not much money, because the mine operators keep their hired killers' remuneration to a minimum.

For the rest of the Congolese, this bizarre world is as strange as it is for outsiders. They continue their attempts to revive a country exhausted by 32 years of dictatorship, six years of war and an uncertain peace since 2002. An election will be held later this year, most likely

in October. Will it mark an end to this uncertainty? In 2006 another election took place, when the war was supposedly really over. But then what?



Some 20,000 UN soldiers attempt to maintain order in eastern Congo. Elections scheduled for later this year could further destabilize the region.

In the eastern regions the peace has refused to take hold. Meanwhile so-called friends in the southwest, in Angola, who saved the Congo from the Rwandan invasion more than 10 years ago, are now asking for their reward. Angola's army is the biggest and the best in Africa, and the country has occupied oil-rich coastal and offshore areas from which it refuses to budge. When the Congolese protest, the Angolans grumble about ingratitude. (The oil is worth several hundred million dollars a year.)

This curse of the Congolese people started almost 130 years ago when Belgium's King Leopold II had the explorer Henry Morton Stanley conquer the vast space that is now the Congo and savagely exploit its rubber (a wild plant in those days; plantations came later). The men Stanley recruited for the ill-named Congo Free State were former soldiers, rogues and cutthroats. They killed half the Congo's population and made Leopold a very rich man.

Thus, the Congo was born out of incredible violence. It's the only place in Africa where the making of the nation was based on genocide. A pattern was set from the start.

A Congolese friend who is writing a biography of the late dictator Mobutu Sese Seko—who attended Belgian schools and was a member of Belgium's army—recently said to me, "In more ways than one, Mobutu was a black 20th century reincarnation of Leopold."

The darkness has nothing to do with the color of men's skins but everything to do with the color of their hearts.

Gérard Prunier is author of Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe.

Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 war epic, *Apocalypse Now*, below, was inspired by *Heart of Darkness*. While the novel describes the European conquest of the Congo, Coppola set his story in the jungles of Vietnam and Cambodia.



READER RESPONSE

APPLE TALK

In “Steve vs. Steve” (November), Tim Wu describes Apple as an “oppressive empire” that stifles free speech. Apple isn’t oppressing; it’s inspiring and changing the industry. If someone creates a better product than Steve Jobs has, consumers will vote with their wallets.

Derrick Schommer
Hudson, New Hampshire

Your commentaries on Apple are thought-provoking but misleading. First, regarding “Steve vs. Steve,” an open platform may be wonderful for hobbyists, but it has no commercial future. How do you recover your research and development costs without a system you can sell? For a manufacturer to survive, its hardware must be closed; otherwise all devices become vanilla and the least expensive one wins. Apple is number one because its products work—every time, all the time. Even Microsoft Office works better on a Mac. If Tim Wu wants a dragon to slay I suggest he go after industry rating systems that ban anything remotely sexual but allow violence and gore. Developers can choose not to



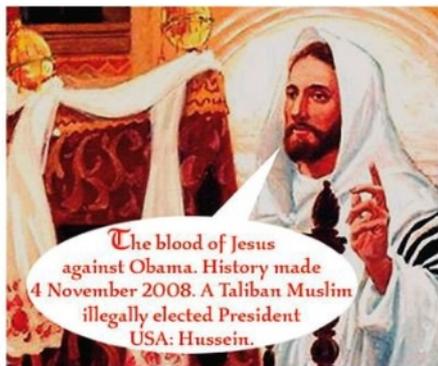
Apple’s iPad—closed but inviting.

do business with Apple just as consumers can choose not to buy Apple products.

Michael Kaplan
Atlanta, Georgia

BIBLE BUSTER

Based on the letters in the November issue, I am amazed so many Bible believers are *PLAYBOY* readers. If anything, I would have thought most readers are like me and know more about the Bible than your average Christian but don’t embrace its dogma. Jesus made it perfectly clear in Matthew 5:28: “Anyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in



Tea Party Jesus (teapartyjesus.tumblr.com).

his heart.” As it happens, these letters appear along with others from supporters of the Tea Party, which is as much a Christian movement as a libertarian one. The New Testament does not advocate government programs but appeals to us as individuals to help the disenfranchised. Further, it neither condemns nor condones government control of education, national defense, road maintenance, trash pickup or programs to fight disease, climate change and poverty. It certainly does not advocate the diversity afforded by freedom of religion.

Michael Morgan
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

HITLER THE LIBERAL

Concerning your response to two readers who wrote in October to challenge your description of Adolf Hitler as a “right-wing radical”: I am a libertarian and use the widely accepted definition of *right* as being in favor of maximum personal freedom in all areas. This means having the least amount of government control as possible to maintain order. On the opposite side, the more you favor a strong, centralized government, the further left you are. By these definitions, totalitarian dictatorships, fascists and communists are on the far left. In succession, Hitler eliminated prayer from public schools and nationalized banks, car companies, schools and the health care system. He then rounded up his citizens into concentration camps if they were of a certain ethnic or religious background. Only then did he take his experiment beyond anything done by Franklin Roosevelt or Barack Obama. Talk about strange rebranding! Cancel my subscription immediately.

Gary Engstrom
South Park, Pennsylvania

Not to prolong this discussion after we’ve cited three of the world’s foremost experts on

Hitler and his politics (and religion—he was Roman Catholic), but doesn’t wanting “the least amount of government control as possible to maintain order” put you toward the left, near the anarchists?

WHY WAIT?

While the “new Calvinists” are big fans of sexual abstinence, as Jessica Warner notes (“The United States of Abstinence,” December), they seem to have made peace with alcohol. Such Calvinism favors a far more pronounced theory of human depravity and is beginning to thrive in Baptist circles, which may explain the lower rates of abstinence there than among Pentecostals. Unlike Christian perfectionists, new Calvinists believe they can’t entirely escape from sin. Nevertheless, the demographer in me is convinced something else is going on. Emerging research reveals that conservative Christians under the age of 30 are considerably more approving of premarital sex, cohabitation and looking at



Is matrimony worth the wait?

magazines like this one. The likely reason for these shifts is not about faith or theology but the national flight from marriage. Since conservative Christians typically marry at 26 or 27—just barely below the national average and years into the most fertile and sexualized period of life—something had to give. Insofar as conservative Christians portray themselves as normal everyday Americans, normal they will become.

Mark Regnerus
Austin, Texas

Regnerus, a sociology professor at the University of Texas at Austin, is co-author, with Jeremy Uecker, of Premarital Sex in America: How Young Americans Meet, Mate and Think About Marrying.

E-mail via the web at letters.playboy.com. Or write: 680 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

NEWSFRONT

**Catholic Masses**

MANILA—Police arrested a popular tour guide who disrupted mass at Manila Cathedral to protest the Catholic Church's opposition to a bill that would require government clinics to provide information about contraceptives. Dressed in a derby hat and long-tailed coat resembling those worn by José Rizal, a hero of the Philippines' struggle for independence from Spain, Carlos Celdran (far left) raised a placard that read DAMASO—the name of a priest who fathers a child in Rizal's 1887 novel *Noli Me Tangere* ("Touch Me Not") that has become slang for hypocrisy and deceit. Celdran, who hands out birth control pills and condoms during his walking tours of the capital, pleaded not guilty to "offending religious sensibilities." The legislation has the support of President Benigno Aquino III, who believes overpopulation has stunted economic growth and who now faces excommunication. Worlds away, Pope Benedict XVI announced condoms are not totally immoral if used to stop the spread of HIV. A Vatican spokesman said the pope believes the use of condoms by HIV-positive people, "whether man, woman or transsexual," could be viewed as "the first step of responsibility, of taking into consideration the risk to the life of the person with whom there are relations."

Life Lesson

EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA—The mothers of two middle school students sued the local school district after their daughters were suspended for wearing I ♥ BOOBIES bracelets. Administrators say the rubber bracelets, which are designed to raise awareness of breast cancer, not only violate a dress-code ban on vulgarity, obscenity and profanity but trivialize a deadly illness. Schools in California, Florida, Oregon and Wyoming have also banned the bracelets, which are sold by the Keep a Breast Foundation.

**HIV on the Run**

DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA—In a study of 889 young women, those who regularly used a vaginal gel containing tenofovir, a medication used to treat AIDS, reduced their

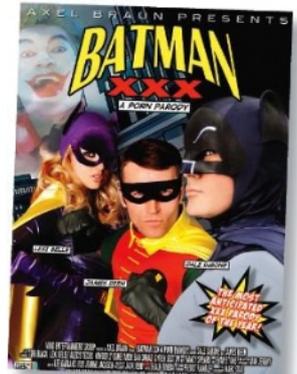
chances of contracting HIV by 54 percent. Scientists call the gel a game changer because it's inexpensive, can be put into the vagina up to 12 hours before sex and allows a woman to protect herself without relying on her partner. In other promising news, a study of nearly 2,500 gay and bisexual men in six countries found that those who took a daily antiretroviral pill called Truvada were 44 percent less likely to become infected.

Work to Do

Nearly 40 percent of countries criminalize gay sex, including five in which it is punishable by death, according to a survey of "state-sponsored homophobia." On a positive note, Argentina became the eighth nation to allow same-sex marriage, and courts in India and Fiji have repealed antisodomy laws. Meanwhile, two political scientists at Columbia University quantified the "gay gap": If Americans over the age of 65 made the laws, no state would allow gay marriage, but if Americans under 30 made the laws, 38 states would allow it.

Holy Legal Strategy!

MARTINSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA—An adult film director asked a federal court to allow him to subpoena internet service providers for the identities of 7,098 people who he alleges illegally infringed on his copyright by sharing digital copies of his movie *Batman XXX*. "Fuck 'em all," Axel Braun told Xbiz Newswire. "People don't realize that when you pirate a movie it hurts all of the people who work very hard to get it produced." Civil libertarians have criticized the legal strategy of suing alleged pirates en masse, saying it makes it more difficult for people to defend themselves.





Reese's Pieces

After perusing the photos taken at the annual Avon Foundation for Women Gala in New York City, we count ourselves among the fans of actress REESE WITHERSPOON's perkiness.

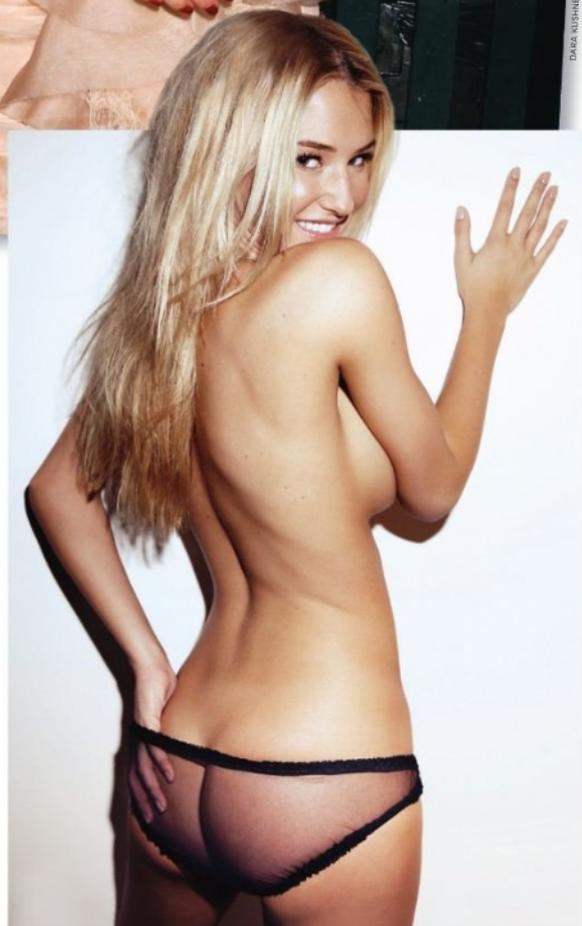
DANICA KUSHNIR/PHOTO.COM



Hallyday Vacation

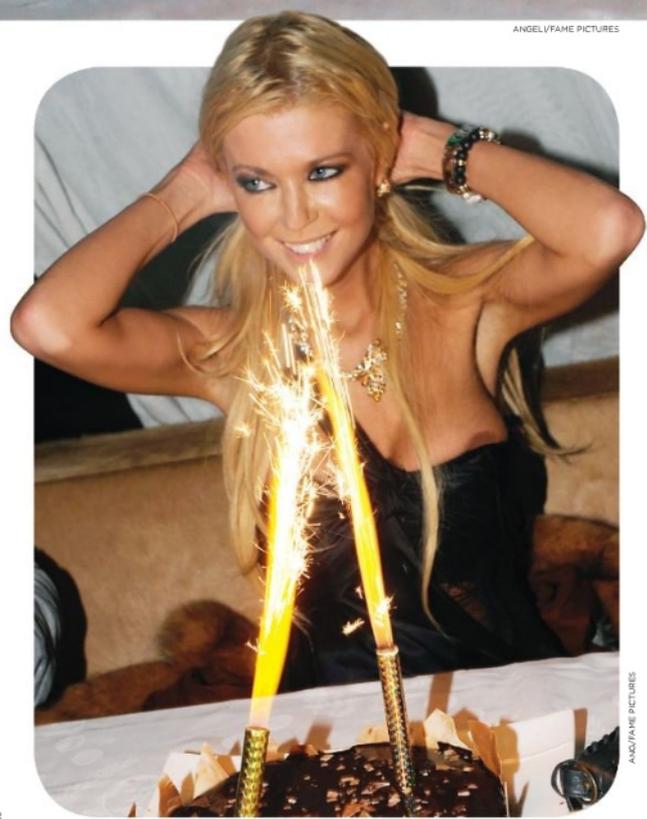
Here's what we know about LAETICIA BOUDOU, the wife of French superstar singer Johnny Hallyday: She spends her vacations in St. Barts and she wears her heart on her lower abdomen.

ANGEL/FAME PICTURES



License to Enthral

A few of British model DANICA THRALL's favorite things: lasagna, Venice and dressage—basically, fancy horse training. It could also be the new workout craze, with posting—bobbing up and down in the saddle—obviously excellent for the posterior.



ANGEL/FAME PICTURES

Miss Firecracker

How hot is January/February 2010 PLAYBOY cover girl and *American Pie* starlet TARA REID? So hot that she sets off fireworks even when in the presence of baked goods and other nonflammable objects.

ZOE MCCONNELL/CELEBRITY PICTURES



CELEBRITY PICTURES

Love Thy Neighbour

NATALIE BLAIR, who starred on the Australian television series *Neighbours*, once earned the fairest role of them all—appearing in a British production of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. After Blair joined the show, the cast member who played Happy sent his acting coach packing.



CELEBRITY PICTURES

The Meddy Ford Clinic

British actress and reality star MEDDY FORD (*Get Him to the Greek* and *Paris Hilton's British Best Friend*) has appeared on the BBC series *Skins*, which makes our job easy—no double entendres necessary.



Trophy Girl

France has given us champagne and the Statue of Liberty. We have returned the favor by schooling Paris in the fine art of wardrobe malfunctions at sporting events—à la this recent sartorial mishap at a French rugby match.

ALBAN PIERRE/SIPA



STEVE GRANITZ

Princess Jasmin

Style blogger (vintagevandalizm.com) and model JASMIN RODRIGUEZ possesses an inimitable fashion sense: "I love pinup culture, but I also love being versatile. So most of the time I clash different genres of history and fashion. And somehow, I make it work."



WINTER AVE ZOLI: ANARCHY AT ITS FINEST.



BORN TO RIDE: THE 2011 MOTORCYCLE REVIEW.



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NEXT MONTH



SEE SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

WINTER AVE ZOLI—THE *SONS OF ANARCHY* BAD GIRL BARES ALL HER DANGEROUS CURVES.

DEEPAK CHOPRA—HE USED TO DO DRUGS WITH GEORGE HARRISON AND ADVISE MICHAEL JACKSON; NOW HE HANGS WITH U.S. PRESIDENTS AND DINES WITH THE DALAI LAMA. IN THE *PLAYBOY INTERVIEW* THE SPIRITUALITY GURU DOES WHAT HE DOES BEST—GETS DEEP—FOR **DAVID HOCHMAN**.

WILD BILL—BILL CORTEZ MADE FRIENDS EASILY IN PANAMA, BUT THEY HAD AN ODD HABIT OF DISAPPEARING. **ROBERT DRURY** UNCOVERS THE STORY BEHIND A BIZARRE KILLER.

MAN COLUMN: A TRIBUTE TO LEFTY—IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE WITHOUT A TELEPHONE IN TODAY'S WORLD? **NICK TOSCHES** PAYS HOMAGE TO A MAN WHO DOES EXACTLY THAT.

HOW THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER CHANGED THE 2008 ELECTION—IT WAS JOHN EDWARDS'S WORST NIGHTMARE. **HOWARD KURTZ** REVEALS HOW A GROUP OF TABLOID MISFITS ALTERED THE COURSE OF THE PAST PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

NEANDERTHAL LOVE—ABOUT 40,000 YEARS AGO, OUR ANCESTORS, THE CRO-MAGNONS, MIGRATED AND ENCOUNTERED *HOMO NEANDERTHALENSIS*. DID WE GET IT ON WITH OUR BIG-BROWED, CHINLESS COUSINS? **CHIP ROWE** FINDS OUT.

GIRLS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN—A TOUR OF PARADISE, FEATURING OLIVE COMPLEXIONS AND BREATHTAKING BODIES.

THE LONG ROAD—AFFLICTED WITH A DISEASE THAT IS SLOWLY RENDERING HIM BLIND, A LIFELONG MOTORCYCLIST TAKES THE ULTIMATE RIDE. **JAMES R. PETERSEN** CHRONICLES A PERILOUS JOURNEY ALONG SOUTH AMERICA'S HIGHWAY OF DEATH.

2011 MOTORCYCLE REVIEW—GET THE LOWDOWN ON THE BADASS BIKES COMING SOON TO A ROAD NEAR YOU.

SETH GREEN—IN *20Q*, THE ACTOR AND PRODUCER TALKS TO **DAVID HOCHMAN** ABOUT HIS EYE-OPENING LSD EXPERIENCE, JULIA ROBERTS'S CELEBRITY BIRTHDAY PARTY AND HIS SUPERSECRET *STAR WARS* PROJECT WITH GEORGE LUCAS.

GOOD HOME—IN NEW FICTION BY PEN/FAULKNER AWARD WINNER AND LONGTIME *PLAYBOY* CONTRIBUTOR **T.C. BOYLE**, MAN'S BEST FRIEND EXPOSES A MAN'S TRUE CHARACTER.

WOMAN COLUMN: BAD BOY—IT'S NOT FAIR, BUT IT'S OFTEN TRUE: NICE GUYS FINISH LAST. QUEEN OF MEAN **LISA LAMPANELLI** SHARES THE SECRETS TO BEING A DESIRABLE JERK.

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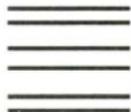
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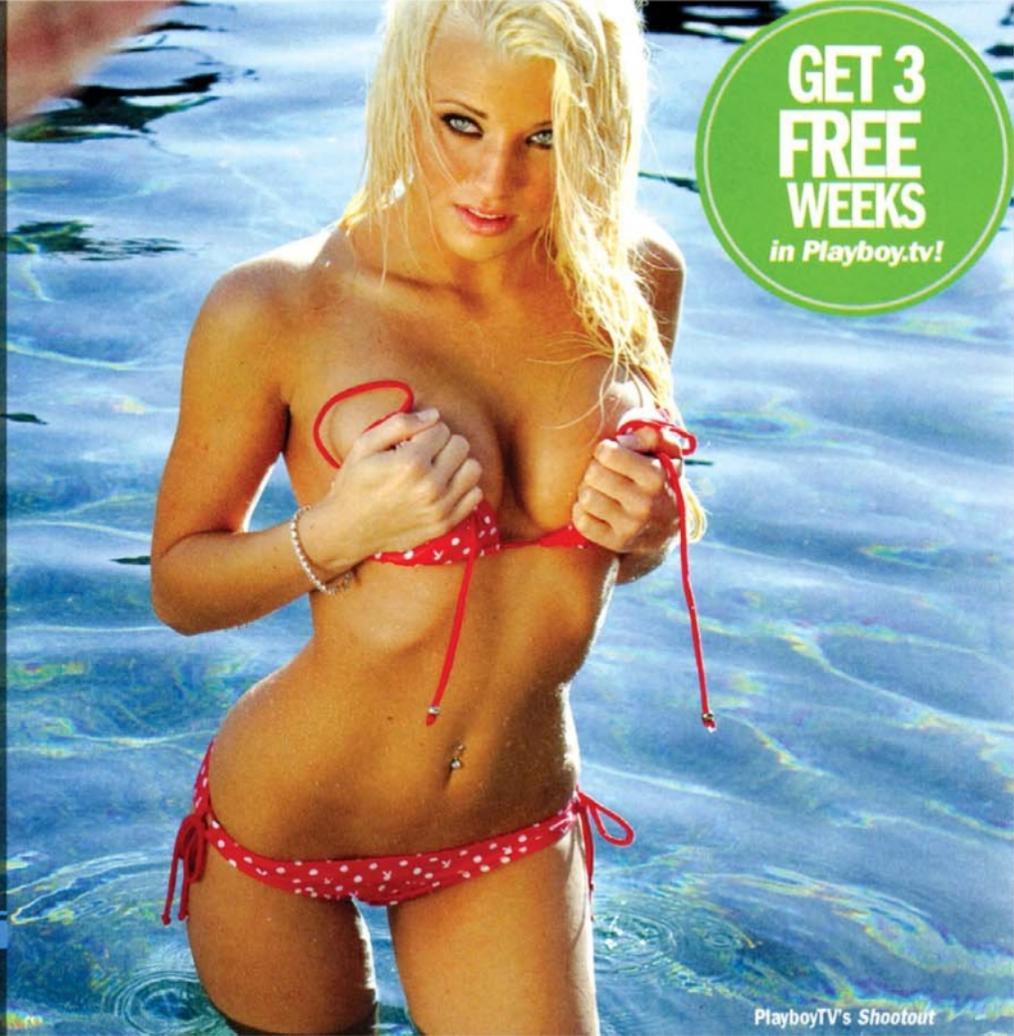
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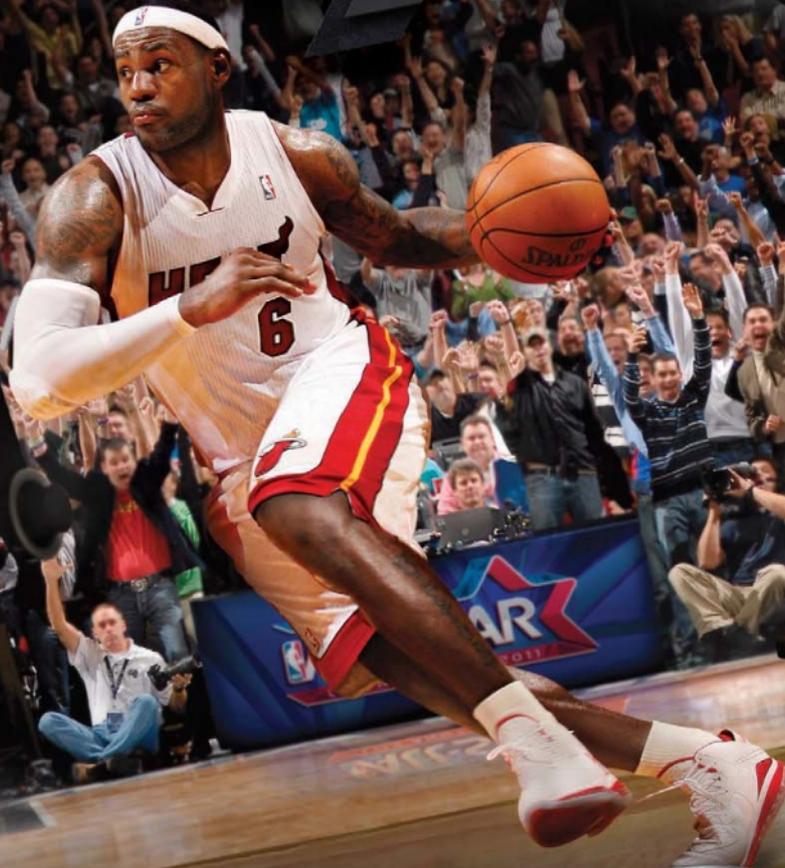


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