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20 D

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VIDEO GAME GIRLS
GATEFOLD

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INTERVIEW
ARIANNA
HUFFINGTON

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Arianna Huffington was on our radar long before she hitched herself and her star friends to *The Huffington Post*. "I tried to meet with her for the *Playboy* interview years ago," Contributing Editor **David Rensin** says. "We were both busy, and time was too tough to budget. When we finally did it, the interview was quite involved, and I had to ask her for more time to ensure that we covered everything." Because *Huffington* has a daily forum for her opinions, Rensin steered some questioning away from the normal subjects of her editorials. "Nothing about politics made her uncomfortable, but when I asked about her personal life she laughed and claimed it was private. I reminded her that she is a very public figure. She answered every question as though she was aware that this was a great forum and that she'd be portrayed candidly and authentically."



To learn about the fostering of fanaticism in the Islamic world, **Joseph Braude** walked into the eye of the storm: mosques in Jordan. With the fight for the world's future being waged in the hearts of young Muslims, the U.S. has entered the fray with a program aimed at steering young people away from militancy. "If America wants to press democracy, it has to respect Arabic language and customs," the author of *Islam in the Crucible* says. "The U.S. also has to remember it isn't popular at the moment. Attaching its name to the project could be the kiss of death."



"Video games have grown up in the past 10 years, and so have the people playing them," says Senior Editor **Scott Alexander**. "The average player is now 33 years old—great news for those of us who like edgy games." In our annual gaming feature, *Welcome to the Next Level*, Alexander dissects the fight between the three next-generation consoles, and his team of writers fills you in on breaking trends. Our pictorial shows seven digital divas from six different games as they hang out at the Mansion. The creators of each character made the renderings separately; then Justin Chornenky, marketing art director for the *Playboy: The Mansion* game, brought them together. Call it the best party that never happened.



Contrary to popular belief, a picture can be worth more than 1,000 words. For this month's fashion feature, *Book Jackets*, we rethink the covers of interesting works of contemporary literature. **Michael Eric Dyson**, **Andrew Ross** and other writers slip on sharp-looking coats and enter the volatile atmosphere of their own story. Photographer **Judson Baker** had the delicate task of blending our fashion into each author's vision. "I tried to capture each writer's message in one snapshot," Baker says. "Some of my concepts were crazy, but luckily the magazine allowed me to push the envelope. The results are strong fashion photos with strong social messages."



Would you let this man watch your baby? Author of the novel *Home Land*, **Sam Lipsyte** asks that question in this month's fiction, *The Wisdom of the Doulos*. "When my wife was pregnant, we kept hearing about doulos, or midwives," Lipsyte says. "They were too pricey. But the experience of researching the subject got me thinking about the comic potential of the situation. I came up with a character who is the absolute wrong guy for the job. Most everyone I know is both likable and loathsome. I am frightened when somebody's just one or the other."

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83	Crown Royal®
83	Gentleman Jack®
81	Jack Daniel's®

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THE STUFF INSIDE MATTERS MOST.™

PLAYBOY

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Prodded by U.S.-backed government officials, many religious leaders in Middle Eastern Arab countries are trying to persuade the next generation of Muslim youth not to adopt an ideology of martyrdom and anti-American warfare. The author of *The New Iraq* gives a firsthand account of the struggle to reclaim Islam from the terrorists who hijacked the religion and discusses how this effort could impact global security. **BY JOSEPH BRAUDE**

80 THE WORST BREAK OF MY LIFE

A penile fracture is every guy's worst nightmare, but in this astonishing—and edifying—account of his own catastrophe, the former lead singer of That Petrol Emotion tells how a man can weather disaster and spare the rod. **BY STEVE MACK**

88 WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The next generation of video games isn't next anything—it's now. In this special section we preview the hottest games for fall and beyond, look at the state of the current console wars and invite you to take a byte out of our third annual set of slinky video game vixens with their biosuits powered down. **BY SCOTT ALEXANDER**

112 HOW SUITE IT IS

The Hugh Hefner Sky Villa has opened on the 34th floor of the Palms Casino Resort Fantasy Tower in Las Vegas. It will run you about \$35,000 a night, but you won't find more sumptuous lodgings anywhere. Take a peek inside with several Playmates, including Amanda Paige and Sara Jean Underwood.



fiction

84 THE WISDOM OF THE DOULAS

Doula is the Greek word for slave, but Mitch doesn't work for those wages. In this tale by the author of *Home Land: A Novel*, Mitch is the only male midwife in his city and has an unorthodox approach to postnatal care. The family that hires him must figure out if he is a certified doula or simply certifiable. **BY SAM LIPSYTE**



the playboy forum

47 THE PLAYBOY VOTER: A SPECIAL REPORT, PART II

We continue to examine 8 million PLAYBOY voters' views on the most polarizing political topics of the day. Among the questions we pose: When should U.S. troops leave Iraq? Should illegal immigrants be deported? Are you better off economically than you were five years ago? Our readers consistently buck both party and regional lines and occupy a commonsense middle ground.

20Q

96 TENACIOUS D

Nobody rocks quite like Jack Black and Kyle Gass. The self-proclaimed greatest band in the world shocks and awes us with the truth about its mock rockumentary *The Pick of Destiny*, discloses who gets more backstage Betties and composes an impromptu D ditty just for you. **BY ERIC SPITZNAGEL**

interview

57 ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

The first lady of blogs was a noted biographer, a political wife, an outspoken columnist and a TV talking head before shifting from mainstream media to the web with *The Huffington Post*. Now the opinionated activist sounds off about spineless Democrats, why President Bush is dangerous enough to be impeached and why God belongs in politics. **BY DAVID RENSH**

COVER STORY

Ever since she played wicked Harmony Kendall on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and Angel, Mercedes McNab has driven us wild. Now the expert Afro-Brazilian dancer is revving up more than her swiveling hips for big-screen roles in *The Pink Conspiracy* and *Hatchet*. Senior Contributing Photographer Stephen Weyda captures her contours. Our Rabbit prefers to ride a blue Mercedes.



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THE WORLD OF PLAYBOY

HEF SIGHTINGS, MANSION FROLICS AND NIGHTLIFE NOTES



AN AUGUST BODY

Kendra, Holly, Hef and Bridget (left) played host, along with PMOY 2005 Tiffany Fallon, her husband, country singer Joe Don Rooney, and PMOY 2006 Kara Monaco (below), at PLAYBOY's August-issue launch party, sponsored by SKYY Vodka at the hot new L.A. club Mood.



K ROCK THE HOUSE

Hef's ladies helped KROQ FM's morning-show personalities (right) throw Kevin & Bean's Playboy Mansion Singles Party. Station alum Jimmy Kimmel (above) joined the live broadcast from Hef's pad.



CHARMED LIFE

Holly debuted her new line of jewelry, the Girls Next Door by Holly Madison, at Kitson, Los Angeles's hottest fashion boutique. The whimsical wares, inspired by the hit E! Entertainment television show, are also available online at playboy-store.com.



WILLKOMMEN, RABBIT

Following a smashing run at London's Proud Galleries, the Playboy Exposed photo exhibit touched down in Berlin, where Playboy CEO Christie Hefner teamed with Galeries Lafayette director Thierry Prevost to open the show.



PLAYBOY AFTER DARK

Hef returned to the set of *The Late, Late Show With Craig Ferguson*, where Mr. Playboy gave the host a lesson in how it's done by sharing with the amusing Scotsman a clip from the new *Playboy After Dark* DVD. The set contains six episodes of the groundbreaking 1960s TV series hosted by Hef, featuring Sammy Davis Jr., Lenny Bruce, Ella Fitzgerald and Sonny and Cher in a retro-cool setting.

JULY FOURTH SPLASH AND ALL STAR BASH



Summer at the Mansion is an endless party, an ongoing festival of celebrity events. Two of the season's most memorable moments this year were Hef's annual Fourth of July barbecue and All Star Night at the Mansion, a benefit hosted by NFL greats Rodney Peete and Mike Sheppard. (1) Hef, Bridget and Kendra with Holly, her water-soaked Bunny tail fresh from the Slip 'N Slide. (2) Ice-T and his wife, Coco. (3) American hero Buzz Aldrin and his wife, Lois. (4) The Donald and Melania. (5) The Bluecat Express whoops it up. (6) Verne Troyer, living large. (7) Talk radio's Larry Elder and the Morrell twins. (8) All Star Night organizer and *Best Damn Sports Show Period* host Rodney Peete with his wife, actress Holly Robinson Peete. (9) Bunny Playmates Jillian Grace and Athena Lundberg with WWE's Chris Jericho. (10) Playmate Miriam Gonzalez entertains David Krumholtz and Aimi Ballard from *Nurses*. (11) Aaron and Nick Carter with Playmate Brande Roderick. (12) Three 6 Mafia's DJ Paul and Juicy J say cheese. (13) *The Closer*'s Robert Gossett. (14) Stephen Dorff and Frankie Muniz.



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KEEPING IT ON

It's a bird...it's a plane...it's pubic hair! Playmate Nicole Voss (*Nicole, Naturally*, August) restores my faith in the grooming standards of 20-something women. There is a certain symmetry to the traditional triangle.

Darren Vaughan
Moab, Utah

Nicole is gorgeous. As a longtime subscriber, I find myself reading the articles more and looking at the models less. I just don't understand the shaven look. Am I old-fashioned at the age of 39?

Kenny Brown
Land O'Lakes, Florida

In a world where women inflate their breasts to appear more womanly and shave their pubic regions to the point of looking less so, Nicole is proof that natural beauty is alive and well.

Dale Kiesling
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Bravo to Nicole for bucking the hairless trend and to Hef for selecting her



The naturally beautiful Nicole Voss.

as the Centerfold. As a woman who also chooses to look like a woman, I feel vindicated.

Sharla Mayes
Boulder Creek, California

Nicole takes me back to the days of sneaking peeks at my dad's issues.

Mike Fall
Denver, Colorado

Wearing an American flag on your ass is not a fashion statement (*Fashion Milanese*, August), and Miss August

should invest in a razor. This isn't *National Geographic*, and it's not 1957.

Kirby Whitsel
South Mountain, Pennsylvania

PLAYBOY has finally come to its senses. All-natural women like Nicole are much harder to find these days and much nicer to look at.

Dave Cummins
Greenwood, Indiana

TAKING IT OFF

It was a pleasant surprise to see a Playmate with hair below, but I also enjoyed *All Roads Lead to Brazil* (August). Sloane Crosley's tale of having it all waxed off. PLAYBOY truly has something for everyone.

Andy Decker
New York, New York

As Eve Ensler says, "You cannot love a vagina unless you love hair." I hope Crosley was sufficiently compensated for her suffering.

L.J. Palardy
Burlington, Vermont

I read *All Roads Lead to Brazil* the day before I was scheduled to have my own southern hemisphere uprooted, but I went ahead with it. It hurt like hell, but the look in my man's eyes when he saw it made me forget the pain.

Sarah Anderson
Hauford, California

WHY WE FIGHT

PLAYBOY continues to surprise me. I expected to read only near-hysterical antiwar protests in *Why Are We in Iraq?* (August). While I disagree with some of the participants' statements, the message I hear from everyone is simple concern. I supported the decision to depose Saddam Hussein and build a democracy in Iraq, but no war should be entered into lightly. I'm glad the piece does not include unreasonable Bush bashing and that no one calls for us to tack tail and run. I did, however, find Eugene Jarecki's claim that *It's a Wonderful Life* is about George Bailey saving his small town from "what is effectively Wal-Mart" to be ridiculous.

Josh Austin
Newman, Georgia

Why Are We in Iraq? includes the thoughts of everyone but the soldiers who are actually fighting. A desk jockey who worked for Colin Powell for 16 years is not a substitute, and if Jessica Lynch, supply clerk, had intended

to fight anyone, she would have kept her weapon cleaned, oiled and functional. The comments of the director of the global-security program at Brown University, who thinks war is a video game, and the 70-year-old nun, who acts as if it's still 1968, are indica-



Tough questions and tough answers about Iraq.

tive of the article's level of discussion. The Army and Marine Corps are full of intelligent, thoughtful and articulate men and women. Don't ask for Ethan Hawke's opinion; talk to his brother in the Special Forces.

Maj. Terence Zuber (Ret.)
New Martinsville, West Virginia

We are in Iraq in part because we spend so much more on the military than on education. I think that makes it hard for us as a nation to argue, discuss and decide vital issues in a reasonable fashion. If more Americans were educated about cultural differences and had opportunities to travel, perhaps we would realize that military power and ethnocentrism are not progress.

Brian Kirstein
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

We are in Iraq because to leave at this point would be too costly to the politicians who sent us there.

Noel de Nevers
Salt Lake City, Utah

As the saying goes, we fight because we are there. The better question to ask is why we invaded. To understand the answer, you have to know the nature of the political process, in which wealthy groups make large contributions to select individuals to secure the success of highly specific objectives that will benefit them. When you look at the war from that point of view, is it a stretch to suggest that one reason we invaded was to spend a surplus

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that might have otherwise allowed for a national health-care system?

Ronald Tripp
Binghamton, New York

What strikes me is the naivete of the antiwar voices. They possess an almost childlike belief that if we just stop fighting, the world will magically be peaceful. Why are we in Iraq? Because if we weren't, the past six years of the left's seething rage at the president for taking action would have been six years of everyone's rage at the president for doing nothing.

Peter Buttascano
Montauk, New York

Jessica Lynch says, "I'm not totally for the war, but I'm not against it. I want my friends home, but we have a job to do there right now." Those are the words of a true American.

Bryon Powell
Bellingham, Washington

I appreciate the fact that Eugene Jarecki, unlike Michael Moore, sought opinions from people on all sides of the debate. The right's views about preemptive strikes may not be correct, but the left has no better ideas.

Jim Green
Columbus, Ohio

Why Are We in Iraq? is a glaring example of how removed we are from the heart of the conflict. Powell's former chief of staff Lawrence Wilkerson and cabdriver Nathan Price identify the main issues: oil and Halliburton and Bechtel.

Doug Sever
Carson City, Nevada

Sister Ardeth Platte claims that "every pope throughout history has declared we should not participate in war." Pope Urban II began the first Crusade in 1095. Pope Gregory VIII endorsed the third Crusade in 1187. Pope Innocent III did the same with the fourth in 1198. All of the Crusades were wars.

Darren Johnson
Sparks, Nevada

IN THE SWIM

The bikini has such a rich history, it's hard to contain it in five pages (*Playboy Presents the Bikini* at 60, August). When Louis Réard created the suit in 1946, no respectable model would put it on, so he had to hire a nude dancer from the Casino de Paris as a model. He had her wear a version covered with articles about the atomic bomb. Even 15 years later many American women who dared show their navel were removed from

beaches, and in 1964 the Vatican barred bikinis in Catholic countries. This only made the suit more provocative and popularized a new kind of bombshell: the empowered, sexy and dangerous woman, a.k.a. the Bond girl. As designer Tomas Maier says, "A bikini is a bold collaboration between a designer and a woman. When it works, it's exhilarating. But there is no margin for error."

Kelly Killoren Bensimon
New York, New York

Bensimon is the author of The Bikini Book.

DENIS LEARY

Denis Leary dismisses his pillage of Bill Hicks's material as "a fable" (*Playboy Interview*, August). I suggest you listen to Hicks's 1990 and 1992 albums, *Dangerous* and *Relentless*. Then listen to Leary's 1993 album, *No Cure for Cancer*. It



Denis Leary: smart, funny, controversial.

wouldn't have been difficult for PLAYBOY to challenge Leary's claim.

King David MacKenzie
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Leary is a menace, but I find him enchanting and funny as hell.

Sean Jewett
Wheat Ridge, Colorado

CLASSIC BEHIND

It is a mystery how "rump researcher" David Holmes (*After Hours*, August) could fail to note the charms of Kathy Douglas's cheeky pose in the October 1960 issue. I only assume her posterior failed to fit with his theories.

J.D. Sutton
Orlando, Florida

In fairness to Holmes, we did not include Douglas in the sample of Centerfolds we asked him to evaluate. His formula for the perfect ass is posted at blog.playboy.com.



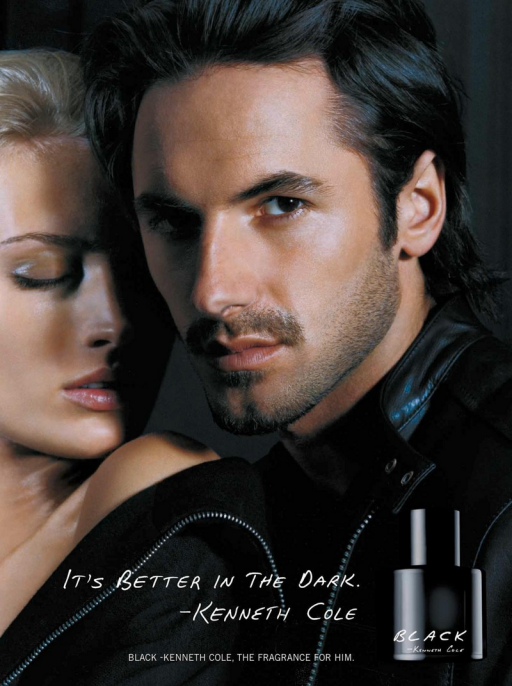


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IT'S BETTER IN THE DARK.
-KENNETH COLE

BLACK -KENNETH COLE, THE FRAGRANCE FOR HIM.



P L A Y B O Y

a f t e r h o u r s



"There's something satisfying about aiming and shooting."

babe of the month

Clare Grant

FOR THIS TENNESSEE TRANSPLANT, HAPPINESS IS A WARM GUN

As Lissome Girl in *Walk the Line*, Clare Grant gets Joaquin Phoenix's Johnny Cash in an ardent backstage lip-lock, a small but memorable scene that prompted Clare to leave her hometown of Memphis for Los Angeles. But *lissome*? (We'll spare you the trip to Webster's: It means flexible.) She's not Cirque du Soleil malleable, but she's close: "I would rate myself a nine out of 10," she says. You can catch Ms. Lissome as the sexy title character of "Valerie on the Stairs," an upcoming Showtime *Masters of Horror* episode adapted from a screenplay by Clive Barker. "I play an entity who

wreaks havoc on writers living in a safe house," she says and assures us we'll get an eyeful. "It may sound funny, but I'm more comfortable with nudity on film than in photographs." In her spare time Clare likes to squeeze off a few rounds at the downtown L.A. shooting range. "I like it because it's a little on the dirty side," she says. "There's something satisfying about aiming and shooting. I make sure I wear something really girly and pink, which is funny because you'd be hard-pressed to find me in a dress otherwise. I like to see the expressions on people's faces when I hit the bull's-eye."

shooting star

You Saw Her Where First?

WE HATE TO SAY WE TOLD YOU SO, BUT WE DID. DIORA BAIRD HAS GROWN INTO THE IT GIRL WE ALWAYS KNEW SHE WOULD BE

We won't say she was just a pretty face—to do so would be selling her hypervoluptuous figure short—but Diora Baird wasn't a household name when we put her on the cover of our August 2005 issue. Still, we had faith, and readers shared our enthusiasm. A year later she's starring in *The*

Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning and the indies *Hot Tamale* (below center) and *South of Heaven*. She also stole scenes in *Accepted* (below left) and *Fifty Pills*. We found her May U.K. *Esquire* cover, with the tagline "Remember—you saw her here first," particularly interesting.



socially irresponsible investing

Bad Behavior for Fun and Profit

FOR THE VICE FUND'S SAVVY MANAGERS, MONEY IS THE FRUIT OF ALL EVIL

A run at the craps table, a cocktail and a cigar: standard stuff for a Vegas bachelor party, but for an investment strategy? The high rollers at Mutuals Advisors think so. Their Vice Fund (VICEX) invests in such drink distributors as Anheuser-Busch, Diageo and Heineken, and tobacconists including Altria and Reynolds American. The other half of the fund's holdings is spread across gaming and (ahem) defense stocks. Such "sin stocks" tend to do well in good times and bad and are nearly inflation-proof. "You can raise the price of vices and people will still buy," says Richard Bryant, president of Capital Investment Companies, in Raleigh, North Carolina. "They may buy Basic brand cigarettes and cheap liquor, but they will still buy." That means the fund could perform well despite a lousy domestic economy and strife abroad. If you have no conscientious objection, for a \$4,000 minimum investment you too could be betting on human frailties and shooting for the same 19.71 percent returns the fund has posted over the past three years. Someone has to get rich off all that money you squander on bar tabs and blackjack—why not you?

drinks of the month



Atlantic Coast Conflict

TOASTS OF CONFERENCE PAST AND PRESENT

Once upon a time the ACC was a happy little league that excelled in basketball. Its other sports included football, and Clemson was class of the conference. Then Florida State joined in 1991, and it's been hard luck in Death Valley ever since. Do the Tigers have anything against FSU, Miami or Virginia Tech (whom they play on October 26)? Other than resentment for hijacking the whole damn conference, no.



CLEMSON TIGERS VS. VIRGINIA TECH HOKIES



Orange Tiger

1 oz. tequila
1 oz. Grand Marnier orange liqueur
1 oz. orange juice

Combine ingredients and ice in a shaker, shake and strain into old-fashioned glass over ice. Garnish with orange wedge.

Hokie

10 oz. beer
1 oz. gin
2 oz. sour mix

Pour all ingredients into a frosted beer mug and stir well. Garnish with lemon wedge and serve.

Go to playboy.com/magazine for weekly college drink matchups.

attack of the listless libertines



Are They Having Fun Yet?

EVEN CHIC, NAKED PARTY PEOPLE GET THE BLUES

In the canvases of artist Terry Rodgers, life's an orgy—and that's not necessarily a good thing. "My paintings are about desire," he says of his tableaux of sex, booze and conspicuous consumption. "We're in the throes of all kinds of desires. You can't yield to all of them, but if you limit yourself to too few of them, you'll feel dissatisfied. We always want something better." It's not just the naked ladies—other covetable items include gaudy jewelry, famous works of art and A-list guests (Paris Hilton recurs *Where's Waldo?*-style). Look for a book of Rodgers's work, *The Apotheosis of Pleasure*, in December.

hot wheels



Gentlemen, Start Your Engines

THE PLAYBOY RACING TEAM'S TRACK RABBITS SET THE PACE

Since its debut in January, the six-car Playboy Racing Team has taken the asphalt by storm. On the Grand American circuit (a younger brother, if you will, to NASCAR) the team participates in the Daytona Prototypes class in the Rolex Sports Car Series and the Grand Sport class in the Grand-Am Cup Series. In its maiden race, the grueling

Rolex 24 at Daytona, Playboy's number 19 Crawford prototype took sixth place. In July the team's number 15 Mustang won its first Grand-Am Cup Series race, in Birmingham, Alabama. Even in this new arena, some things are predictable: Win or lose, the team always throws the party everyone wants to attend. Crashing is discouraged.

justice for all

Attorney for the Debauched

A LAWYER'S TIPS FOR BUDDING PORN STARS

Michael Fattorosi of the Los Angeles firm Fattorosi & Chisvin is a legal fluffer of sorts. An attorney with AdultBizLaw.com, he advises new porn stars on the industry's ins and outs. Here's what a corn-fed Kansas lass should know before she starts making love and money in the San Fernando Valley.

STAY IN CALL: "In *People v. Freeman*, 1988, California decided that a producer could pay actors to have sex, as long as he was not receiving sexual gratification himself," Fattorosi says. "In other states, it's pandering or prostitution. Production companies operate in other states, but they do so at legal peril. If there's a bust, everyone gets taken in."

INCORPORATE: "Girls can write checks on their corporate account for hair and nails, lingerie, lube and tanning salons. All those expenses are taken out before taxes."

TRADEMARK YOUR NAME: "You can't own a name, but you can limit its use within the industry. Angie Savage is a client; if an 'Angi Savaye' pops up, we can shut that down."

KNOW WHO YOU WORK FOR: "Before accepting a job, check out their videos or website. The product tells you a lot about the producer. One girl went to a shoot at a house where the toilets didn't flush and the lights didn't work. If she had done any research, she might not have taken the job."

GET CLOSER THAN EVER CALL OF DUTY 3



IN STORES NOVEMBER 2006



ACTIVISION

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Wii



activision.com

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employee of the month

Pickup Artist

IT'S HARD OUT THERE FOR A PERP WITH BOUNTY HUNTER HEATHER FILERINO ON THE CASE

PLAYBOY: Says here you're a bounty hunter.

HEATHER: I'm the bait. I'll find a guy who has skipped bail and ask him if he wants to go on a date with me to a restaurant.

PLAYBOY: And he'll go, even if he has never met you?

HEATHER: Most of these guys are stupid. They tell themselves they must have met me when they were drunk or something.

PLAYBOY: So he walks in and sees you. He's pretty psyched.

HEATHER: He sits down, and I tell him, "I'm a bounty hunter, and I'm taking you in. You can come peacefully. Or you can try to run and the guys at the table over there will take you down."

PLAYBOY: What's it like to date a tough girl like you?

HEATHER: I'm pretty passionate, and I think the man should be in control. I want to be thrown onto the bed and tossed around.

PLAYBOY: Are you saying you like the rough stuff?

HEATHER: Not S&M but playful—pull my hair, smack my ass.

PLAYBOY: What else should we know?

HEATHER: I do the best sexy Halloween costumes. It's the one time you can go downtown and walk around with nothing on. One year my friends and I went as naughty Victoria's Secret angels.

PLAYBOY: Sounds like a costume for the Playboy Mansion.

HEATHER: I would love to be one of the Painted Ladies.

PLAYBOY: We'll see what we can do.

Employee of the Month candidates: Send pictures to Playboy Photography Department, Attn: Employee of the Month, 640 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60611. Must be at least 18 years old. Must send photocopies of a driver's license and another valid ID (not a credit card), one of which must include a current photo.

ways to go

Which Is Deadlier?

Michael Largo's tome *Final Exits: The Illustrated Encyclopedia of How We Die* contains enough statistics to kill a horse. Which of the following are more likely to do you in?

1. BASEBALL OR FOOTBALL?
2. ALLIGATOR OR ANT?
3. BEAR OR ICE CREAM?
4. DARTS OR DENTURES?
5. RICE CAKE OR ROLLER COASTER?
6. TOASTER OR SNAKE?
7. SCORPION OR CHEWING GUM?



1. *Baseball*—341 people died from being hit by a baseball in 2002. Football kills about 20 people each year.

2. *Ant*—Fire ants have killed 4,289 people since 1965. Alligators have caused just 201 deaths since 1949.

3. *Ice cream*—987 children have been killed while buying ice cream since 2001. From 1920 to 2000, 1,682 people were killed by grizzlies or polar bears.

4. *Dentures*—11,556 denture-obstruction deaths have occurred since 1965. Just 312 people have died by dart (including lawn darts) since 1950.

5. *Rice cake*—Since 1965, roller coasters have killed 265 people, while 1,601 diners have asphyxiated from eating mochi, a gooey rice cake consumed as part of the Japanese New Year's celebration.

6. *Snake*—224 people were fatally electrocuted by their toaster from 1985 to 2004. Since 1965, snakes have caused 13,102 deaths.

7. *Chewing gum*—Gum kills 300 people annually; 2,600 have died by scorpion sting in North America since 1940.

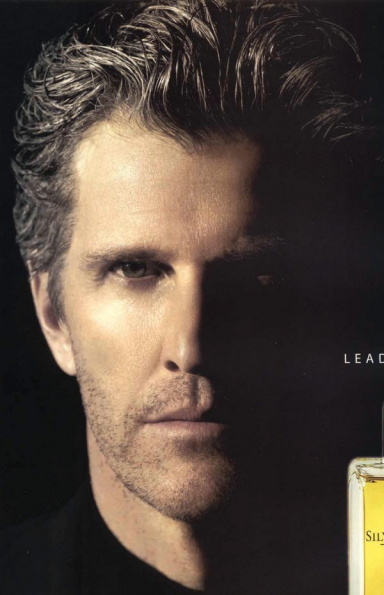
photo retouching



Entertainment for Manipulators

ON THE INTERNET, ALTERATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY

The website Worth1000.com holds contests for creative loafers who use Photoshop software to make funny images on a given theme. No pop culture foolishness would be complete without a few appearances by our founding editor; these pictures were taken from the contests "When Hell Freezes Over," "Going Postal" and "Hair-Donts."



LEAD THE WAY

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Head Out on the Highway

Before Governor Jeb Bush repealed Florida's mandatory motorcycle-helmet law in 2000, the state averaged **22** unhelmeted-biker deaths a year. In 2004 the number had risen to **250**.

That's No Wrench

A former handyman won **\$400,000** in a suit over a penile implant that gave him a **10-year** erection. The settlement could buy **11** Viagra pills a day, every day, for **10** years.



Rounds and Rounds

Amount Americans spent last year on golf equipment: **\$3.5 billion**
On hunting and firearms: **\$3.4 billion**



Neurotic to the Core

The Big Apple and its environs are home to **7%** of the U.S. population but have **23%** of the country's psychiatrists.

price check



\$1,500

Amount Hillary Clinton spent in campaign cash on one styling session with acclaimed D.C. hairdresser Isabelle Goetz.

you bet

Money Pit

It took rescuers in India **50** hours to save a five-year-old boy who had fallen into a deep hole, during which time Indian bookies took in **\$33 million** in bets on whether or not he would survive.

Worth a Lot of Dough

Estimated value of Wonder Bread's screen time in *Talladega Nights*: **\$100 million**. Cost: **\$0**. (Will Ferrell and director Adam McKay thought it would be funny to have Wonder Bread sponsor fictional driver Ricky Bobby, and they did it without charging a product-placement fee.)

what they're thinking

But Honey, Hiding It Is Half the Fun

How *Cosmopolitan* readers would react if they found their mate's porn stash:

12% would force the man to choose between them and their collection.

32% would just be upset that the man is hiding something.

56% would suggest they look at the stuff together.



Gigastore

How big has Wal-Mart become? The ratio in America of the number of the chain's employees to the number of high school teachers is **1:1**.

The Young and Restless

41% of Americans in a recent poll said they usually or always feel stressed, and **78%** wish they had more free time. What's alarming: Those polled were kids ages **9** to **13**.



Not So Fast

U.K. art student Lauren Porter took **10** months and used **12** miles of yarn to knit a life-size replica of a Ferrari modeled after the Testarossa and the F355.



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Illustration © 1998 Columbia Sportswear Co.

GIVE WINTER THE MIDDLE TOE.

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REVIEWS

movies



movie of the month

[FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS]

Clint Eastwood raises the bar with this WWII epic

One movie that has been sparking Oscar buzz for months is *Flags of Our Fathers*, directed by Clint Eastwood, a guy who does pretty well when awards season rolls around. Produced by Steven Spielberg, the film is based on the nonfiction best-seller about the pre- and postwar lives of the six men who, in 1945, raised the U.S. flag at Iwo Jima, one of World War II's bloodiest battlegrounds. Sobering stuff, *Flags of Our Fathers* features Ryan Phillippe, Adam Beach, Paul Walker, Barry Pepper and Jesse Bradford, who plays the youngest of the flag-hoisting Marines, for whom promises of a high-paying job and a good life come to nothing once the parades end and the flag-waving dies down. Bradford, known for *The West Wing* and the movie *Happy Endings*, was impressed by the iconic Eastwood. "It's really easy to jump aboard his ship and feel as if you've got a strong captain at the helm," he says. Rather than coming off as a platform for Eastwood's political conservatism, the movie is "about how you sell a war to the public, how you make it seem like 'they' need our help," Bradford claims. "Reading the primary accounts and learning about the propaganda these people—American and Japanese—were spoonfed, you develop tremendous respect and appreciation for both sides. War is ugly, man. Everybody's got his side, and everybody thinks God is on it."

—Stephen Rebbello

now showing

The Fountain

(Hugh Jackman, Rachel Weisz, Ellen Burstyn, Donna Murphy) Director Darren Aronofsky's brainy metaphysical mindblower offers three parallel quests, spans 1,000 years and features a man (Jackman) traveling to infinity and beyond to find a cure for the terminal illness afflicting the woman he loves (Weisz).

Our call: Aronofsky's surreal, visionary emotional powerhouse is his *Titanic*, *Vertigo* and 2001 all rolled into one. Meanwhile, Jackman bashes should prepare to eat crow.



Babel

(Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett, Gael García Bernal) A random gunshot fired by boys in the desert ignites life-changing events for a grieving American couple (Pitt, Blanchett) vacationing in Morocco, their Mexican nanny and her hotheaded nephew (Bernal) near San Diego and a single dad and his deaf daughter in Tokyo.

Our call: One critic's towering masterpiece can be another man's babble, but this is a well-acted, relentlessly grim, often heavy-going dissection of modern miscommunication.



A Good Year

(Russell Crowe, Albert Finney, Abbie Cornish) *Gladiator* guys Crowe and director Ridley Scott lay down the body armor for this sunny romance about a gorgeous Californian (Cornish) who stakes her claim to a vineyard in Provence recently inherited by a down-on-his-luck British investment expert (Crowe).

Our call: Coming on like Cary Grant, winemaker Crowe doesn't so much as stomp a grape, let alone bash heads or hurl a phone. It is kind of a relief—temporarily, anyway.



The Grudge 2

(Amber Tamblyn, Jennifer Beals, Sarah Michelle Gellar) A young woman (Tamblyn) in Tokyo gets exposed to the same supernatural curse that afflicted her sister, doomed American exchange student and original *Grudge* heroine Gellar, who makes a quick exit from this sequel. Smart girl.

Our call: We've got no grudge against spooky, smart hair-raisers, but this iffy sequel to the 2004 American remake of *Ju-on: The Grudge* needs to give up the ghost.



dvds of the month

[JAMES BOND ULTIMATE EDITIONS, VOLUMES 1 & 2]

Never say never to these revamped 007 collections

Will Daniel Craig's 007 in *Casino Royale* be on the level of Sean Connery's or George Lazenby's Bond? Four planned *Ultimate Edition* boxed sets will help fans decide. They'll boast gorgeous new anamorphic HD transfers along with significant upgrades in both sound (DTS 5.1) and bonus features (40 hours' worth over the 20 films).

Volume one includes *Goldfinger* (1964, pictured), *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971), *The Man With the Golden Gun* (1974), *The Living Daylights* (1987) and *The World Is Not Enough* (1999). Volume two kicks off with *Thunderball* (1965), plus *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977), *A View to a Kill* (1985), *Licence to Kill* (1989) and *Die Another Day* (2002).

Best Extras: From home movies (e.g., the Aston Martin DB5's world tour!) to Roger Moore's first-ever Bond commentaries, too many to choose from. **★★★** —Greg Fagan



THE ASTAIRE AND ROGERS COLLECTION

VOLUME 2 (1933–1939) The dynamic duo of dance hoof their way through five classic musicals, all new to DVD. Included is their first accidental pairing, in *Flying Down to Rio* (1933, pictured), featuring the



erotic dance number "The Carioca," and their star turn in *The Gay Divorcee* (1934). **Best Extra:** Musical shorts. **★★★★**

—Matt Steigberg

THE PROPOSITION (2005) The title of this thrilling Aussie Western refers to lawman Ray Winstone's deal with desperado Guy Pearce: Go out and kill your psychotic big brother or we hang your half-witted baby brother. **Best Extra:** Commentary by postpunk icon turned screenwriter Nick Cave. **★★★★**

—G.F.



THE TARZAN COLLECTION VOLUME 2

(1943–1948) Olympic champion Johnny Weissmuller returns as the definitive King of the Jungle in this boxed set, squaring off against Nazis in two of the six films featured. He then grapples



with some untamed women in *Tarzan and the Amazons* (1945), *Tarzan and the Leopard Woman* (1946) and *Tarzan and the Mermaids* (1948). **Best Extra:** The supplements are leaner than Jane, but the films are all home-video debuts. **★★★** —Brendin Cummings

STRANGERS WITH CANDY (2006) The triumvirate of uncomfortable comedy—Amy Sedaris, Paul Dinello and Stephen Colbert—returns in this prequel in which 47-year-old erstwhile junkie whore Jerri Blank is released from prison and re-enrolls at Flatpoint High. **Best Extra:** The three filmmakers share laughs about their morally askew characters. **★★★**

—Brian Thomas



FOX SPY COLLECTION (1966–1969) This boxed set bundles together four 1960s spy films that, with varying degrees of success, defined themselves in relation to the burgeoning James Bond franchise. The enjoyable Bond parody *Our Man Flint* (1966) and its sequel *In Like Flint* (1967, pictured) fared much better than *The Chairman* (1969) and *The Quiller Memorandum* (1966). **Best Extras:** Packed with featurettes for die-hard fans of the genre. **★★** —M.S.



SCANNER

REDS (1981) Warren Beatty, who grabbed the best-director Oscar for this pet project about early-20th-century American radical John Reed, also worked overtime on the maxed-out DVD debut of this epic biopic. **★★★★**

THE OMEN (2006) This needless remake about the young Antichrist has one casting coup: Mia Farrow as the nanny. But you can almost hear the director coaxing the tyke, "C'mon, little guy. Give us your best maad." **★★**

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III (2006) We'll forgive public icon Tom Cruise as long as he keeps making smartly tooled action vehicles like this. Philip Seymour Hoffman makes a formidable bid for the year's best villain. **★★★**

NACHO LIBRE (2006) *Napoleon Dynamite* director Jared Hess pairs with funnyman Jack Black for this lowbrow laughter about a friar who moonlights as a Mexican wrestler. **★★**

SIX FEET UNDER: THE COMPLETE SERIES (2001–2005) All five seasons of this funeral-home opus and a book of cast obituaries come preserved in a box designed as a burial plot with a faux-grassy lid. **★★★★**

★★★★ Don't miss **★★** Worth a look
★★★★ Good show **★** Forget it

tease frame



Rosario Dawson comes across on-screen as some kind of vulpine sexual carnivore, like in this scene from *Alexander* or as the queen hooker in *Sin City* and its upcoming sequel. Look for her next in the Elmore Leonard adaptation *Killshot*.

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arena rock



[MURDER BALLADS]

On *Sam's Town*, the Killers sound as big as U2

The Killers' second album is so vast, so layered, so confident, it makes their multiplatinum debut, *Hot Fuss*, sound two-bit and tinny by comparison. Listening to *Sam's Town*—bass now chugging like a locomotive instead of awkwardly bouncing, guitars roaring, small-timey keyboards buried in a tsunami of sound—it's hard to avoid thinking of U2 during their climb from popular niche band to bona fide stadium rockers. In part that's because this time out the Killers seem to have taken a lot of inspiration from the sound of the ascendant U2 of *War*, *The Unforgettable Fire* and *The Joshua Tree*. (Even the mythologizing of the Killers' Vegas environs on the new album is reminiscent of the *Joshua Tree* campaign.) And while there are missteps here—the awkward "Uncle Jonny" smacks of an *After School Special*; there's a terrible chord change in "This River Is Wild"; singer Brandon Flowers, while less histrionic in his delivery on this LP, trots out plenty of cringe-worthy rhymes, clichés and forced religious images—you have to hand it to the Killers for going for it. Perhaps most interesting is the Queen pastiche of "Why Do I Keep Counting?" Overall, an ambitious return. Sophomore slump? Not guilty. (Island) **★★★** —Tim Mohr

EMILY HAINES

Knives Don't Have Your Back

Haines, the frontwoman for bombastic Toronto New Wave combo Metric, mellowed out here, singing about prescriptions, poisoned beaches and disappearing bookstores over mournful piano-based backgrounds. It's perfect music for a rainy night. (Last Gang) **★★★** —T.M.



JUNIOR BOYS • So This Is Goodbye

This Canadian duo puts a pleasing micro-house spin on electropop, managing to evoke the smooth romanticism of early-1980s synth acts while maintaining a much more modern sound than most neo-electro bands. Tunes unwind slowly for use after the club; vocals keep things interesting. (Domino) **★★½** —T.M.



EVANESCENCE • The Open Door

Since 2003's Grammy-winning *Fallen*, pixie-size singer Amy Lee has survived a series of battles, the messiest involving the departure of writing partner Ben Moody. On her own, Lee adds more keyboards, and "Call Me When You're Sober" is the best song she's written. (Wind-up) **★★★** —Jason Gohmester



SLEEPY BROWN • Mr. Brown

After more than a decade of songwriting and production work with Atlanta-based Organized Noize, Brown is ready to take on the world. Here the unofficial third member of OutKast resurrects the values of vintage R&B with a soulful funk-adelic twist. *Mr. Brown* is sure to please. (Purple Ribbon) **★★★** —Dean Gaskin



THE CARDIGANS • Super Extra Gravity

Still associated with the chirpy "Love-fool," these Swedes have much more to offer, and each LP since that hit has unveiled a different take on their sound. This latest album is the best yet. Nina Persson is as winsome as ever and full-voiced over an array of richly arranged pop gems. (Netwerk) **★★★** —T.M.



KEITH JARRETT

The Carnegie Hall Concert

Virtuosity is a wonderful thing to behold. This two-CD set, recorded in September 2005, shows one of the greatest living pianists improvising at the top of his form. Don't expect *The Köln Concert*; this one is far more dynamic—and interesting. (ECM) **★★★** —Leopold Froehlich



ALAN JACKSON • Like Red on a Rose

Of all the singers hoping to follow in the footsteps of Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings, Jackson comes closest to the spirit of the masters. Alison Krauss's production is a bit too mellow at times, but beneath all the atmospheric lies a work of heartbreaking soul. (Arista Nashville) **★★½** —L.F.



SOLOMON BURKE • Nashville

Here soul's Unknown Soldier works his jowly way through covers of country classics and might-have-beens with Ray Charles-like authority. At 66 Burke has a marvellously imperfect voice: Close your eyes and you may even forget the man singing is from Philly. (Shout! Factory) **★★★** —Josh Robertson



game of the month

[ROSE, MEET THORNS]

Scared of little girls? You will be

Rule of Rose (PS2) is the tale of a young orphan, her canine companion and the psychopathic children who stalk them. Filled with unnerving settings and characters, the game starts getting dark when you arrive at a massive English orphanage and find a cadre of children beating a burlap bag with a stick. The game masterfully evokes a drab prewar ambience through its twisted storybook presentation, haunting parlor music, grainy camera filters and generally antique feeling. Chalkboard drawings and tinkling laughter combine with sudden shocks and puzzles (some of which you'll need your dog to solve) to make sure you never trust a seven-year-old again. While Gothically gorgeous, the story unfolds at a drip rather than an arterial spray, so those searching for the next *Suffering* should look elsewhere. **YYY**

—Scott Steinberg



SCARFACE: THE WORLD IS YOURS

(PC, PS2, Xbox) When Tony dies at the end of *Scarface* he completes the film's tragic arc. But we all know there's no fun in tragedy. This game picks up where the movie leaves off, letting Tony cap the guy who was about to shoot him in the back and challenging him to rebuild his empire from the ground up. Fast paced and filled with colorful characters, it plays like *Grand Theft Auto* with an MBA—and a massive set of balls. **YYY½**

—Scott Alexander



NHL 2K7 (PS2, PS3, 360, Xbox) The most recent hockey game from 2K was as predictable and tired as the NHL lockout. This year, however, the company has returned with a revamped pro hockey simulation so realistic it'll have you spitting bloody Chiclets at the screen. Though the game looks fabulous (especially on next-gen), the upgrades aren't just cosmetic, with dozens of new ProControl moves and a new defensive pressure system. It just may be the best trash-talk venue ever created. **YYY**

—Marc Saltzman



STAR TREK: LEGACY (PC, 360) It turns out large-scale space combat is more Horatio Hornblower than Han Solo. Legacy's huge capital ships and blistering phaser-and-torpedo broadsides span all Trek eras, from pre-Federation days through the classic original series, *Next Generation* and the *DS9* and *Voyager* fringes. Exact reproductions and classic battle setups (such as the tooth-and-nail Enterprise-Reliant duel from *The Wrath of Khan*) complete the package. **YYY**

—Chris Hudak



SPLINTER CELL: DOUBLE AGENT

(GameCube, PC, PS2, 360, Xbox) In his fourth adventure, superspy Sam Fisher infiltrates a terrorist cell, adding moral ambiguity to his already fraught path. Players' choices—such as whether to kill innocents to maintain your cover—take center stage as you skydive into mission locations ranging from the Arctic to the Congo (where arcade-style shooting action breaks up all the stealth). The PC and next-gen versions look amazing. **YYY**

—John Gaudiosi



gaming on the go

[REVENGE OF THE PSP]

Unbowed, Sony comes back strong this fall with these great titles

The PSP has a gorgeous screen, a fast processor and a sleek design but spent the past year chasing the Nintendo DS's superior games. This fall, however, we smell a turnaround, as the DS lineup edges disappointingly back to kiddie territory. Meanwhile, the thumb fun on the way for the PSP has us looking forward to bus rides and bank lines.

LUMINES II takes the same addictive block-moving-and-busting gameplay that made the original an instant classic and outfits it with new songs, graphics and modes. The psychedelic **EVERY EXTEND EXTRA** (above) turns on a delightfully passive-aggressive premise: get as close as you can to your enemies, then explode your own ship, setting off spectacular chains of destruction. A product of freaky French man-child Djon, **HOT PXL**



(right) features more than 200 minigames, each taking eight seconds or less to complete. It's ADD-rific but has a big heart and true fanboy love for street culture. **WTF** succeeds on the sheer shiny weirdness that only the Japanese can create; here you navigate a variety of wilfully strange situations (such as chopping wood without axing any of the babies crawling nearby). If you're a fighter, not a lover, **TEKKEN: DARK RESURRECTION**, which came out last July, is a capital way to blow off steam.



So is beloved Sony platformer franchise **RATCHET & CLANK: SIZE MATTERS** (above). It's cartoonish ultraviolence in a can—just what the doctor ordered. **KILLZONE: LIBERATION** brings the world of the 2004 PS2 hit to the PSP with a top-down third-person view and intuitive controls. Finally, if you prefer your games more Guy Ritchie than Paul Verhoeven, take a butcher's at **GANGS OF LONDON** (above) with its stylish cockney gunslinging action. —S.A.



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the erotic eye

[ALBERTO VARGAS: WORKS FROM THE MAX VARGAS COLLECTION]



Starting with his first gig as an illustrator for Ziegfeld's Follies, Vargas made a feast of the feminine form. This outsize volume follows his career from the 1920s through his glory years with *Playboy*. **★★★★** —Leopold Forstlich

THE FEMALE THING • Laura Kipnis
Media scholar Kipnis wields psychology, history and anecdotal evidence to argue that women remain deeply conflicted about desire, body image and, above all, men. She insists that women, postfeminism, too often use men as scapegoats. An audacious, essential read. **★★★★** —Carmela Cloraru



YES YOU CAN! • Jonathan Black
In this thoughtful look at the dubious world of American motivators, former *PLAYBOY* editor Black applies a healthy dose of skepticism to our institutions of inspiration and self-improvement. Who knew backslappers and Pollyannas could be so entertaining? **★★★★½** —L.F.



he said

[HELP ME, PLAYBOY]

Who's afraid of Dear Abby?

Dear Mr. Advisor: I read your book, *Dear Playboy Advisor: Questions From Men and Women to the Advice Column of Playboy Magazine*, while vacationing with my girlfriend, and I was astonished by the results. (No, I'm not talking about our sex life.) Chapters are devoted to topics such as anal, gaming and threesomes. Your responses can be snappy. For instance, Q: "What do you think about guys who wear thongs?" A: "We try not to." Or wise: To the reader who said you didn't know "the difference between having sex and fucking," you wrote, "The difference...is between your ears, and everyone's love life should have a little of both." And more often than anything else, informative: "10 percent of children worldwide are not sired by the men who believe they're the father." And while I have quibbles with some of your know-it-all answers (arguing against circumcision when you tell us later it virtually eliminates the chances of HPV-related penile cancer), they don't come up often. But none of this really has anything to do with what I wanted to ask you while I was reading your book on the beach with my girlfriend peering over my shoulder. What I wanted to ask was, What's the best way to get sand out of the crack? (Of the book, I mean.)

—Bill Vourvoufies



trilogy of the month

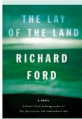
[THE LAY OF THE LAND]

The final installment of Richard Ford's Bascombe trilogy

So here's Frank Bascombe again, 10 years on but every bit as achingly real as he was in *The Sportsman* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Independence Day*. Sequels are dicey business, but Ford rolls out his 2006 Bascombe masterfully, assembling Frank's late middle age (his "Permanent Period") with such splendid writing and soulful humor that you don't read the book so much as watch it happen. It's November 2000, and the disputed presidential election shadows the land like a storm (with worse on the horizon). As always, Frank's falling apart. A Luddite real estate agent, he has an ambitious Buddhist partner, a second wife who's run off with her first (dead) husband, and a prostate full of titanium BBs.

After Easter rebirth and Fourth of July independence, the trilogy arrives in Frank's autumn with a Thanksgiving feast intended

to bring his children back into the fold. Ah, but this is Frank Bascombe, so expect a holiday of partisan fistfights and heartache in lesbian bars. It's always fun watching Frank implode, but by the end there's one bang too many. Thankfully, the novel's true engine—real estate—never stops purring. Ford paints our obsession with property as more than metaphor and something like a national faith. There's plenty of death here too. But for a book whose opening line is "Are you ready to meet your maker?" *The Lay of the Land* manages to stay wickedly funny. Ford has said this is the last we'll read of Frank (No Bascombe family Arbor Day? No Rabbit Resuscitated?), and in a book that hums along, poignant and melodic, that may be the saddest note of all. **★★★★**—Jess Walter



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THE



Debate the 100 absolutes at absolut.com



Pony Up

Cruising in the past lane in a Baldwin-Motion Camaro

NEW-MILLENNIUM MUSCLE-CAR MADNESS has officially taken hold in Detroit. Once again America's drivers are whipping around in brand-new Ford Mustangs and Dodge Chargers, with new Dodge Challengers and Chevy Camaros on the way. Still, as much as we love the new fleet of Motor City iron, nothing beats the classics. In 1967 a company called Baldwin-Motion started offering limited-production "unlimited-performance" Chevrolets to battle Carroll Shelby's hot-rodded Ford Mustangs in the pony-car wars. Baldwin-Motion Camaros were wickedly consistent drag-racing record setters, and restored examples today will run you \$400,000. Can't find one? You're in luck. The duo behind Baldwin-Motion—Joel "Mr. Motion" Rosen and Marty Schorr—is back in business with two updated Camaros, the 450 hp big-block SS-427 (from \$169,000, officialbaldwinmotion.com) and the 600 hp Phase III 540 (from \$189,000). The new Camaros are built using premium-quality vintage 1969 models with Chevrolet vehicle identification numbers and, unlike the Baldwin-Motion originals, come with air-conditioning and high-zoot audio. Convertibles are also available. And if 600 hp doesn't take care of your street needs, Baldwin-Motion can supply twin-turbo big blocks rated up to 1,000 hp. Will these Camaros become collector's items? Who knows? But we guarantee you won't lose any races.

Vintage Muscle

IN THE MARKET for a vintage muscle car? Here are our picks for every price range.

\$1 million: The 1965 Shelby Mustang GT350-R, which mopped the track with the competition of its day. Hard to find and going fast.

\$500,000: How about a 1969 Dodge Charger R/T Daytona with a 426-cubic-inch Hemi, dual quads and an automatic transmission? (A four-speed will run you another \$100,000.)
\$250,000: We'll take a classic 1967 Corvette 427/435 four-speed convertible with side exhaust.

\$100,000: Go for a 360 hp 1967 Pontiac GTO convertible with Ram Air package, four-speed manual and air-conditioning.
Under \$50,000: The granddaddy of them all, a 1955 Chrysler 300 with a 331-cubic-inch Hemi and twin four-barrels.

Seat of Power

WHEN PUTTING YOUR master plan for world domination into action, make sure you have a comfy chair handy so you can watch the chaos unfold in style. Suck UK's Villain Chair (\$7,500, suck.uk.com) fits the bill with its 1970s-tastic geodesic form and plush leather upholstery. Just remember: Tell the superspy about your secret death ray after you feed him to your pet tiger, not before.



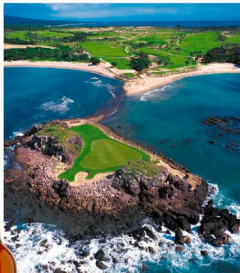


Frickin' Laser Beams

ONE DAY FRICTION will wear out the universe, so it's no wonder it'll do a number on your vinyl. Even the best needles still rub against the grooves each time you spin *Giant Steps*. That is, unless you spin it inside an ELP Laser Turntable (from \$15,000, laserturntable.com), the world's first no-touch record player. Five lasers scan the surface of the disc to read those tiny grooves and generate exceedingly accurate, friction-free sound. Plus you can skip tracks, fast-forward and rewind.

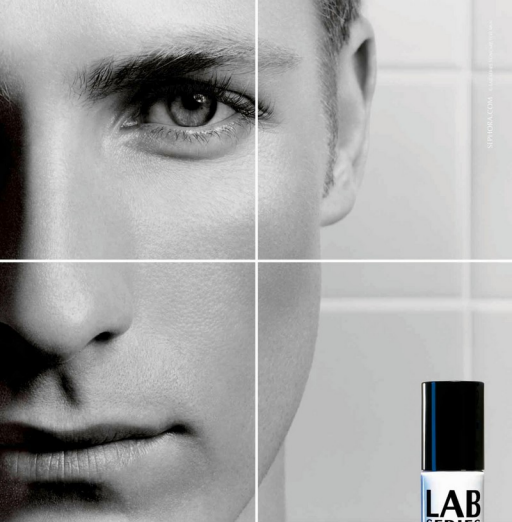
Missing Link

THE JACK NICKLAUS Signature Course at the Four Seasons in Punta Mita, Mexico is among the best in the world. The Golden Bear's anointed acres feature 19 sea-sprayed holes. Eight are played ocean-side, and the 19th is not the clubhouse bar but the Tail of the Whale (pictured), a natural island par three, accessible only during low tide—or when you're feeling intrepid, drunk or just Melvillian enough to sail one of the amphibious golf carts clear across the channel. Of course, you could do worse than staying at the Four Seasons (from \$325 a night, fourseasons.com), but to really outdo yourself, rent a fully staffed and appointed luxury villa on the peninsula for a week (from \$2,900 a night, punta-mita-properties.com). With open-air living quarters, Zenlike views, Edenic courtyards and sexy modern pools, the accommodations may have you and your companion requesting the later tee times.



Foam Home

IN RECENT YEARS wine has crept onto the Thanksgiving table, but in the interest of tradition we suggest serving beer with your fowl-centric feast. Brewery Ommegang of Coopers-town, New York crafts some of the world's most sublime ales (\$6 to \$7 for a 25-ounce bottle, ommegang.com), and three of its Belgian-style offerings pair beautifully with the holiday's rich foods: the original Ommegang Abbey, the Three Philosophers Quadrupel and the Hennepin Farmhouse Saison. With an alcohol content of about eight percent each, they'll help you forget every familial insult slung or received.



look alive

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Looking Sharp

SPYDERCO, THE WORLD-CLASS knife company of Golden, Colorado, has created what it claims is "the smallest possible folder with the largest possible cutting performance." The Spin (\$80, spyderco.com) has a nearly two-inch-wide high-carbon stainless-steel blade, and with the engraved spider-web on the stainless-steel handle, it looks sharp, too. The belt clip on the handle's other side doubles as a money clip.



Cuff 'Em, Officer

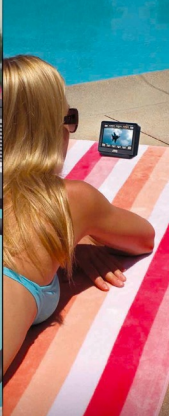
FOR US, LIFE is about indulgence—sex, gambling, a good bottle of vino. With these Four Vices cuff links (\$175, justcufflinks.com), we can wear our heart on our sleeve. These sterling-silver-and-enamel links are repros of ones worn by London *bons vivants* in the 1870s, when vices such as women and gambling were synonymous with the good life. Some things never change.

About Time

THESE DAYS IF you use "Bond, James Bond" as a pickup line, you'll out yourself as an utter goon. But flash this Omega Seamaster with blue dial, 007 logo and gun-barrel spiral—also known as the James Bond watch (\$3,450, omegawatches.com), marking the release of *Casino Royale*—and you'll be nose-deep in Pussy Galore. Though the automatic, stainless-steel number is water-resistant to 300 meters, laser and remote detonator must be installed aftermarket.



MOBILE ENTERTAINMENT



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UBISOFT

The Playboy Advisor

My wife is Roman Catholic and attends church every Sunday, which is fine. But after 13 years of marriage she has stopped giving me oral sex because she says the priest told her it is a sin. I asked her to show me where in the Bible oral sex is forbidden, but she says it doesn't matter, it's what she believes. What is your take?—G.S., Southington, Connecticut

Are you kidding? God loves blow jobs. It's a highly efficient way to get a man ready to create more Catholics. Husbands have it rough enough without priests spreading heresies, if indeed that's where your wife got this cockamamie idea. Our understanding of the church's stance on oral sex is that it's okay—or at least not specifically condemned—for a married couple when it's used as foreplay. The Vatican says that "sexuality is a source of joy and pleasure. The spouses' union achieves the twofold end of marriage: the good of the spouses themselves and the transmission of life." And what better for a committed couple than a little spice? Your wife is using the church as an excuse to avoid what she considers an onerous task. The question you need answered is why she doesn't enjoy it. We will pray for you because, frankly, it doesn't sound as if you'll be having constructive discussions about your mutual sex life anytime soon.

Why do men get potbellies? Why don't the muscles stay like a six-pack?—E.M., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Scientists aren't sure why men tend to store fat in the gut while women store it in the butt and thighs, but it's probably dictated by genetics and hormones. (Some women develop gobs but only after menopause.) Since the 1950s scientists have suspected that excess abdominal fat, even though it accounts for only 10 to 15 percent of your extra pounds, is the anchor that will take you to the bottom. Scanning technology that can look inside the gut now confirms this; doctors are finding that the internal organs of many apple-shaped men have been surrounded and infiltrated by belly fat. This appears to contribute to lethal problems such as clogged arteries, high blood pressure and diabetes. (A study published earlier this year suggests that a man with a 45-inch waistline has a risk of death three times higher than a man who is 10 inches thinner, regardless of age, race or body weight.) In effect this inner belt of fat becomes a mutant organ, releasing proteins and hormones that cause other organs to bog out. Deep belly fat presents a challenge because you can't spot-reduce or diet it away; it must be burned off with aerobic exercise. Researchers at Duke University found that obese adults who jogged 17 miles a week on a treadmill had a rapid decline in their visceral fat even without a change in diet. The amount of exercise was more important than the intensity.

A recent *Advisor* (July) is blessed with a delightful submission from a woman who



understands the importance of going down on a man. Nothing gives a woman more confidence in bed than practicing her tongue technique. Plus, when done correctly, giving head can make your lips more plump, luscious and red. I always enjoy giving my man a quick BJ before going out because I know he will love it and my lips will look stunning. Suck it up, ladies, for his sake and yours.—G.C., St. Paul, Minnesota

That sounds right to us. It's certainly sexier than a collagen implant.

My husband initiates sex by lying on his back, naked and soft, waiting for me. I blow him about as long as we end up having actual intercourse, which can be hard on my neck. But I know this is what turns him on. My ex-boyfriends used to draw me to the bed with a hard-on in place and a sense of urgency. Although I think I am the sexiest I've ever been, I feel I'm not hot enough to elicit this response from my husband anymore. What do you think?—K.M., Honolulu, Hawaii

Your husband must feel the same boredom—or he will or should. The next time he parks his ass on the bed, don't fall forward. Instead, tease him. Conjure his erection like a snake from a basket. Strip and dance. Touch yourself while telling him what you plan to do with his cock, which won't be soft for long. If necessary (or even if not), tie his wrists to the bedposts. Run your nails down the inside of his thighs. Put the head of his cock in your mouth without making contact. Make him beg. You want to hear the word please, e.g., "Please, baby, what are you doing? This isn't funny anymore. I can't stand it." Your husband needs to experience the pangs of longing he felt when he was first trying to bed you.

Alternatively, you could take a hard line. The next time he positions himself for servicing, say, "I don't think so. Get on your knees and lick me, and we'll discuss what comes next." Finally, you could beat him to the bed, lie on your naked ass and hope he recognizes an opportunity when he sees it. If none of these suggestions shakes things up, write us again.

This past New Year's I splurged on a Methuselah of champagne to share with my friends. There was a tense moment before midnight when no one could get the thing open. Then we had difficulty hoisting it to pour for everyone. Now, for his 30th birthday, a buddy who attended the party wants to up the ante and buy a Nebuchadnezzar. Do you have any tips for opening and serving this beast?—A.B., New York, New York

Typically restaurants will place the bottle in a decanting cradle. If you don't own a giant sling, ask your guests to have their glasses ready while two servers lift and tip the bottle to a 45-degree angle. (Be careful—it will be slippery after being chilled.) The Nebuchadnezzar holds the equivalent of about 20 bottles, but if you instead purchase a Balharzar (16 bottles) or Salamanzar (12), one person may be able to do the honors by placing one hand on the bottom of the bottle with his thumb in the front and the other hand under the base, to support the neck. Many other wines besides champagne can be supersized. Connoisseurs say larger bottles improve taste and consistency because the relatively smaller amount of oxygen trapped in the neck allows the contents to mature more slowly. That claim is useful if you need an excuse. We think they're fun because they allow you to share the same bottle with more than one friend.

A reader wrote in June asking how to respond when a woman says, "Let's just be friends." The *Advisor* claimed that LJBFB means there is no chance of having a relationship. That is very poor advice. LJBFB is not written in stone; it is simply a reflection of what the woman is thinking or feeling at that moment. Facing rejection, most men will try to change a woman's mind by bullying, begging or buying. The key is to surprise her with your response. For example, say something like, "I'm not going to promise anything except I don't want anything that doesn't feel right for us both. I sure as hell would never promise to cut my balls off or my heart out. So why don't you sit with that and get back to me?" Say this calmly with a bit of warmth but no anger or neediness. Wish her a nice day and leave or hang up. This is a huge pattern interrupt. It tells her you don't play along as most guys do. It's also vague enough to leave open all possibilities. Making yourself scarce is also unexpected. Another suggestion is to

reframe LJB.F. Tell her, "If you want to be nonsexual, that's fine, but I will never accept the label just in front of friends. If you want to say we're dear friends, that works for me." Again this interrupts her pattern. None of this guarantees she'll get sexual, but it greatly increases your odds when a woman sees you as non-needy and strong, having and setting standards and being truthful and direct.—Ross Jeffries, Los Angeles, California

Jeffries, whom we profiled in July 1998, is the creator of Speed Seduction (seduction.com). We're dear friends.

What's the story with high-definition DVD players? I just purchased a high-definition television and now wonder if I should also upgrade my DVD player.—J.H., Boston, Massachusetts

Hold off for now. Only about 200 high-def DVD titles are available, the players are still expensive at \$500 to \$1,000, and it's not clear which of two formats—Blu-ray or HD DVD—will dominate. "In a few years the price of players will have dropped to a few hundred dollars, there will be much more content, and the format war will have played out," says our tech editor, Scott Alexander. "Unless you're addicted to emerging technology, that will be a better time to pull the trigger."

Three weeks after we started dating, my new girlfriend came into the bathroom while I was shaving and sat down to urinate. I told her, "Not in front of me," and left the room. Is it common for couples to pee in front of each other? I thought it lacked class and took the romance out of the situation, but she didn't think it was a big deal.—M.J., Warwick, Rhode Island

We appreciate our privacy, but we have also found our tolerance for watching a woman pee rises exponentially with the number of times we have licked her nubs. In a similar vein...

Is it okay to be turned on by watching your boyfriend take a piss? I find the fact that he can stand and aim to be very masculine and erotic.—G.M., Lake Ronkonkoma, New York

Sure, it's okay. If you ask nicely, he may even give you a turn.

My 10-year high school reunion led to the most exciting adventure of my life. My ex-boyfriend was home for the first time since he'd moved to California shortly after we graduated. My second serious boyfriend, whom I met my senior year, is now my husband. I wasn't sure what to expect when they met, but they hit it off. After the party my husband invited my ex to come home with us to "share a cup of coffee." I was stunned because that has always been our code for sex. No sooner had we arrived than my husband kissed me and asked my ex if he had missed me. He said yes, so my husband invited him to kiss me as well. Before I knew it I was in bed with the two men I most loved.

The problem is my husband and I later received a letter from my ex, who says he is returning to town next month with his girlfriend. He sent her photo and wrote that "she loves coffee too." I wouldn't mind another visit, but I'm not sure I want to share the spotlight, especially with someone who has bigger breasts and slimmer hips than I do. How should we reply?—M.T., Wells River, Vermont

Talk this over with your husband if you haven't already. He'll reassure you, but if you proceed, it will be helpful for him to be aware of your concerns. You will also want to discuss it with your ex and his partner, should you extend an invitation. We can't predict how it will go, but the fewer surprises, the better. Nothing says you can't still be the center of attention; there will simply be more mouths and hands involved.

What's inside a golf ball?—H.M., San Antonio, Texas

Based on our drives lately, we'd say lead. The two-piece balls you don't care about losing have a solid rubber core and a durable plastic cover. These balls tend to spin less, meaning they go faster and generally straighter but are harder to control off the iron. A three-piece ball has another layer of plastic around the core and a thinner, softer cover to provide less spin off a driver and more spin off an iron. The balls pros hit tend to be of four pieces—a hard core surrounded by softer rubber and then two layers of plastic. This gives the ball makers more places to make adjustments. Last year a Buffalo company called NanoDynamics introduced the NDMX ball, which has a hollow metal core. The idea is that with a concentration of weight on the sides rather than in the center, the ball spins less. Golf balls are now so well made that the USA has asked manufacturers to design a few that don't travel so far in the event that restrictions are necessary someday.

How do women really feel about watching porn?—J.R., San Antonio, Texas

*Most can take it or leave it, although Violet Blue, author of *The Smart Girl's Guide to Porn*, believes the Internet is creating many more female fans by allowing women to find material they like. "Our desire for intimacy in relationships and our visceral response to porn may come from two different places, but they aren't mutually exclusive," she says. "Porn disrupts our rationality." Welcome to the club. Once women become comfortable with porn, Blue says, they usually enjoy it as much as men do. However, they tend to be more critical. "If women see a performer screaming in pleasure even though her clit isn't being stimulated, they roll their eyes." We're all for equal-opportunity voyeurism, but it's hard to believe women will ever have the same appetite for porn that men do. Research shows that while both male and female brains react more quickly to a couple having sex than to seeing them talk, and that women (at least those who volunteer for porn studies) rate sex scenes as erotic as men do, the genders process sexual images in different ways. One study found*

that two regions of the male brain become more active when viewing porn—the amygdala, which is involved in processing visual stimuli and lights up when we anticipate being satisfied, and the hypothalamus, which controls the sex drive. Stephan Hamann, a neuroscientist at Emory University, says some women's hypothalamuses show more activity than others as they view hard-core, but the levels never approach those of men. In fact, the male hypothalamus activates even when we view such neutral interactions between couples as dancing, a wedding or a clinical massage, suggesting we can find sex in any situation involving a woman, just as we can see flirting where none exists.

I don't like stepping out of the house unless I look presentable, with a tie, slacks, nice shoes, etc. I have even been known to wear a fedora. My girlfriend asks why I am always so dressy. She often says, "You don't have to look that way where we're going." But I just don't feel comfortable in a baseball cap, T-shirt and khaki shorts. I told her she was the pot calling the kettle black, telling me to dress down when she spends a fortune on manicures, facials and her hair. What do you think?—A.T., San Diego, California

Going casual doesn't have to be done to the extreme you describe. If you're going bicycling, on a hike, to a barbecue or to the park, we're sure you have the skill to look sharp in shorts, sandals and a polo or in a casual coat with no tie. In your girlfriend's defense, your comeback about her manicures, facials, etc. doesn't wash. That's basic grooming for a woman, just as you shave, get your hair cut and trim your nails.

I am very content with my wife and her looks, but she is not Playmate material. She seems unaware of that fact when we go to swingers' clubs and often tries to hook up with the hottest couple. Usually it ends with an embarrassing rejection. Should I tell my wife that we (I'm no Brad Pitt) need to lower our expectations? I love her and don't want to hurt her feelings.—W.D., Snellville, Georgia

Don't go there. It's great that your wife has such confidence, and you can't predict what might pique the interest of another couple. In our experience, people often become more attractive once you get to know them. There's also no reason to feel embarrassed about a polite rejection, especially from partygoers who receive a lot of attention. The fact that you can ask is what makes it fun.

All reasonable questions—from fashion, food and drink, stereotypes and sports cars to dating dilemmas, taste and etiquette—will be personally answered if the writer includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The most interesting, pertinent questions will be presented in these pages each month. Write the Playboy Advisor, 730 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10019, or send e-mail by visiting our website at playboyadvisor.com.



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**Milwaukee's
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"There are only three sports:
bullfighting
motor racing
and mountaineering;
all the rest are merely games."
-Ernest Hemingway



LIFE TAKES POWER

Photo by Andrew Ranney
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K&N
LIFETIME AIR FILTERS

THE PLAYBOY FORUM



THE PLAYBOY VOTER

A SPECIAL REPORT

PART II

Eight million strong, the PLAYBOY voting bloc is a swing state of its own. This month, again using our scientifically rigorous poll, we examine our readers' views on some of the most polarizing political topics of the day: war in Iraq, militancy in North Korea, the U.S. economy, privacy in an era of unprecedented surveillance and the Republicans' newest wedge issue, immigration. In contrast to the picture of our nation offered by the news media—of two Manichaean foes, one red, one blue, locked in a proverbial Mexican standoff—we have found that our readers consistently buck party and regional lines, reject much of the “moral values” agenda and synthesize a common-sense middle ground, all hinting at a democratic future in which the fringe elements are pushed toward the political sidelines.

DO YOU FEEL safer now than you did five years ago?

Although nearly two thirds of PLAYBOY respondents say **no**, answers to this question are riven along party lines. While **71 percent** of Democrats and **64 percent** of independents say they do not feel safer, only **43 percent** of Republicans say so. PLAYBOY voters feel significantly more secure than our representative national non-subscriber group, among whom far more Republicans (**62 percent**), Democrats (**85 percent**) and independents (**75 percent**) do not feel safer.



WAS PRESIDENT BUSH justified in launching the war in Iraq?

Among our readers a razor-thin majority says **no**. Here again, however, partisan differences emerge: **75 percent** of PLAYBOY Republicans say the war was indeed justified, while just **22 percent** of Democrats think so. Still, large as the pro-war faction is among PLAYBOY Republicans, our readers' skepticism toward party talking points is evident, with PLAYBOY Republicans **64 percent** more likely to say the war was not justified than national Republicans.



WHEN SHOULD U.S. troops leave Iraq?

Among the five options, the most popular choice is "when the elected government is firmly established," with **44 percent** support from our subscribers. This mirrors the response of the representative national nonsubscriber group. The second most popular choice among PLAYBOY voters—"now; the war

was wrong"—also echoes the national group. The surprise comes at third place: **12 percent** of PLAYBOY voters say "never; we need permanent military bases in the Midwest." Among nonsubscribers this answer trails in last, with just eight percent supporting this position. In fourth place among our readers and third among the national representative group is "now; our mission was accomplished." Last among our readers is "before the end of the year." Though PLAYBOY Republicans are more skeptical than national Republicans about the justification of the war, their attitudes about the troops on the ground reflect national Republicans' feelings: Among PLAYBOY Republicans and national Republicans alike, the top two answers (and with the same level of support) are "when the elected government is firmly established" and "never." The success of "never" among PLAYBOY readers is due to **seven times as many** PLAYBOY Democrats supporting this option as national Democrats. This discrepancy is the same for PLAYBOY Democrats who voted in the 2004 elections, though less pronounced.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT the resumption of the draft?

Universal service is not popular—and the idea is even less popular among our readers than in the general population. While **35 percent** of the national survey group unconditionally oppose the draft, **47 percent** of PLAYBOY voters oppose it. (Another third say their support would depend on circumstances, and just **16 percent** want to bring back the draft.) PLAYBOY voters of all stripes express more opposition to the draft than their national counterparts: PLAYBOY Republicans are more than half again as likely as their national counterparts to oppose the draft. PLAYBOY independents differ from their national counterparts by the widest margin, with **56 percent** of PLAYBOY independents opposed to the draft versus **34 percent** of national independents. As for regional distinctions, mid-state PLAYBOY subscribers oppose the draft at a much higher rate (**45 percent**) than representative mid-state residents (**29 percent**). Our blue-state subscribers also oppose the draft at a higher rate than nonsubscriber blue-state residents, though the margin of difference is not as extreme as with red-state residents.

IF IRAN OR NORTH KOREA refuses to stop its nuclear program, should the U.S. take military action?

54 percent of PLAYBOY subscribers would want the U.S. to take military action against unwanted nuclear programs, making our audience slightly—but almost negligibly—less hawkish than those polled in the national sample. The difference is attributable to PLAYBOY Republicans being **20 percent** more dovish than national Republicans.

OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES, which poses the greatest threat to America?

A plurality of both subscribers (**31 percent**) and the national sample (**36 percent**) consider Al Qaeda and terrorism the top concern. But beyond that, the great middle represented by PLAYBOY voters differs from the national group: Whereas among nonsubscribers nuclear weapons in Iran or North Korea (**16 percent**), religious fundamentalists (**15 percent**) and illegal immigrants (**15 percent**) are the next most often perceived threats, the second-biggest number of PLAYBOY voters (**22 percent**) puts religious fundamentalists as the greatest threat, and the third-biggest number of PLAYBOY readers (**15 percent**) places global warming as the top threat. Again bucking the party line, PLAYBOY Republicans are **more than twice as likely** as national Republicans to consider global warming the greatest threat to America. PLAYBOY Democrats are less worried than their national counterparts about both nuclear weapons in rogue states and illegal immigration. Virtually no one—among both subscribers and the national sample—is worried about bird flu.

OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES, which poses the greatest burden to you?

Among five answers, illegal immigrants taking American jobs finishes dead last among our readers. As with the previous



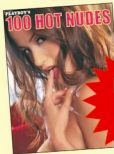
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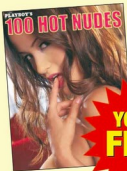
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question, PLAYBOY Democrats are less concerned about immigration than their national counterparts are. Top concern for PLAYBOY readers? The high cost of gas, with **36 percent** of respondents singling it out. The high cost of health care—the top concern for the national sample group—is second for our readers, at **25 percent**. The third most common concern for PLAYBOY voters (**15 percent**) is the high cost of college education—a rate more than twice as high as among the national sample group, for whom college cost is last by a significant margin. (This is a bipartisan concern for our readers: Both PLAYBOY Republicans and PLAYBOY Democrats are twice as likely to worry about the cost of college education as their national counterparts.)

SHOULD ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS be deported?

Three quarters of PLAYBOY readers think illegals should be deported, only slightly lower than the national rate. But whereas PLAYBOY Republicans are in step with national Republicans on this issue, PLAYBOY Democrats and independents are significantly more sympathetic to illegals than their national counterparts are: **38 percent** of PLAYBOY Democrats would let illegals stay, compared with **10 percent** of PLAYBOY Republicans would let illegals stay.

21 percent nationally. As for independents, **27 percent** of PLAYBOY voters would let illegals stay, compared with 20 percent of independents in the national sample group.

ARE YOU BETTER off today economically than you were five years ago?

Our readership is much more bullish on the economy than the general population is, likely reflecting our readers' affluence. Across every political affiliation, a significant majority of PLAYBOY voters says **yes**. While 42 percent of the national group are better off, **68 percent** of our subscribers are. Of PLAYBOY independents, **67 percent** say they are faring better, compared with 39 percent of national independents; **58 percent** of PLAYBOY Democrats are better off, compared with 32 percent of national Democrats; and **76 percent** of PLAYBOY Republicans are doing better, compared with 54 percent of national Republicans. Regionally, PLAYBOY voters are also universally happier with their circumstances: **70 percent** of PLAYBOY's red-state residents say they are better off, compared with 43 percent of the nonsubscriber group, and **65 percent** of PLAYBOY's blue-state readers are doing better, compared with 42 percent of nonsubscribers in blue states.

DO YOU HAVE health insurance?

84 percent of all PLAYBOY voters are insured, and at comparable or slightly higher than national rates across all political and regional subgroups except independents.



WILL SOCIAL SECURITY provide enough money for you to retire comfortably?

PLAYBOY subscribers are more skeptical than the national average: **87 percent** say **no**, making them 15 percent more pessimistic than the national sample group. In particular, PLAYBOY independents and Republicans are significantly less likely than their national counterparts to believe Social Security will adequately provide for them.

DO YOU PUT aside money for retirement other than Social Security deductions?

Given their views about the utility of Social Security, it should come as no surprise that far more PLAYBOY readers (**78 percent**) than the national group (61 percent) are setting away additional monies for retirement. And whereas blue-state residents in the national sample are more likely to save additional retirement funds, the percentage of those saving among PLAYBOY's red- and blue-state readers is exactly the same.

DO YOU FEEL affirmative-action policies in education and job hiring are beneficial?

A libertarian streak emerges in answers to this question, especially among PLAYBOY Democrats, who are much less

supportive of affirmative action than national Democrats are. PLAYBOY Democrats who say no outpace national Democrats who say no, **54 percent** to 45 percent. Overall, **68 percent** of PLAYBOY voters think affirmative action is unhelpful.

WHAT IS YOUR primary source for news about current events?

The top source of news for our readers is the Internet, attracting **40 percent** of PLAYBOY voters, followed by TV with 35 percent and newspapers with 17. Among nonsubscribers, TV is the top source (46 percent), followed by the Internet (24 percent) and newspapers (19 percent).

Survey conducted by Sovereign Marketing Research in June 2006 using representative groups.



THE PRIMACY OF PRIVACY

65 percent of PLAYBOY readers think the government should not be allowed to conduct surveillance on citizens without court approval.

79 percent of Democrats are against surveillance without court approval, and **48 percent** of Republicans are against surveillance without court approval, making PLAYBOY Republicans much less forgiving than national Republicans.

70 percent of independents say no to surveillance without court approval, also significantly higher than the national rate.

GET OUT...

79 percent of PLAYBOY readers think the government should not enact stricter laws against obscenity. (Only 11 percent are in favor of stricter laws, with another 10 percent undecided.)

Three times as many PLAYBOY Republicans as national Republicans say the government should not get stricter: 75 percent to 27 percent.

16 percent of PLAYBOY Republicans think the government should enact stricter laws, compared with 56 percent of national Republicans.

7 percent of PLAYBOY independents want stricter laws against obscenity, compared with 49 percent of national independents.

AND STAY OUT

76 percent of PLAYBOY readers think the best way to protect children from harmful Internet material is parental control and monitoring of kids' computer use. Interestingly, PLAYBOY Democrats and independents mirror PLAYBOY Republicans in their trust in parental responsibility. In the case of PLAYBOY Democrats, their overwhelming support for parental controls means they are much less supportive of filtering technologies and government blocking of websites than national Democrats are. Our Democrats are **more than 10 times less likely** to support government controls than national Democrats, a level of distaste for government involvement mirrored by PLAYBOY independents and Republicans, who are also more than 10 times less likely to support government involvement than their national counterparts. Overall, less than one percent of our readers favor government intrusion.

FOR FULL SURVEY RESULTS, SEE PLAYBOY.COM/MAGAZINE.

READER RESPONSE

DEAR LEADER

John Dean's "Radicals on the Rise" (August) is one of the most enlightening and positive articles I have ever read. His definition of the authoritarian mind-set simply but eloquently explains it all. This incurable disposition of cor-



John Dean resonates with readers.

ruption without guilt, and control without conscience, is a true poison in our society. Our president and the leader of North Korea should get along like two kids in a candy store. I now wait with great anticipation to see the level of creativity that will come from conservatives writing in with negative responses: I love to see a good hypocrite.

Jim Kahua
Portland, Oregon

At last someone states a position very close to my own. I am a conservative Republican who first voted in 1964, for Barry Goldwater. I have been dismayed and upset by the direction my party has taken in the past couple of decades. The religious right and ultraconservatives have hijacked the Republican Party, which now bears little resemblance to my idea of it. I have written repeatedly to my congressman, Duncan Hunter, and to my local newspaper, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, with no success. I am beginning to believe politics has no place for me except as an independent or a Libertarian. Unless the Republican Party dramatically reverses the direction in which it is heading, it has lost me as a voter.

Samuel Kähler
Lakeside, California

I applaud your look into right-wing radicalism in "Radicals on the Rise" and your interview with the truly remarkable Wole Soyinka in "Democ-

racry, Torture and Exile." Radicalism is a growing problem in the U.S., and I am more afraid of hard-liners than of terrorists, as no one affects our lives more than our own elected officials. It's one thing to have those who hate us scare the American people but another to have people who claim to love this country scare us. When did fear of our own politicians become an acceptable way of life? I want to thank *PLAYBOY* for publishing engaging political articles that help awaken the spirit of true Americans like myself—people who want America to be a better place for all, not just the few on top.

Scott Franks
Columbus, Ohio

THE BALANCE FALLACY

Thanks for "An Open Letter to Our Readers" (August); it sets the record straight for some of the alleged long-time subscribers who obviously don't get it. It's self-evident that the very act of publishing nudity is progressive. A magazine that features the glorious nude female form cannot possibly be restricted in thought or limited by artificial moral parameters. *Hef's Playboy Philosophy* beautifully brought this home, weaving ideas into a coherent theory that remains a benchmark of true progressivism to this day. In a culture in which polarization and passion negate rea-



Two sides to every issue? Nope.

son, most people erroneously assume every issue is two-sided; the false assumptions that often follow are that both sides deserve equal airtime and that a balanced presentation confers objectivity. Nonsense!

Phil Stahl
Colorado Springs, Colorado

It's about time the *Forum* stood up and said nothing is wrong with subjectivity in the editorial process. The information it provides provokes thought and is a good starting point. If questions remain after you have finished reading an article, find a book on the subject to get that extra depth you seek. Don't hold *PLAYBOY* responsible for making up your mind on an argument for you.

Greg Jorgenson
Bend, Oregon

Bravo to *PLAYBOY* for staring down the radical right-wing bullies and telling them politely but firmly to go pound salt.



Sloganeering is not political dialogue.

It is high time somebody did. Trying to placate such zealots is a losing proposition. These brainwashed, protofascist pod people view compromise as a sign of weakness, deem fairness and balance as qualities for suckers only and define bias as even the slightest deviation from their talking points du jour. *PLAYBOY* has wisely decided not to go along with their game and, better yet, has told them so to their smug faces. Now if only the rest of the media, mainstream Republicans and the Democratic Party would do likewise.

Michael Pastorkovich
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I subscribe to *PLAYBOY* because I agree with its politics wholeheartedly. I wish *PLAYBOY* contributed more to national news coverage, as the mainstream media allow unscrupulous authorities to abuse the public. A strong, responsible media promotes freedom and democracy much more than the military does.

Ben Chornush
Austin, Texas

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

NEWSFRONT



Freedom Not Marching

NEW YORK CITY—The New York City police department has proposed tighter restrictions on protests and demonstrations, requiring permits for groups of more than 34 people or 19 cyclists. Police claim large protests are problematic because they block traffic and create safety hazards. Civil libertarians, however, are affronted by what they perceive as an infringement on First Amendment rights. They say the new rules virtually eliminate spontaneous rallies. They also consider the new proposals to be police retaliation for clashes at previous protests, particularly during the 2004 Republican Convention, when police arrested 1,800 protesters, and at a Critical Mass demonstration just days prior to that, when more than 260 cyclists' rights advocates were arrested.

Marshal Law

LAS VEGAS—Federal air marshals revealed to a Denver TV reporter that their managers are insisting on report quotas that could have a devastating impact on American travelers. "Innocent passengers," said one marshal, "are being entered into an international intelligence database as suspicious persons—and they did nothing wrong." Why? Marshals must in some cases file at least one report of terrorist-surveillance activity a month to qualify for raises, bonuses and special assignments. The problem was first revealed in a pair of leaked 2004 memos from top management at the Las Vegas federal air marshal office. One memo states, "Each federal air marshal is now expected to generate at least one surveillance detection report per month." Another reads, "There may come an occasion when you just don't see anything out of the ordinary for a month at a time, but I'm sure that if you are looking for it, you'll see something." Federal air marshals insist the quotas are still in place, putting innocent U.S. citizens on watch lists and inundating intelligence databases with spurious and irrelevant information.

Little Sleuth Coupe

WASHINGTON, D.C.—License-plate-reading equipment is already proliferating among law enforcement departments, and now manufacturers want to start selling the devices to private companies for use in collecting consumer data. Police currently use the equipment to find vehicles that have been stolen or used in crimes or that have outstanding parking tickets. In the

near future—barring new privacy laws—the devices could be used to track the movements of law-abiding citizens. "I know it sounds Big Brother," says Andy Bucholz, a board member at G2 Tactics, a manufacturer of license-plate-reading technology, "but it's going to happen."

Masses of the Opiate

LONDON—Senior members of the opposition Conservative party in the British Parliament have urged the legalization and licensing of opium crops in Afghanistan. The MPs say the \$1 billion spent on eradication in 2005 had no effect on opium exports—which hit record



levels last year—and in fact made it easier for the Taliban to find recruits, as poor farmers had their sole source of income destroyed. "We're pouring gas on the flames of the violence with this eradication campaign," says an aid worker active in Afghanistan. Researchers also point out that in Turkey in the 1970s a legalization and licensing program overseen by the UN's International Narcotics Control Board successfully eliminated the heroin trade there (then the world's biggest) by directing the poppy crop to pharmaceutical companies for use in the production of medical painkillers such as morphine. Adding to the timeliness of the British MPs' call, the World Health Organization has reported a global shortage of legal opiates.

MARGINALIA

FROM A STATEMENT by Roberta Stewart, the widow of U.S. serviceman Patrick Stewart, killed in Afghanistan, whose wish to place a Wiccan symbol on his memorial plaque was refused by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the grounds that Wicca is not one of the department's 38 authorized religions: "My husband fought for the Constitution of the United States. He was proud of his spirituality and of being a Wiccan, and he was proud of being an American."

FROM COMMENTS by Congressman Christopher Shays (R-Conn.) concerning a Government Accountability Office report that 2,669 sensitive military items were sold from November 2005 to June 2006: "During previous hearings we learned the Department of Defense was a bargain basement for would-be terrorists, due to its security screening of excess military equipment. Based on the GAO's most recent undercover investigation, it looks like the store is still open."

FROM A DESCRIPTION of the book *Birthing God's Mighty Warriors* on GaiaNetFull.com, a website "dedicated to providing encouragement and practical help to those who are striving to raise a large and growing godly family": "A hard-hitting, scripturally based exposé on the emotional, physical and spiritual damage caused by the secular idea of birth control. We are living in the last days. An anointed generation must come to earth to help prepare the way of the Lord. Many in this generation will be children. Will these chosen children be allowed to come? Satan is trying hard to prevent their conceptions and births. *Birthing God's Mighty Warriors* exposes how Satan has used the secular idea of choice and modern medical advances to convince God's people to limit their family size through birth control and sterilization. Sadly, thousands of couples are suffering emotionally, physically and spiritually because they have chosen their own path."

FROM AN INTERVIEW with the Dalai Lama in London's *Daily Telegraph*: "A Western friend asked me what harm could there be between consenting adults having oral sex if they enjoy it. But the purpose of sex is reproduction, according to Buddhism. The other two holes don't create life. I don't mind—but I can't condone this way of life. Using the other two holes is wrong."



UNREASONABLE SEARCHES AND SEIZURES

THE RISING USE OF SWAT TEAMS IS BAD, BUT IT'S ABOUT TO GET WORSE

This past term, the Supreme Court ruled in *Hudson v. Michigan* that evidence seized in an illegal raid can be used against a defendant at trial, even if police had disregarded the requirement to knock and identify themselves before entering. Taking away the only disincentive for these raids is likely to exacerbate an already unsettling trend: the rise of paramilitary tactics in police departments across America. Nearly every U.S. city now has a SWAT team, as do many small towns. Below are some examples of raids gone wrong and the tragic consequences.



1 FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA In January 2006 a SWAT team apprehended Sal Colosi, a local optometrist accused of betting on sports with an undercover detective. As Colosi came out to meet the officer to pay a debt, the SWAT team descended. One officer's gun apparently discharged accidentally, hitting Colosi in the chest and killing him instantly. Colosi had no prior criminal record and no history of violence. Police found no weapons in his home. A Fairfax police department spokesman told *The Washington Post* the department serves most of its warrants with a SWAT team, even for nonviolent crimes. One leading criminologist estimates the number of SWAT call-outs each year in the U.S. has increased more than 1,300 percent since 1980, to 40,000 a year or about 110 a day.

2 SUNRISE, FLORIDA In August 2005 a SWAT team raided the home of Anthony Distalato, a bartender and part-time student. Police say the team was necessary because Distalato owned a legal, licensed and registered handgun. Distalato had no history of violence and one prior conviction for marijuana possession as a minor. Police say that as they raided the home, Distalato met them in the bedroom with a gun and they opened fire. His bullet-riddled body was found in a closet. Police discovered two ounces of marijuana. Raids are extremely violent and confrontational, and on dozens of occasions non-violent offenders have been killed in cases of mistaken identity or mistaken intent.

3 OMAHA, HAWAII In March 2005 police mistakenly broke into the residence of Sharon and William McCulley on a drug raid. The McCulleys, home with their grandchildren at the time, were thrown to the ground at gunpoint. William McCulley, who uses a walker and has an implanted device to deliver electrical shocks to his spine to relieve pain, began flopping around on the floor when the device malfunctioned from the trauma. Police then erroneously raided a second address before finally arresting several men for distribution of marijuana. There are now hundreds of documented cases of "wrong-door" raids, during which SWAT teams have entered the wrong home, terrorizing innocent people.

4 DUNDALK, MARYLAND In January 2005 a SWAT team in Baltimore County descended on the home of Cheryl Lynn Noel at five a.m., after finding marijuana seeds in the family's trash. (Raids are generally conducted late at night or very early in the morning.) When officers entered Noel's second-floor bedroom, the middle-aged woman sat upright in her bed, frightened, holding a handgun. (She owned it legally.) A SWAT officer fired twice from behind a bullet-proof shield, hitting Noel in the chest, then fired a third shot at close range. Noel died at the scene. Friends and acquaintances described Noel as a person who ran a Bible study group on her lunch break. Research has turned up more than three dozen cases in which wholly innocent people have been killed in paramilitary raids.

5 LEVITTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA In February 2004 police raided the home of James Hoskins, looking for his brother. Police broke down the bedroom door, and an officer fired after mistaking for a gun the T-shirt Hoskins was using to cover his genitals. The bullet ripped through Hoskins's stomach, small intestine and colon. Hoskins didn't learn that the intruder who shot him was a police officer until he awoke from a coma weeks later. Police arrested Hoskins's brother for possessing a small amount of marijuana. SWAT teams were once used only in rare emergency situations such as hostage takings or bank robberies; now they're used most commonly to serve drug warrants. SWAT raids are also often conducted on tips from confidential informants, who are notoriously unreliable.

6 PRENTISS, MISSISSIPPI In December 2001 police stormed a small duplex on a tip from a confidential informant that drugs were inside. In one apartment they apprehended Jamie Smith, a known drug dealer, and found a substantial amount of marijuana. In the other, 21-year-old Cary Maye was asleep with his 18-month-old daughter. When police kicked down the door, Maye mistook them for criminal intruders and fired his gun. His bullet struck and killed officer Ron Jones, the son of the town's police chief. Maye, who had no prior criminal record and no history of violence, was later convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death.



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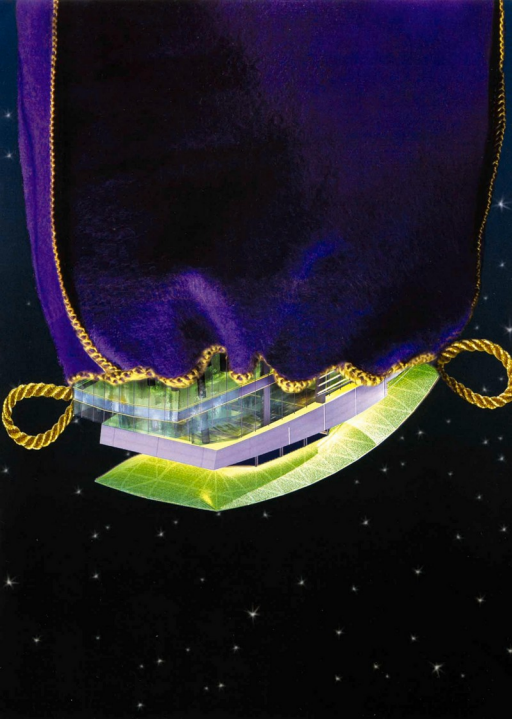
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IDE, TURN TO PAGE 112

THE NEW FANTASY
THE PALMS
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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

A candid conversation with the queen of bloggers about citizen journalism, spineless Democrats, impeaching Bush and why God belongs in politics

Few people have gone through as many transformations as Arianna Huffington. She's been a noted biographer, a political wife, an outspoken columnist and a TV talking head. She's also morphed over the past few years from a conservative voice and major force within the Republican Party into a Democrat who has run for office. But perhaps her most impressive shift has been from mainstream media to the web with *The Huffington Post* (huffingtonpost.com), her news-aggregating, multiblog branchchild. Formed 18 months ago, in partnership with former AOL Time-Warner executive Kenneth Lerer, HuffPost now gets 2.3 million unique visitors a month, breaks news stories and relentlessly pursues crucial issues long past their mainstream-media expiration date. On the blog side HuffPost features a rotation of more than 700 bloggers—celebs, politicians, academics, pundits, activists, humorists and others—who can post anytime they want.

The tall, aristocratic Greek native was born 56 years ago in Athens—though she is fond of joking that she was born in Fresno, California and “just cultivated the accent so I could be an ethnic minority”—and attended Cambridge University on a full scholarship. She earned a master's degree in economics and became president of the debating society—only the third woman to do so.

Since then she's written 11 books, including prominent biographies of Maria Callas

and Pablo Picasso, as well as three recent poleemics excoriating corporate and government corruption and deconstructing the foibles of our political parties: *How to Overthrow the Government*, *Pigs at the Trough*, and *Fanatics and Fools: The Game Plan for Winning Back America*. Her newest book, *On Becoming Fearless*, is a departure meant primarily for the self-empowerment crowd.

Huffington was married to wealthy oil heir Michael Huffington, a Republican who became a California congressman in 1992. In 1994, after spending nearly \$30 million of his own money, he lost a close Senate race to Dianne Feinstein. His wife was a high-profile part of that campaign and emerged afterward as a bigger name than her husband. The couple divorced in 1997, but Arianna and Michael, who has come out publicly as bisexual, remain friendly. Out of concern for their two daughters, neither will speak to the media about the other.

Huffington is nothing if not a survivor. In 1995, though still outwardly a Republican, she began to drift toward the center, thanks to some eye-opening from her friend Al Franken, with whom she covered the 1996 political conventions for Bill Maher's TV show *Politically Incorrect*.

Eventually she evolved into a Democrat, a conversion that caused some to call her a blatant striver rather than a true believer. “Arianna,”

asserted one political consultant to writer Steve Oney in *Los Angeles* magazine, “is one of the most dedicated persons to developing a public profile I’ve ever seen. She’s gone through some remarkable changes, but the one thing about her is that she’s a consistent self-promoter.”

Part of that transformation included a weekly syndicated political column, a continuing stint on public radio and, in 2004, a campaign for governor of California. She garnered few votes but received lots of exposure.

She established herself as a progressive salonista in Los Angeles, holding regular parties at her Brentwood home to promote an array of ecological, political, philosophical and spiritual causes. She also formed a new group of friends, a staggering and mostly liberal collection of powerful entertainment, media and political types, some of whom now blog on *The Huffington Post*.

Contributing Editor David Rensin met with Huffington for two long sessions one weekend and another session six weeks later, just as she was adding the finishing touches to *On Becoming Fearless*. He reports, “Arianna is so heavily scheduled that I never expected her to be on time for our meetings. And she wasn’t. But waiting in her home office, with its fireplace, family photos and humdrum of books, was not exactly torture. She would breeze in, all apologies, perch on the soft couch, her BlackBerry perched discreetly by her thigh and a tall latte easily within reach, and



“Hillary Clinton should not be the Democratic nominee. Period. The end. She has failed to speak out when it matters. She has failed to show leadership on Iraq. Anybody who wants to support her is part of the problem.”



“Democrats were actually in the majority in the Senate in 2002. You can forgive politicians for going along on unimportant issues, but to allow an administration to take us into an unnecessary war? Nothing is more immoral.”



PHOTOGRAPH BY MIZUNO

“The more powerful bloggers become, the more money and access are thrown at them. Bloggers are just as susceptible to the problems of mainstream media; they just haven’t had an opportunity until now. Let’s see how they use it.”

answer questions with calm and focus, the conversation often punctuated by her trademark laugh.

Arianna insists, "The more fearless we are in our lives, the more fearless we're going to be in changing the world." When it comes to her political opinions, she practices what she preaches."

PLAYBOY: How does Arianna Huffington view the state of the union?

HUFFINGTON: With a sense of tragedy. Again and again in history you see tragic decisions having an impact way beyond what was obvious at the time. Invading Iraq is exactly such a decision, with consequences that have barely begun to unfold and which demonstrate the bankruptcy of our political system.

PLAYBOY: In what way?

HUFFINGTON: Although it goes without saying that we can be legitimately outraged at the administration that took us to war—that I blame the president goes without saying—I'm equally outraged at the Democratic leadership for allowing the president to take us to war. I believe tragic historic events happen only when the opposition fails to oppose.

PLAYBOY: Given the administration's promotion of a link between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, WMDs, security alerts, a real fear of another attack and the framing of opposition to the Iraq war as unpatriotic, was there any reason for you to think the opposition would oppose, at least at the time?

HUFFINGTON: Yes, because it was a matter of going to war. And remember, we were actually in the majority in the Senate in 2002, if only for a moment. You can forgive politicians for going along on unimportant issues, but to allow an administration to take us into an unnecessary war? Nothing is more immoral.

PLAYBOY: But who in Congress knew it was unnecessary? It took years for accusations that the administration manipulated and ignored intelligence to surface.

HUFFINGTON: The late Democratic senator from Minnesota Paul Wellstone voted against the war in 2002. I've had off-the-record conversations with many Democratic leaders who knew better and did not act on that knowledge. I believe the Democrats lacked courageous leadership, lacked a willingness to stand up for what they believed in, for what is right—even if they lost. There is a special blame and a special place in Dante's Inferno for them.

PLAYBOY: So why did they do it?

HUFFINGTON: Democrats are fools and enablers. Their spineless leaders went along with the war purely for political reasons: reelectability. They assumed if they opposed the war they would be seen as weak.

PLAYBOY: Weren't they right, at the time?

HUFFINGTON: But they let their decision making be driven by fear. There are other examples: Nevada senator Harry Reid closed down the Senate last year to make a point. It was a great example of what the minority can do. Then he went into hiding again. Leadership has to be exercised every day, and the same points have to be made again and again.

During the last presidential campaign, John Kerry went to the New School in New York and gave a speech that was unequivocally against the war. He called it "the wrong time in the wrong place at the wrong time." His poll numbers shot up. What did his campaign do the next day? Instead of sustaining the argument, they pivoted to health care. They did not trust their argument

me, is the most important thing happening in American politics now. I've said again and again that since September 11 you cannot be a majority party without addressing the fundamental issue of whether you can keep us safe. Before anybody will listen to a politician's 11-point health-care plan, they need to be convinced that politician knows how to protect us.

PLAYBOY: How did the Republicans manage to convince the electorate?

HUFFINGTON: Karl Rove knows how to take the battle to the enemy and take them on their strength. That's what I've been urging the Democrats to do: Take the Republicans on their perceived strength, which is national security.

PLAYBOY: You say perceived strength. Why hasn't President Bush made our country safer?

HUFFINGTON: Bush defines national security as the pursuit of imperial adventures abroad, which actually makes America less instead of more safe.

PLAYBOY: You clearly disagree with his strategy.

HUFFINGTON: Obviously you beef up security at home, but beyond that the Democrats need to make it clear to the American people that we and our children are less safe because of an unnecessary, immoral, idiotic war that spreads anti-Americanism and beefs up terrorist recruitment every day, allowing our young men and women to become targets.

PLAYBOY: You're no longer a lone voice against the war.

HUFFINGTON: What's interesting is that lately some of the most eloquent writing against the war has come from Republicans, from conservatives such as William F. Buckley and Francis Fukuyama. It's in the American DNA to be against imperial adventures. The founding fathers warned against them. There are many awful dictators around, and the world would be better off if they were not in power, but it's not America's job to go around the world, promoting democracy at the

end of a bayonet. By going into Iraq we've succeeded where Bin Laden failed: We've unified the most extreme elements of the Muslim world and provided them with many nonextreme recruits. And to return to my sense of tragedy and the unseen impact of decisions, we have emboldened and empowered a real enemy—Iran. Whatever happens in Iraq can only be to the advantage of Iran and its theocratic, fundamentalist Shiite majority.

PLAYBOY: From today's perspective, why do you think we really invaded Iraq?

HUFFINGTON: It was part of a long-term strategy born in Republican think tanks to take on Saddam and establish a permanent military presence in Iraq. Otherwise



Watching Bush meander around the world stage is like watching an amateurish production of Shakespeare.

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Our Top 10 Political Blogs

The best brain food on the web. By Daniel Radosh

The Daily Dish (andrewsullivan.com): Andrew Sullivan is every liberal's favorite conservative. He's willing to pick fights with Republicans over Iraq, gay marriage and torture, and he's not afraid to change his mind—frequently. But why not allow readers to post comments?



Power Line (powerlineblog.com): Power Line's John Hinderaker, Scott Johnson and Paul Mirengoff will forever be known as the bloggers who took down Dan Rather. An oasis of reason for anyone frustrated with the liberal media, Democrats and Europeans.



Captain's Quarters (captainsquartersblog.com): The swaggering Ed Morrissey puts his back into his blogging. His ability to dig up stories makes him a must-read in right-wing circles beyond the blogosphere—Rush Limbaugh reads Morrissey's posts on the air.



Daily Kos (dailykos.com): If, as they say, politics is about making sausage, most bloggers are food critics who either like or don't like the way the product tastes. The liberal Democrats of DKos—led by founder Markos Moulitsas Zúniga—are factory reformers.



TPM Cafe (tpmcafe.com): Joshua Micah Marshall pioneered the left wing of the blogosphere in 2000 with his Talking Points Memo. This interactive spin-off, which includes—gasp!—actual reporting, features contributions from Paul Begala, Todd Gillin and Kevin Phillips.



Hit & Run (reason.com/hitandrund): Reason magazine's astute yet playful blog proves libertarians don't have to be a bunch of cranky ideologues. A fine source for all the latest news on what you're not allowed to do today and a relief from the left-right bickering.



Unclaimed Territory (glenngreenwald.blogspot.com): Glenn Greenwald is a newcomer to blogging, but within months of his arrival he had been quoted on the Senate floor (by Russ Feingold, but still) and had written an anti-Bush book, *How Would a Patriot Act?*



Pandagon (pandagon.net): The don't-give-a-fuck spirit of blogging is alive and well at Pandagon, where three fierce, funny, pro-sex feminists disguise their almost frightening intellect with thick layers of attitude. Their favorite targets are blowhard moralists.



Tapped (prospect.org/weblog): This group blog mines the same vein of lively workmanship as its parent, *The American Prospect*. It provides a progressive perspective on issues such as health care, education and foreign policy but won't make your eyes glaze over.



The American Scene (theamericanscene.com): Two of the most eclectic conservative bloggers around, Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam are well-informed, passionate and as comfortable discussing heavy metal as they are the latest developments in the Middle East.



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why, despite recent talk of troop reductions, are we building more than a dozen permanent military bases there? This should be a major issue in Congress, and it is not. We're there to stay.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe the crises that have broken out between Israel and Hezbollah, and in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, have anything to do with our presence in Iraq, or are they just coincidences?

HUFFINGTON: I believe the current crises are a tragic result of our invasion of Iraq. In the run-up to shock and awe, Dick Cheney and his fellow neocons were all over the place, predicting the fall of Saddam would bring good things throughout the Middle East. But now that their predictions have proved tragically wrong, the neocon war shills have been notably absent from the wall-to-wall coverage of the carnage between their policies have led to. It's time for the media to haul in these war triumphalists and ask them to account for the gulf between their rosy predictions and the bloody reality. Remember that, back in the summer of 2002, Cheney predicted regime change in Iraq would weaken extremists, strengthen modernists and enhance the Israel-Palestine peace process. Didn't quite turn out that way, did it?

PLAYBOY: As we speak, Bush doesn't seem that involved in playing the traditional peacemaking role his predecessors played in the Middle East.

HUFFINGTON: What's happening is chilling. As the significance of the play of current events has increased, the stature of the lead actor seems more dwarfish than ever. I get a very sinking feeling watching this all-hat, no-cattle puppet, who was put in power by the GOP elite back in a very different time, suddenly find himself presiding over a series of cataclysmic events. Watching Bush meander around the world stage is like watching an amateurish production of Shakespeare. We need Olivier, and all we've got is this community-theater ham.

Has a U.S. president ever made a more feeble statement than Bush's unintentionally overheard "See, the irony is what they really need to do is get Syria to get Hezbollah to stop doing this shit, and it's over"? It says all you need to know about how Bush's disastrous mismanagement of foreign policy has undermined America's standing in the world. The Middle East is teetering on the brink, and the president of the United States is reduced to sitting on the sidelines, impotently ruminating on what they need to do to broker a settlement.

PLAYBOY: Does George Bush strike you as an authentic person who believes in what he's doing?

HUFFINGTON: I think George Bush is a dry drunk.

PLAYBOY: What's a dry drunk?

HUFFINGTON: A dry drunk is someone who has stopped indulging in an addiction without getting to the bottom of its cause or connecting with himself in a deeper

way. Instead, he has cut off a part of himself. It represents itself as fanaticism, which means pursuing a certain course irrespective of facts and evidence. You see it in his behavior: "I'm the decider." He has not dealt with what is actually going on inside himself. He just reacts.

PLAYBOY: Do you expect Bush to fix things in his remaining time, even if just to ensure that his party stays in power in 2008?

HUFFINGTON: No. I don't think Karl Rove believes we have to withdraw from Iraq for the Republicans to win in 2008. In fact, they've decided to run on Iraq, which is stunning. This president sees staying the course, as he puts it, as the right to keep going even if the course takes us over a cliff. I believe in miracles, but I don't see a miracle happening. Bush and his administration are too settled on a view of the world. That's why I've called the Bush people fanatics—people impervious to new evidence. It's incredibly dangerous, and it's what we are fighting.

PLAYBOY: Let's say a Democrat wins the White House. What should he or she do?

HUFFINGTON: First, bring home the troops. Stop bleeding us in terms of lives, casualties and treasure. Remember how often we've been told we don't have the money for universal health care, for good schools, but we have the money to waste hundreds of billions of dollars down the black hole in Iraq?

Then we should rebuild our own infrastructure. Look at the response to New Orleans—incredibly inept, utterly incompetent. And now New Orleans is off the radar for the majority of Americans. The opposition needs to keep it in the forefront where we saw how unprepared we are for an epidemic, a natural disaster, a terrorist attack.

Repeat the permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest at a time of war. Increase the minimum wage. Our public-health infrastructure is not what it could be. Our port and airport security is not what it can be. The National Guard needs to be rebuilt both in terms of people and equipment, which, I found out while talking to Kansas governor Kathleen Sebelius, gets taken with them to Iraq, leaving their states less protected.

These are all high priorities, and they need to be repeated again and again. But Democrats need to emerge first as the party of national and homeland security. They have a great opportunity to do that now because we all know what a mess this administration has made of it.

PLAYBOY: But bottom line, isn't there still great national division over basic issues? How do we find common ground?

HUFFINGTON: I think the left-right, red states-blue states way of looking at the country is obsolete. Most of America is purple. Many of the key issues of our time are what Newt Gingrich used to call 70 percent issues—issues on which you can get 70 percent of Americans to agree. Recently Governor Mitt Romney—a Republican—signed a

universal-health-care bill in Massachusetts. The Democrats would have said, "You can't touch that. It's ours." But looking after health care is not just a left-wing issue. We have more common ground than some politicians would like us to think, and we should focus on it by putting the common good first, as opposed to following the individualist, up-by-the-bootstraps philosophy.

PLAYBOY: Who's your 2008 Democratic presidential candidate?

HUFFINGTON: I don't have one yet, but there's no question Al Gore is speaking out about the environment, against the war and against the administration in passionate and unequivocal terms, with the authority and the sense of outrage he lacked in 2000. I was not a fan then; you can go back and see what I've written. But the Al Gore of 2006 is very different. It's like what Churchill said: There's something exhilarating about being shot at and surviving. You realize you're still around. You stop being afraid of losing everything. That puts Gore in a very special category in terms of 2008. That's what we need.

Whoever runs, we cannot have a replay of 2004. We also can't adopt the current Democratic viewpoint of "Let the Republicans self-destruct." The American people are not going to pick you just because you are not George Bush. You have to articulate an alternative. You have to give them some clear reasons to pick you.

PLAYBOY: Could Gore run again and win?

HUFFINGTON: I believe in redemption, in second chances. I have had plenty myself.

PLAYBOY: Why don't you like Hillary Clinton as a candidate?

HUFFINGTON: Hillary Clinton should not be the Democratic nominee. Period. The end. We need to decide that now. She does not deserve it. She has failed to speak out when it matters. She has failed to show leadership on Iraq, and she has kowtowed to an obsolete view of how you win elections, which is that you triangulate, you split the difference. She supported an anti-flag-burning bill. What was that about? She's had photo ops with Bill Frist and Newt Gingrich. Why? To convince people she is not a liberal? That's not leadership. Anybody who wants to support her is part of the problem.

PLAYBOY: How about Senator Russ Feingold?

HUFFINGTON: Feingold would make a good president. He has been willing to be a real leader. I had a small event for him at my home, and David Geffen asked him, "So what makes you think this country is ready for a Jewish president?" Feingold, without missing a beat, said, "You mean a Jewish twice-divorced president." That he dared to vote against the war and has been willing to speak out at every turn when other Democrats are silent is incredibly significant. That he is at the forefront of trying to clean up our system with the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance-reform bill is significant. This is the kind of leadership we need.

PLAYBOY: What about John McCain? Will he represent the other side?

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HUFFINGTON: Unfortunately, McCain has now betrayed McCain.

PLAYBOY: Meaning?

HUFFINGTON: He's made a Faustian bargain by embracing George Bush and appealing to the religious right. At least when Faust made it, he got his part of the deal. I think McCain isn't going to get his part of the deal. I don't see McCain becoming president or being embraced by the people he wants to embrace him, such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. They're the very people he attacked as agents of intolerance. Mitt Romney will give him a run for his money.

PLAYBOY: Bill Frist?

HUFFINGTON: Bill Frist has shot his wad.

PLAYBOY: You crossed the aisle from Republican to Democrat. That led to suggestions that you're just an opportunist whose agenda is only about Arianna.

HUFFINGTON: People criticized my evolution more at the beginning. It's now been 10 years. People know my beliefs. I've written four recent books specifically about them. My reinventions have all been organic. Evolutions.

PLAYBOY: So can we expect you one day to evolve again, beyond your current incarnation?

HUFFINGTON: You mean my views? Well, if I had a lobotomy. [laughs] My Republicanism—and by the way, it has been 10 years since I left that party—was rooted in a misguided belief about the role of government. I was always pro-choice, pro-gay rights and pro-gun control, so I didn't have any transformation to make on the social issues. The transformation was in my view of the role of government. I believed the private sector could rise to the occasion and address the major social problems and core political issues such as poverty and inequality. Then I saw firsthand how misguided I was. I saw how inauthentic Newt Gingrich and others were when they talked about fighting poverty. Then I realized he didn't mean any of it. The private sector was never going to address it. Private giving is more likely to go to prestigious institutions, to the arts, to hospitals. Not enough goes to fight poverty. It's not as glamorous. People don't want homeless shelters named after them.

PLAYBOY: Can someone who doesn't believe in God be president?

HUFFINGTON: Someone who openly says so?

PLAYBOY: If asked, yes.

HUFFINGTON: I don't think anybody expects politicians to have to say they will go to church or synagogue every week. But from the beginning this country has had a spiritual foundation. Accepting the spiritual dimension of our lives, whatever form or name one gives to it, enriches everything we do or say. If you're a politician who's uncomfortable with the spiritual dimension, I think you would be deeply impoverished as a leader.

PLAYBOY: We don't mean someone who is uncomfortable with the spiritual dimension but rather a happy nonbeliever who

says, "I don't need to believe in a god to be ethical, to care about people, to be a good and responsible human being."

HUFFINGTON: I have atheist friends, but I can't imagine going through life without believing in God. The spiritual dimension matters to me because that's what unites us—no matter what religious or nonreligious form it takes. In every other way we are divided. Our survival is survival of the fittest. Sexually and mentally we're different. There are social hierarchies. Only spiritually are we all equal. The whole essence of America, that we're all born equal, is a spiritual statement. People can believe different things, but that has to do with dogma and the particular doctrine they espouse. I called the soul the fourth instinct in my book of the same name, which was deliberately neutral. So I think it matters to the electorate—to the extent it would think this through—that its leaders are connected with that dimension.

PLAYBOY: According to Kevin Phillips's new book, *American Theocracy*, the Bible has greatly affected our government and political process, and not for the better.

HUFFINGTON: I think that's an important book. [pauses] Some people take certain Bible verses literally. I consider the New Testament an extraordinary document. I read it regularly. I believe it's a tremendous springboard for public policy. It's all there. Social conscience is in fact at the heart of the Bible; there isn't a lot in there about gays and abortion. But to take the New Testament and corrupt it, to use it as an instrument of division and intolerance, is a sin.

PLAYBOY: What drives people to do that?

HUFFINGTON: Fear drives people to want to condemn a group, because that's a way they can think more highly of themselves.

PLAYBOY: We don't often get to hear about your spiritual side. Is it because you've been criticized for your devotion to your controversial spiritual advisor, John-Roger? Some critics dismiss him as a New Age cult leader.

HUFFINGTON: John-Roger is a great friend of mine, and I've gotten incredible value from his books and seminars. It's not something I speak about a lot publicly, but there's more of it in my new book, *On Becoming Fearless*, because it's hard to talk about fearlessness without talking about spirituality. The first three instincts are survival, sex and power. The fourth instinct separates us from the animals and drives us to find meaning in life. I believe that instinct should be the foundation of public policy. It's hard to talk about it in political terms because people hear different things. But just because it is difficult to talk about spiritual things—that poets are better at this than politicians—doesn't mean we should give up trying.

PLAYBOY: Which couldn't you do without, John-Roger or your BlackBerry?

HUFFINGTON: [Laughs] It's not either/or. I can have it all.

PLAYBOY: It seems as if you do. This past May you were named one of *Time*

magazine's 100 most influential people of 2006. What does that mean to you?

HUFFINGTON: I think it's actually very much an acknowledgment of the role of The Huffington Post and the blogosphere and the brave new media world. It's great to have it.

PLAYBOY: You had a long web presence with a site that featured your print columns and information on your books. What made you want to make a business out of it?

HUFFINGTON: I fell in love with the blogosphere back when bloggers exposed Trent Lott and were responsible for turning him into the former majority leader. They took the story of his racist remarks at Strom Thurmond's birthday lunch, a story the mainstream media had ignored even though they were at the birthday party, and the bloggers stayed on it, linked to one another and developed the story relentlessly. That's the beauty of the blogosphere. I realized then that it would be the greatest thing in citizen journalism since Thomas Paine.

PLAYBOY: Describe your site.

HUFFINGTON: On the right-hand side of our front page is all the news, presented with an attitude and the aim of keeping certain issues, such as the war in Iraq, in the public consciousness. Deciding what to put at the top of the page is key. In the left-hand column are the blogs. As we speak, we have 700 bloggers who have their own pass-

words and can write whatever they want, whenever they want. We see it when everyone sees it. Ten of our best blog entries are moved to Yahoo News, and we also send some to AOL. You can have millions of eyeballs looking at what you've done.

PLAYBOY: Even before The Huffington Post debuted, and certainly afterward, you were savaged by some in the press. For example, in *L.A. Weekly* Nikki Finke wrote, "This website venture is the sort of failure that is simply unsurvivable." Obviously, you survived spectacularly.

HUFFINGTON: At first people thought the celebrities' blogs would be what everyone talked about, but it turned out that a lot of the blogs that made news were not necessarily written by big names. We also had breaking news: Lawrence O'Donnell revealed Karl Rove's role as a source for *Time*'s Matt Cooper in Planescape. And we have great satire. Our willingness to laugh at ourselves and not be so earnest—even though we're deathly serious about what we believe—was the right mixture. My attitude was "Wait and see." Criticism can't kill you.

PLAYBOY: Did you sign up celebs at the beginning just to get attention?

HUFFINGTON: I didn't see it that way at all, honestly. Sure, the boldfaced names drew traffic, but I didn't invite a single celebrity I didn't want to hear from.

PLAYBOY: That's not exactly answering the question.

HUFFINGTON: I thought the celebrities I invited to speak had interesting things to say. The online world was supposed to be for people with no other way to get their voices heard. I brought people who had multiple ways to get their voices heard. At first there was criticism, but the blogosphere soon realized this only expanded its power. For instance, I think John Cusack has written some great stuff. Even if he were John Smith, it would be great. If he were not a boldfaced name, it wouldn't be any less good.

PLAYBOY: Did bloggers such as Nora Ephron, Walter Cronkite, Larry David, Al Franken, Christie Hefner and Steve Martin come to you, or did you go to them?

HUFFINGTON: A lot come to us now, but they didn't at the beginning, of course. I asked Steve Martin, for instance. Some weren't clear what blogging was. I told everybody they were in complete control of what they said, more than in any other medium. Even if you write a column for *The New York Times*, you're going to be edited. Our approach was very attractive. People also loved the instant gratification. We also made it clear we'd take submissions in any form. Larry David would call me in his trailer while he was taping *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and dictate his blog. Presidential historian Arthur Schlesinger doesn't have a computer. He faxes his comments to me, and we post them. Norman Mailer, who is on deadline



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with his books and hasn't done a lot online, wrote something when the *Newsweek* story about the Koran being flushed down the toilet appeared. We injected it instantly into the cultural bloodstream, and he saw, as so many of our other bloggers have seen, the medium's impact.

PLAYBOY: Has your vision been vindicated?
HUFFINGTON: There are never any guarantees when it comes to new ventures. Not in our wildest dreams did we think we would get the reception and have the impact that we have. Part of it, as I look back, was timing. There's a tremendous advantage in being first with something.

PLAYBOY: As Matt Drudge was when his focus on the Monica Lewinsky affair woke up the mainstream media to the power of the web.

HUFFINGTON: The power of the web is one thing. The power of the blogosphere is another. The Drudge Report is not a blog; it's a news site. There's a difference. We were the first hybrid of news and group blog. The blogosphere is also a very different model than the mainstream media.

PLAYBOY: In the morning do you get up, pull out your hair over the latest Bush fiasco, have breakfast and go to work? What's your routine?

HUFFINGTON: I still have my hair. [laughs] I work here at home. Upstairs are the Huffington Post editors who work on the site blog. Our main office is in New York, where news, advertising and business are run by my partner, Ken Lerer. Here the shift runs from seven in the morning to 11 at night, seven days a week. I'm up at six a.m., and I have a latte in my hand by about 7:15. I take my two daughters, who are 14 and 16, to school. In the meantime I've talked to my editors about what we will have on the front page that morning, and I do research for what I'm going to write. I've already looked online before bed the previous night to get an idea of what the next day's news will be. I read the *New York Times* website and CNN.com, Drudge and all my favorite blogs—Kausfiles, Firedoglake, and Crooks and Liars. In the morning I look at the ABC News blog The Note.

PLAYBOY: How worried should the mainstream media be about the blogosphere?

HUFFINGTON: There's definitely a new sheriff in town. [laughs] Part of the role of the blogosphere is to hold the mainstream media's feet to the fire. There is so much conventional wisdom being peddled as genuine wisdom. Part of what I see as our role at The Huffington Post is to keep exposing empty rhetoric. The key is accuracy. We have a huge responsibility to be 1,000 percent accurate in the blogosphere because one of the mainstream-media attacks we get is that we aren't accurate.

PLAYBOY: What are The Huffington Post's ground rules?

HUFFINGTON: If bloggers write something that is inaccurate, they have 24 hours to withdraw it, apologize and correct it. If they don't, they have their blogging privileges revoked. Out of more than 700 bloggers, we've had only two cases in which someone has had to correct something.

PLAYBOY: How do you test for accuracy?

HUFFINGTON: That's the great thing about the blogosphere: The checking comes from other bloggers. The minute something inaccurate is posted, you know it. Part of being a member of this online community is course-correcting and accepting mistakes.

PLAYBOY: Newspapers and magazines are clearly suffering from circulation and advertising problems. Can they survive?

HUFFINGTON: They'll evolve, but first some of them need to stop being dismissive. We have Bill Keller from *The New York Times* saying that reading blogs leads to self-absorption. It makes him sound out of touch, as though he's missing the point of this huge journalistic revolution, which like any new beginning is fraught with risks and is evolving. It's not a finished product.

PLAYBOY: Wouldn't Keller take exception to the phrase *journalistic revolution* or at least the word *journalistic*?

HUFFINGTON: He shouldn't. How can the mainstream media, including *The New York Times*, sit on their high horse and talk to bloggers about accuracy when they put stories about fake aluminum tubes on their front pages? There's been a lot of editorial vetting of mainstream media stories that have ended up being deeply and tragically inaccurate. Editors are great, and I love being edited. I'm a great believer in fact-checking. I believe in bringing all those old-fashioned journalistic rules into the blogosphere. [pauses] Look, they can attack us and say we're not journalists, but the fact that they are firing back is confirmation of the blogosphere's power to hold them accountable. I know they're pissed off at us, but I am sure they will adjust. I'm not lumping together all mainstream media writers, of course, nor is the blogosphere a monolith. There are individual blind spots, but collectively this is an amazing phenomenon in citizen journalism and in holding the establishment media accountable. Everybody's better when there is accountability, when you can't hide.



"I read Playboy for the articles."

PLAYBOY: Do you want the blogosphere to replace the mainstream media? Where would you get the news you aggregate?

HUFFINGTON: I love the mainstream media. I read four newspapers a day. I can also amuse myself online for hours on end. When I spoke to the American Society of Magazine Editors earlier this year I said the mainstream media have ADD and the blogosphere has OCD. I meant that the major stories the mainstream media cover make the front pages and then die there. The blogosphere's characteristic is to obsessively cover a story. It's about results. If you want to achieve something—whatever your passion is—and break through the static, you must stay on the story.

Great reporting and opinion writing are still being done, and there are a lot of very good journalists. The problems are more about keeping access to power. Bob Woodward basically sold his journalistic soul to get access to the Bushes—which went with the multimillion-dollar contracts and big sales—and gave us this “I was there” look at the Bush administration that excluded the most important thing that happened. If those in the mainstream media cannot move beyond being stenographers for those in power and if they are never willing to sacrifice their access for journalistic truth and probing, they should find a different profession: public relations, political consulting or lobbying.

PLAYBOY: Won't bloggers face these same pressures as their power grows?

HUFFINGTON: Yes. The blogosphere is going to get its own test. The more powerful bloggers become, the more politicians court them, and the more money and access are thrown at them. Bloggers are just as susceptible to the problems of the mainstream media; they just haven't had an opportunity until now to have such access to power. Let's see how they use it. The proof will be in the pudding. That's the way of the world. Bloggers are human.

PLAYBOY: Is that a process you'd like to interrupt?

HUFFINGTON: Human nature can't be interrupted. Other bloggers will have to keep bloggers honest. It's a continual process of holding ourselves accountable and working to see who can keep putting the public interest ahead of self-interest.

PLAYBOY: Do you consider The Huffington Post to be a liberal blog?

HUFFINGTON: Look, I'm proud to be called a liberal when it comes to political views, and I don't want to pretend the blog is agnostic. But if *liberal* is being used in a dismissive way to say we're always going to take one side of the story, that's just completely untrue. We take on liberals when we believe they're hypocritical or don't stand up for what we see as the truth, just as we take on conservatives. Obviously we have a liberal, progressive perspective on politics, life and the news, but we're in no way going to cover up for people who are “on our side.” We are completely open to critiquing all sides, and we've shown

that again and again. We've shown it with Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, Harry Reid and countless Democrats. We invite conservatives to blog: Tony Blankley, John Fund, Michael Smerconish and more.

PLAYBOY: You work at a frantic pace. Do you get any downtime? Do you even want it, or are you just obsessive?

HUFFINGTON: I wouldn't call myself obsessive. I feel blessed that I love my work. I just don't have a line between my private life and my work life—and my working from home is symbolic of that.

PLAYBOY: Define your work.

HUFFINGTON: My work ranges from writing my blog to writing my books to speaking to doing TV. All are for communicating things I believe in, and I do it in different ways to my different audiences, whether they're Huffington Post readers or TV viewers. I want to convince them all of what I believe, whether it is living fearlessly or getting our troops out of Iraq.

PLAYBOY: Have you always wanted to convince people?

HUFFINGTON: I have. When I look back at why I so instantly fell in love with the Cambridge Union as a student, it was the spectacle of minds and hearts being moved by words. It was incredibly exciting to me. I've always felt that's the way you change the world.

PLAYBOY: Why do you want to change the world?

HUFFINGTON: [Laughs] Because it's in a pretty sorry state. Even if we can change it a little bit, even if we can move it a little bit....

I believe in free will but also that spiritually we are born with a certain blueprint for our lives. The Bhagavad Gita talks about how we each have our dharma, and whatever ours is, when we connect with it we find our life's purpose. I fell into my blueprint unconsciously, and I gradually became more conscious of what gave me joy. If you told me you were going to give me a billion dollars and put me in the south of France and I could have unlimited money and go to parties and buy all the clothes and



“I go to Vegas for the shows.”

What happened in Vegas? Talk about the shows—they make a great alibi. For more Vegas alibis hit VisitLasVegas.com or call 1-877-Visit-LV.



jewelry I wanted, I'd say, "Oh my God! That sounds like a miserable life."

PLAYBOY: Wait, can't you more or less do that anyway?

HUFFINGTON: Yeah, but you know what I'm saying: to do nothing else and just have what people would call fun. Yes, I live in a beautiful home, I wear clothes I love, I take great vacations. That is great, but it's the background of my life. What's in the foreground of my life gives me joy and purpose.

PLAYBOY: So you would do what you do now, anonymously, out of a modest apartment?

HUFFINGTON: I think I'm more effective doing it the way I'm doing it.

PLAYBOY: What are your top three life priorities?

HUFFINGTON: First, my children. It's a job no one else can do for me. Second, my work through The Huffington Post, my books and my other writing, communicating what I believe in, whether on a political or personal level; the two are very connected. Third, to continue to work on myself. I take that very seriously. It involves meditating and understanding myself better. The Greeks said, "Know thyself."

PLAYBOY: Do you?

HUFFINGTON: When I try to understand myself, I always go back to my relationship with my mother. She gave me the greatest gift we can give our children: unconditional love and a belief in them that lets them know they can try anything and that if they fail, we won't love them any less. She died in 2000 and was utterly fearless. She was entirely self-taught; she'd never been to college. She joined the resistance in Greece. She left my father when he started cheating all over the place. Without any money or a job she took her children and left.

When I was a teenager I saw a picture of Cambridge in a magazine. I lived in Athens. I told my mother, "I want to go to Cambridge." She didn't say, "Don't be ridiculous." She said, "Let's find out how we can get you there." She found out, and I started taking my general certificate for education at the British consulate in Athens. Then she said, "Let's see if we can go and see Cambridge." We got on a plane and went to see Cambridge. It was almost like, "We have to visualize where you want to go and see if you can get there." She was there at every stage of my life, and there was no way I would have done what I did without her.

But she wasn't like that just with me. She showed me how to be in the world. She could not have an impersonal relationship. Whether just out shopping or meeting you for the first time, she would immediately connect with you. If the Federal Express man or the president of the United States came to the door, she'd say, "Hi, come in. I just cooked something; come in and have something to eat."

She taught me not through words but through her actions. She was an amazing original. I feel unbelievably blessed.

PLAYBOY: How have you changed as you've gotten older?

HUFFINGTON: I think I'm constantly fine-tuning. I've become less reactive. I've become less judgmental. I've become less afraid. Staying centered doesn't just happen. You're in the middle of the world, of business, and there are challenges. You need to make that a priority. It's a journey. Both life and the blogosphere are about the journey, but you also want to achieve results. You want to get to the tipping point. It takes obsessiveness to get to that tipping point.

PLAYBOY: You've been single for a while. How important is having a man in your life?

HUFFINGTON: I've had relationships. I've been dating. It's fun. It definitely enhances the rest of life.

PLAYBOY: What kind of man can't stay away from you?

HUFFINGTON: Why don't you ask what kind of man I can't stay away from? [laughs] What I love in a man are the

*Bush has committed many
impeachable offenses.*

*If the past is any indication,
he will keep doing harm.*

*We have truth on our side,
the facts on our side.*

things I love in a blogger: passion, persistence, a sense of humor, a light touch about who they are and what they write, the opposite of taking themselves too seriously. It's the kind of man who makes me like myself best when I'm with him, who brings out the best in me. It's the kind of the opposite of the romantic ideal of falling head over heels and losing yourself. It's the kind of man who helps you find yourself. Otherwise, I have no guidelines as to how tall, how old, rich, poor. I don't have a physical type. The men I've been with have had absolutely nothing physically in common. The first love of my life was substantially shorter than I and twice my age. I'm drawn to who they are, their energy and intensity.

PLAYBOY: Do you date the rich guys who come to your house for big parties? Do they want to date you?

HUFFINGTON: Shouldn't we have a ground rule that we're not talking in detail about my private life? [laughs] There are no guidelines. Tall, short, rich, poor, younger, older. No guidelines.

PLAYBOY: Have you ever met anybody online?

HUFFINGTON: No, but I have friends who have met people online, and they're very happy with each other. I don't make any judgments about it.

PLAYBOY: Is it tougher to date when you're such a public figure?

HUFFINGTON: It's tougher to juggle. A relationship takes time, especially in the beginning, when you spend hours on the phone discovering each other, and then you wake up in the morning and curse yourself. [laughs]

PLAYBOY: For giving away all the intimacies in the dead of night?

HUFFINGTON: No, for being on the phone instead of sleeping, and you have to get through a day exhausted.

PLAYBOY: What do you see when you look in the mirror?

HUFFINGTON: I see somebody who will never have plastic surgery. I'm lucky to be in a profession in which you can keep doing what you're doing and it's not a function of how many wrinkles you have or how old you are. So I can age gracefully. I feel there is no part of my life I would like to go back to, no age I'd like to go back to.

PLAYBOY: Do you make enough from The Huffington Post and writing books to support yourself?

HUFFINGTON: And from speeches and also the divorce settlement, which is private, but it's primarily child support.

PLAYBOY: You said you like men who don't take themselves too seriously. How seriously do you take yourself?

HUFFINGTON: I take what I do seriously, but I don't think I take myself seriously.

PLAYBOY: If the Democrats return to power in this election, should they impeach George Bush or be more forgiving and just move ahead to neutralize him legislatively?

HUFFINGTON: He deserves to be impeached.

PLAYBOY: But should they actually do it? Won't it distract from the healing?

HUFFINGTON: Before the elections we should not distract ourselves with thoughts of impeachment. All our energy should be focused on electing a Democratic Congress. Once that's done it's incredibly important to stop any more harm from being done. Bush still has two more years in office. He has committed many impeachable offenses. If the past is any indication, he will keep doing harm, no question about it. Once we have the votes, when we have the seats and subpoena power, we should bring it all out, absolutely. We have the truth on our side, the facts on our side. Part of what's important in running the country is to prevent the current administration from doing more harm. Paralyze them. Otherwise, for me, George Bush is over. We cannot sit here and endlessly debate how bad Bush is and not change anything. If we're serious about wanting to change, we need to challenge our own side to stand up. We need to look forward.





ISLAM IN THE CRUCIBLE

WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS NO LONGER
ABOUT NATIONS: IT'S ABOUT RELIGION. IN THE
DESERT KINGDOM OF JORDAN A FEW BRAVE
SOULS ARE TRYING TO RECLAIM A FAITH THAT
HAS BEEN HIJACKED BY TERRORISTS



It's 4:40 A.M. on a chilly April morning in downtown Amman, Jordan—too late for coffee and backgammon and too early for falafel. On the second floor of a drab commercial complex, the lights burn bright and four young men huddle around a computer screen, laughing and throwing high fives.

The hushed city below smells of Islam and sex. Men who walk the streets this late give off the scent of *misik*—a reddish flower oil said to have been worn by the prophet Muhammad himself—as they make their way to mosque, bearded and robed, for the dawn prayer. They avoid looking at the buxom prostitutes who wander in high heels from one wide intersection to the next, their jet-black hair unveiled, leaving a trail of sugary perfume behind them. A long avenue's procession of boarded-up shops and gritty social halls empties into the ruins of an ancient Roman amphitheater, devoid of tourists under the starless, hazy sky.

The hour before sunrise in the Kingdom of Jordan used to be the exclusive domain of the pious and the horny—until the appearance of the World Wide Web. Now the edge of night is ablaze with streaming video images and Arabic Internet chat rooms, as I discover at the end of a long stroll when I chance up a flight of stairs into a 24-hour cybercafe. I pay one Jordanian dinar, about \$1.40, for an hour's access to e-mail and the Internet and take the last available seat in front of a computer terminal.

The four boys across from me, huddled around a 16-inch screen, appear to be college-age buddies. Two or three days' stubble on their faces, their clothes a little sloppy, they would look at home in a sports bar. At first, when they raise their arms, clench their fists and shout in unison, I figure they must be watching a soccer match or maybe an X-rated video. I lean over to get a peek and realize with a start that they are watching the beheading of 26-year-old American entrepreneur Nicholas Berg by a man believed to be the Jordanian-born Islamist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. On their computer screen, Arabic subtitles laced over the graphic images urge viewers to keep Islam's "holy warriors" in their prayers.

As the video approaches its final frame, the first call to prayer of the day is heard outside. The chant echoes across this modern city, hastening the faithful to make for the nearest mosque. "Let's go, brothers," one of the young men tells his friends. They pack up and go off into the thin light of the morning.

If the Middle East today is a whirlwind of war and civil strife, then Jordan and its ancient capital, Amman, are eerily quiet for the moment. A desert kingdom roughly the size of Indiana, Jordan is ruled by King Abdullah, perhaps America's closest Arab ally. Only 135 miles away, the Lebanese Islamist militia Hezbollah has been locked in mortal combat with the Israeli Defense Forces. Bloody civil strife in Iraq, on Jordan's eastern border, claims hundreds of lives monthly, including a steady trickle of American soldiers who occupy that country. The Palestinian territories to Jordan's west are now ruled by the radical Islamist militant group Hamas, which openly aspires to destroy the Jewish state and orders suicide attacks to that end.

Inside Jordan's 3,800 mosques, where nearly one third of the country's 6 million people attend Friday prayer services, generations of young men and women have learned to hate the West, to steel themselves for jihad and to despise Jews and the

state of Israel. Radical clerics who hailed from Amman taught both Zarqawi and Osama bin Laden, and these two are only the best known among thousands of their students. Yet somehow, under the watchful eye of a pervasive security and intelligence apparatus, Jordan has largely maintained a semblance of calm—aside from one major plot that escaped the regime's attention, a triple suicide bombing in three Amman hotels last year that killed 60 people.

Just a few hours after I watch the boys leave the cybercafe, prosecutors charge a similar group of local teenagers with plotting to kill Americans, Jews and Iraqi police recruits in a systematic terrorist campaign. The call to violence, which the boys first encountered on the Internet, was allegedly reinforced at a mosque in downtown Amman where sermons by Zarqawi and Al Qaeda paraphernalia were distributed. Committed to martyrdom, the young men went back to the Internet to shop for training in weapons and explosives. They were caught once they began e-mailing Syrian and Iraqi terrorists in an attempt to secure the logistical support they needed.

Five years after 9/11, Jordan and several other Arab governments have concluded that radical Islamism must be driven out of the Muslim world. They've cracked down on Islamist groups within their borders and pooled intelligence with Western governments and one another. They stand by nervously while Israeli and American forces attack Islamist fighters in Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq. Egyptian, Bahraini, Jordanian and Saudi leaders all pointed the finger at Hezbollah this past July for sparking war between Israel and Lebanon rather than condemning their traditional nemesis, Israel. An influential Kuwaiti newspaper editor went so far as to voice his support for Israel's initial military response.

Jordan's king has declared war on Al Qaeda, a Sunni movement, but he also rails against Shiite Islamists such as the Hezbollah fighters who he believes cast a growing shadow on regional security. He has warned of an emerging "Shiite crescent" stretching from Iran through Iraq and Syria into Lebanon, which "will be very destabilizing for the Gulf countries and for the whole region."

What else can moderate governments do? Well, only recently some Arab leaders have publicly acknowledged what was known all along: The roots of Islamist militancy lie as much in the religious teachings of radical clerics, whose presence was tolerated for decades in their countries, as in broader social and political ills. Jordan's government, for one, has resolved to change this pattern—in essence, to reclaim Islam from extremists. Seminaries, houses of worship and the clergy who teach and preach in them are being compelled to convince the next generation of Muslims to turn away from suicide, terrorism and anti-American warfare. As a result, these holy men, the imams, are caught between one set of demands from their government paymasters and another that reflects the more militant attitude shared by the many hard-liners within their flocks.

In this part of the world it is an act of bravery to mourn for the innocent civilian casualties of Israel. It is braver still to condemn Hezbollah's actions. The men who do so find themselves

by Joseph Braude



Above: Terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, born in Jordan and educated by the country's radical clerics, led Al Qaeda in Iraq until his death, in June 2006. Right: An antiterrorism rally in downtown Amman on November 18, 2005. Tens of thousands of Jordanians took to the streets following Friday prayer to show solidarity with King Abdullah after suicide bombers hit three hotels the previous month. The king has declared war on Al Qaeda.



in a spiritual danger zone at the heart of the most fiery intrareligious conflict in the world today. Whether the region's moderates can win this struggle for the hearts and minds of Arab and Muslim youth will have a sweeping impact on the safety and security of the rest of the world.

I have come to Jordan to witness firsthand how a 1,400-year-old religion will attempt to purge its violent radicals. It's going to be difficult. Al Qaeda and other jihadist groups reach millions of young people even without the backing of brick-and-mortar religious institutions. With Internet and satellite technology, they continue to preach the killing of innocent civilians, including Americans of every creed, Jews and Christians globally and any Muslims who disagree with them. Still, if these militant voices could be effectively countered in the mosques and clerical networks of Muslim states, there could be some hope for the future, hoping that young Arab men will again cheer over sports, not beheadings. It is the best bet of the civilized world.

In upscale West Amman, across the street from a KFC restaurant, a gray-bearded cleric welcomes me to an austere white-walled sitting room adjoining the prayer hall of his mosque. Sheikh Mustafa Abu Rومان has fielded hundreds of requests from earnest young worshippers who want to wage holy war, sometimes in neighboring Iraq or Israel, sometimes as far west as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. "I remember a few days after the fall of Baghdad," he says, "someone came to me at the afternoon prayer and said, 'I want you to put me in touch with any organization that will send me out to wage jihad.' He said it with rage, and his body was shaking. He thought if he became a martyr, he could liberate the Muslim nation."

Sheikh Mustafa, an affable 50-something with a youthful wrinkle in his eye, is a Jordanian army veteran who speaks fondly of his years as a soldier. He receives a monthly government stipend—not to keep fit for fighting but to preach in a mosque controlled by the official ministry of Islamic affairs. Though he avoids preaching politics from the pulpit, in keeping with the government's directives, he's not faking it: He's a genuine moderate known to oppose the militant streak of some of the city's imams. Two of his brothers work in Haifa, a city in northern Israel that has endured hundreds of rocket attacks from Hezbollah since July. Rather than abandon the Jewish state when the war began, both brothers chose to remain in Haifa, braving the attacks in underground shelters alongside their Israeli co-workers. Sheikh Mustafa says he has kept them in mind each Friday while the war rages, preaching to his flocks about the

unity of humankind and calling for a cessation of hostilities.

When the young aspiring suicide bomber came to this quiet room to ask the cleric for guidance, Sheikh Mustafa remembers telling him, "Please, after the afternoon prayer we'll talk together, God willing, and after the afternoon prayer, God willing, I'll direct you to the appropriate place." I wanted, you know, little by little, to calm him down." What happened, I wanted to know. "The boy didn't wait. He left and got killed."

"How do you know?" I ask.

Sheikh Mustafa sighs and motions vaguely out the window as if to indicate the dangers of the city around him. It's nightfall now, and scores of holy men in the distance, clutching their megaphones, wait the call to prayer for the fifth time today. He knows the young man is dead, he says, because other clerics in town would readily have steered him to battle—"and because he never came back." This was one he lost, though he says hundreds more who sought him out have left his company opposed to terrorism.

His lined face tightens into a mischievous smile. "Every soul has its key," he says. "We're learning to unlock them, one soul at a time."

The sheikh is a realist, however. Recently a worshipper left behind an unmarked package in his mosque. The sheikh didn't open it. He picked up the phone and called the bomb squad.

I feel a personal stake in the struggle for the future of Islam. I am an American, an Arabic-speaking American Jew who grew up hearing his mother's stories of her native Baghdad—a Baghdad that no longer exists—in which more than 100,000 Jewish Iraqis mixed freely and easily with their Muslim and Christian neighbors under a benign Muslim king. I still dream of my mother's Baghdad and a Middle East that restores that spirit of tolerance.

Yet ever since I began traveling regularly in the region, 11 years ago, I've watched the practice of Islam grow increasingly intolerant, incited by chauvinist preachers and stoked by the tragedies of warfare and occupation. It says a lot that currently one of the most commonly found books for sale in Islamic markets, besides the Koran, is the infamous *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. This anti-Semitic forgery by the 19th century Russian secret police alleges a Jewish plot to enslave the world and drink the blood of gentiles and has been used in Europe to justify the mass extermination of Jews. *Protocols* has been translated into Arabic and Farsi, subsidized by Sunni Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and governments such as the Shiite (continued on page 78)



"I don't know you well, George, but I feel I am in good hands."

Mercedes McNab drives us crazy

Here are five reasons Mercedes McNab may be the coolest 26-year-old in Hollywood: (1) Do you see those shapely hips on the next page? Mercedes is an Afro-Brazilian dancer. Those hips can rev at 5,000 rpm. (2) Speaking of revs, she's got a name that breaks the speed limit. (3) She's an intelligent, witty starlet with a successful acting career. (4) Her dad happens to be Bob McNab, the late-1960s British soccer star. (5) Look at her!

You probably first saw Mercedes in her role as Harmony Kendall on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its spin-off, *Angel*. She thinks the shows gave a lot of folks the wrong idea about her. "People know me from roles where I played the biggest bitch ever," she says. The fact is, this stunner bears no resemblance to the catty type she often portrays on-screen. Vivacious and engaging, she is blessed with as easygoing an attitude as you'd expect from a native of western Canada.

Nowadays Mercedes resides in L.A., and her big-screen career is gaining steam. When we caught up with her, she'd just wrapped *The Pink Conspiracy*, a dark comedy due out next year. You can also catch her in *Hatchet*, a classic blood-splattering horror flick that had critics raving at the Tribeca Film Festival. She plays one of the leads opposite Kane Hodder, the horror legend best known for his work as Jason in the *Friday the 13th* films. "This was straight gore," Mercedes says, a smile blooming. "People getting decapitated and stuff. It was so much fun!"

As for her three days spent posing for our lenses in Italy, Mercedes proved a natural. She says she grew up doing ballet, and "when you're wearing a leopard all the time, you get comfortable in your skin. Besides, I'd always had this vision of myself in Italy in a gondola, so when they said we were shooting there, I was so happy. It was meant to be."



From left: Mercedes McNab (far left) and the cast from the TV series *Angel* in 2004; with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* costmate James Marsters in 2001; and in her latest role as Misty in the bloody horror flick *Hatchet*. Does Misty lose her head? Wait and see.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GUIDO ARGENTINI





HIGH-PERFORMANCE

MERCEDES









See more of Mercedes at cyber.playboy.com.

ISLAM

(continued from page 70)

"Consider yourself warned," Sheikh Mustafa says. "Be careful what you say—and watch your back."

Islamic Republic of Iran. Many Muslims, like no small number of Germans during World War II, believe the text to be gospel truth. Small wonder, then, that a bunch of college-age kids in Jordan can cheer the killing of Nicholas Berg, an innocent Jewish American, then go off to pray.

In my journey through the mosques and Islamic seminaries of Amman in spring 2006, I looked for signs that somehow these attitudes may begin to change. No thanks to the bloody violence in Lebanon, Iraq and the Palestinian territories, this oil-poor desert kingdom has urgent motivation for change. And Jordan is not acting alone.

•
"Consider yourself warned," Sheikh Mustafa says, "if you choose to meet my colleague Sheikh Ahmad Nafal; be careful what you say—and watch your back."

Sheikh Mustafa has taken an interest in my safety. His friendly warning concerns an aging local cleric who happens to be a household name throughout the kingdom. Nafal is in his 60s now, though you wouldn't know it from his most recent videotaped sermons. In addition to wearing heavy makeup, he keeps his hair slicked back and, along with his beard, dyed dark brown.

"Watch your back" would seem a strange thing to say about a fellow man of God and a tenured professor at the University of Jordan in Amman. Nafal has been teaching in the faculty of Islamic law for more than 20 years, and hundreds of present-day clerics cut their teeth on Islamic texts under his tutelage. On a visit to campus I ask two young women at the Center for Strategic Studies, a short walk from the Islamic law department, what they think of the dapper professor.

"He's the sweetest man," says 22-year-old Hanin Khatir, a Lebanese-born sociology major wearing tight jeans and a revealing black blouse. "I love him." Her girlfriend Nur al-Tayyan takes a drag on her cigarette and nods slowly. "He accepts me for who I am, even though I don't wear the veil, even though I'm not that religious." She pauses to explain, "We have boyfriends. We party." The two women giggle at this small confession. "All Ahmad Nafal cares about is that I treat my fellow Muslims with respect."

Yet intelligence agencies on both sides of the Atlantic believe Nafal has a broader agenda that couldn't possibly be called benign. The professor himself broadly acknowledges having dispatched fighters into Israel in the early 1980s. Here in Amman he has been banned from the government-controlled national television network since the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace accords in 1994. He is also barred from entering the United States, after having extolled armed jihad at a Brooklyn Islamic conference he attended in the early 1990s at which he shared a dais with Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian cleric now serving life in prison for plotting to take down New York's World Trade Center in 1993.

"Ahmad Nafal is a terrorist," says Steven Emerson, whose 1994 PBS documentary *Jihad in America* first exposed Nafal's connection to the blind sheikh. "He shouldn't be trusted to teach kids about Islam."

Emerson sparked controversy before 9/11 for accusing numerous Islamist charities and advocacy groups in the U.S. of having ties to terrorism. But he praises King Abdullah's Islamic initiatives in Jordan. "There is a genuine effort going on in Amman to provide an alternative to radical ideologies in the country's mosques and schools," Emerson says. "Efforts like these are crucial and should be encouraged in every Arab and Muslim country."

Nafal is an all-star of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, Jordan's sister franchise to the Palestinian Hamas. Founded in Egypt nearly a century ago, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the transnational movement has planted deep roots in nearly every Muslim country. It also claims many followers among Muslim diaspora communities in Europe and the U.S. When Israel's air war against Hezbollah commenced in July, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood led thousands of marchers through the streets of Amman, hoisting Hezbollah flags and images of its turbaned leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah. When U.S. and Iraqi officials announced the slaying of Al Qaeda leader Zarqawi in June, four Jordanian Brotherhood MPs paid a condolence call to his family, proclaiming him a martyr. The move provoked outrage in

Jordan largely because Zarqawi had ordered last year's deadly hit on three Amman hotels. The officials were jailed and fined.

Nafal's doctrine, the Muslim Brotherhood's party line of Islamic rule and an end to Israel, is precisely what some pro-Western Arab rulers and moderate clerics like Sheikh Mustafa are trying to roll back. But once you get to know the Brotherhood's formidable infrastructure in this country, you discover it isn't so easily marginalized.

Nafal's Thursday-night sermon in a middle-class Amman neighborhood is a jam-packed all-male affair. Inside the mosque waits an anxious crowd that is a cross section of society in the kingdom. Mustached Jordanian ethnics with leathery bedouin complexions pray in their police and armed-forces uniforms alongside bearded Palestinian refugees and their children. Before the main event gets under way, a TV film crew sets up lights, a tripod and a microphone in the center of the hall.

"Didn't you say he was banned from public television?" I ask the Palestinian cleric in his 20s who serves as tonight's master of ceremonies, in the anteroom adjoining the main sanctuary.

"Yes, and he still is," he says. A hopeful smile sneaks onto the young preacher's solemn face. "But now he gets to be on Iqraa, which is a Saudi-owned satellite network out of Kuwait, and Al-Majd, out of Saudi Arabia. People are watching him everywhere, and there's no stopping him anymore."

Back in 1970 Islamist hard-liners like Nafal served as comrades in arms to the young King Hussein of Jordan in his bloody civil war against Yasser Arafat's secular PLO. As payback for supporting the king, Jordan's Islamists enjoyed rewards unmatched by any other group in the state. They were given control of the ministries of education and Islamic affairs, which meant the authority to teach and preach to generations of Jordanian youth in schools and mosques throughout the kingdom.

According to a prominent Brotherhood thinker who quit the organization in the late 1990s, the movement used these perks to transform Jordanian society. "When I got into the Muslim Brotherhood in the mid-1970s," he recalls, "our nation was secular, barely religious, and the only people who went to the mosque were either very old or young Brotherhood members like myself." Now, he says, "the whole society has become religious. You go to the mosque, it's full of worshippers."

The brand of Islam the Brotherhood advances is on display tonight as Nafal

(continued on page 152)



"I lost my tail at the Playboy Club...!"



HEALTH RECORD

THE WORST BREAK OF MY LIFE

Who would ever have thought that a bout of sleepy sex would suddenly end in catastrophe? A triumphant true story of rupture and resurgence

BY STEVE MACK

PLACE OF EXPLANATION

DATE

SIGNATURE OF MEDICAL DOCTOR

Maybe you'll get nothing but nylon socks this year for Christmas. Maybe Santa will get lodged in your chimney and you'll have to yank the bastard out by his ankles while reindeer peck through your roof. Maybe you'll draw the weekend shift as an elf at Sam's Club. But no matter how bad your story of holiday misery, my friend, I've got you beat. Last year, on Christmas, I broke my cock. Although, to be a bit more precise, I didn't break it by myself—my girlfriend helped.

The actual medical term is *penile fracture*. There's no bone in your boner, so there's really nothing to break. It's usually referred to as the eggplant deformity because, well, let's put it this way: When I was on the phone trying to describe my predicament to a nurse, I compared my cock to an eggplant, and she instantly knew what I'd done. Then she told me to get to the hospital right away.

My girlfriend Susan and I live in the Central District of Seattle in a comfortable three-bedroom house. We met at the peak of the dot-com craze, when it looked as if I'd be able to retire young on stock options. Yeah, right. That was before I had any idea what a stock market bubble was. The ensuing five years have been rough, as my paper wealth turned into actual debt, and during periods of disagreement the only thing we've had to look forward to is shagging each other's brains out.

Susan's mother was visiting us from Sacramento for the holidays, which certainly put a crimp in our humping. We'd already opened presents, and when her mother went out to see a friend, I gave Susan a lustful look she knows well. In reply I got the "Can it wait until I clean the kitchen?" look. But my look won out, and soon we were upstairs in bed.

I could make up some bullshit here, maybe rave about a position we invented that catapulted us to new erotic heights, but that's not how it happened. We were enjoying a relatively sleepy shag, missionary position, and I tried to get a little deeper inside her. We both heard it. *Pop*. Like the sound of a single bubble on a sheet of bubble wrap bursting. Not very loud but, given what we were doing, also not an appropriate noise. "What was that?" Susan asked. A split second after I heard it I began to feel it. "I think something's wrong," I said. "I think something is really wrong."

Gingerly I reached down and pulled out my cock. It was a lot bigger than it had ever been before. And trust me, I'm not bragging. The right side was grossly distended and purple because it was filling with blood, while the left side was trying to shrink back down. In my hand I had half a hard-on.

I'd never seen anything like it before, even during my 10 years as singer of That Petrol Emotion, a London-based rock band that toured the world, was hailed by *Rolling Stone* as the best new foreign group and made five critically acclaimed albums.

I'd never been overly modest—hell, I used to wear spandex bicycling shorts onstage, which incited one British publication to dub me “the most shaggable man in pop.”

Right now I wasn't even the most shaggable man in the Central District. Susan jumped out of bed and Googled *broken penis* while I said “fuck” repeatedly and slipped deeper into shock, holding the crooked stick between my legs. It looked like an erect penis but bent and bruised and pointing at the ground.

We knew we needed a hospital, but before I could get dressed I first had to let go of my fractured cock. I was afraid to do that—the ugly thing weighed a ton. Working with one hand, I pulled on my loosest boxers and a pair of oversized sweatpants. Then, fearfully, I unbuttoned myself and found that as long as I was careful I could walk around as if I had a load in my pants. In my neighborhood I'd fit in just fine.

The woman in charge of intake at the emergency room asked what my problem was. “Well, it's slightly embarrassing,” I began. “Oh, we've seen it all,” she said. Okay, then. “I think I broke my penis.” Let's see them use

Most often a penile fracture occurs when the woman is on top and the penis slips out during rigorous sex and slams into the perineum—you know, the little no-man's-land between the vagina and anus. A recent study on penile fractures reports more than 1,300 cases. A startling number have involved sex on office desks. A few resulted when men rolled over onto their erection while asleep. One, involving a ranch hand, mysteriously occurred in a horse corral. And in 2001 a Massachusetts man unsuccessfully sued an ex-girlfriend, alleging negligence when he suffered a penile fracture after she repositioned herself “without prior specific discussion” during sex.

In the past a penile fracture was treated like a sprained ankle, with cold compresses and splinting. But that often led to some undesirable side effects, including what doctors call penile angulation. I did not want my cock looking like a boomerang for the next 40 years.

“We're going to have to keep you overnight for a procedure,” the urologist said.

I paused for a deep breath. “If you say this is the best thing to do, okay,” I said. “When do we start?” Almost immediately they began to prep me for the first operation I'd ever had. I was extra nice to every nurse and orderly; these people were about to fillet my cock, and I wanted them to do the best possible job. A little extra karma couldn't hurt.

Six hours after I broke my cock I was in surgery. The anesthesiologist told me he was from Sydney, Australia, which reassured me. They like their cocks in Sydney, right? Okay, maybe the anesthesia was warping my mind. “You want this surgery because you want your cock back, right?” he asked. I was right! They do love their cocks in Sydney! With a flick of his thumb he started the IV drip.

The next day, when the surgeon explained that he'd found a five-millimeter rupture and stitched it up, I felt great. When the nurse tugged the catheter out of my dick, I felt great. I attribute this joy to a substantial dose of OxyContin—no wonder Rush Limbaugh loved those pills. I even high-fived Susan and the nurses and shouted

A female doctor walked in and let out an involuntary gasp. My penis was unreal, the kind of thing you might see at a seaside freak show or in a rare Victorian medical textbook.

that kind of dialogue on *Grey's Anatomy*:

Soon I was led to a room and told to strip, and I donned a smock. “I broke my penis!” I said to the doctor. The whole thing was starting to seem hilarious. He poked me with a toothpick to make sure I still had feeling. Ouch. I did. A female doctor walked in and let out an involuntary gasp, which did not inspire confidence. They both fetched a urologist while I lay with my eggplant penis propped up on a towel, hooked at a 15-degree angle. It was unreal, the kind of thing you might see at a seaside freak show or in a rare Victorian medical textbook.

Susan and I started giggling. “Take a picture,” I said. “I do have my camera phone,” she said and snapped a few photos for posterity.

The urologist's diagnosis put an end to the fun and games. He explained that three tubes run the length of the penis. When you get an erection, two tubes engorge with blood, which makes them stretch. And abnormal bending can cause them to tear. Pop.

My heart was in my mouth, and my eyes were watering. Until this point I'd been fooling myself, figuring Susan and I would get home before her mother was even back.

The doctor explained my two options: We could do nothing and the blood might drain, given enough time. Or he could drain the blood during surgery and repair the damage. Either way, the risks included nerve damage, reduced sensation and erectile dysfunction.

I looked at Susan. Now we both were crying. “Guys who forgo the procedure have more pain and more problems later on,” the urologist said. He described the operation: They'd make an incision along my circumcision scar, then slide the skin down to the base of the penis. This would allow them to drain the blood and clean up any clots.

I admit it—I'm fond of my penis. I always have been. I haven't given it a pet name or anything dumb like that, but it's one of the few things I've been able to rely on. It's a big part of me. And I was just now realizing it would never be the same.

jubilantly. “Yes! I still have a cock!”

Then the doctor removed the bandages and we both saw it: Franken-cock. There were 18 stitches just below the coronal ridge, and there was a little blood, too. It was kind of cool and special, actually. I felt like the kid who comes back to school in September with a cast on his arm.

My office was closed for the holidays, so during my recovery I relived my life as a rock star. I lay on the couch, watched sports or *Law & Order*, took prescription drugs and slept. The first day I wasn't zonked, something great happened: I got an erection. But something horrible came with it: It was excruciatingly painful. The urologist had advised me to avoid getting hard because it would put undue pressure on the repair work he'd done. But erections have a mind of their own. I tried thinking of baseball stats, dead kittens, anything to avoid ripping the stitches. In my mind I could hear it again: pop.

Mornings were the worst. I'd sit in bed, moaning softly while my reptile brain repeatedly betrayed (concluded on page 151)



"One thing I'll say—you can't get a meal like this back home!"





FICTION BY SAM LIPSYTE

THE WISDOM OF THE DOULAS

FORGET BED REST AND BABY BOOKS. WHAT EVERY NURSING MOM NEEDS IS A GUY'S GUY WITH AN ATTITUDE PROBLEM

My old mentor said we earn our dough the second day. I'm beginning to see what she meant. Yesterday the Gottwald baby was a beautiful, if slightly puckered, dream angel, fresh-pulled from his amniotic pleasure dome. Yesterday the Gottwalds were the stunned and grateful progenitors of a mewling miracle. We even did a group hug.

Today the Gottwalds are the smug bastards they've probably always been, and the Gottwald baby, well, he might only be two days old, but I can already tell he's going to be a miserable little prick. Stay in this gig long enough, you can predict these things. I don't mention any of this to the Gottwalds. It's not my place. I'm no Nos-tradamus. I'm the doulo. Or doula, if you want to get technical, tick me off.

"What does *doula* mean anyway?" Mr. Gottwald asked during my interview. This was a month before Mrs. Gottwald's water broke.

"It's a Greek word for slave," I told him, "but don't get any ideas. My rates are pretty steep."

"I'm glad you agree," said Mr. Gottwald.

"Perhaps you might outline your services," said Mrs. Gottwald.

"Perhaps I might."

"Like examples," said Mr. Gottwald.

"Examples," I said, glanced about their gleaming loft, felt my hand closing on the ultra lights in my coat. "Okay if I smoke in here?"

"Is that a joke?" said Mr. Gottwald.

"Absolutely," I said. "Or maybe even a test."

"Examples," said Mr. Gottwald.

"Examples," I said, gave them examples: how I'd explain proper latch-on techniques for breast-feeding, proper swaddling techniques for, yes, swaddling. I also mentioned how I'd keep their four-year-old, Ezekial, company, make sure everybody got rest, how I'd order up some pizza if we all wanted pizza. My mentor, Fanny Hitchens, always stressed the importance of pizza. Pizza, even just the idea of pizza, binds people together in their common love of pizza.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE BICKNER

"Breast-feeding?" said Mr. Gottwald. "You?"
"Tell me, Mitch," said Mrs. Gottwald, "are there many doulas like yourself?"

"You mean doulas?" I said.
"Yes," said Mrs. Gottwald, and she might as well have had the words *grave misgivings about hiring a male doula* stenciled on her forehead. Call it what you will. Reverse sexism. Substitute racism. It's all the same. But different.

"I'm the only man certified in the city, though I hear there's a kid training with a friend of my old mentor, or sensei, if you will."

"Sensei?" said Mr. Gottwald. "Do you study the martial arts?"

"Never did, no. I guess I just like those movies."
"Oh," said Mr. Gottwald, nodded to a corner of the loft. A pair of glistening mahogany nunchakus and assorted throwing stars dangled from pegs in the brick.

NOBODY'S BORN A DOULA. IT'S TRUE I JUST SORT OF FELL INTO THIS WORK WHILE STALKING MY EX-GIRLFRIEND.

"Just like the movies," he muttered.
The Gottwalds traded a look I'd seen before, especially growing up, the one where it's almost as though I'm not in the room, and I knew then they'd decided against hiring me, vetoed the dude with the yellow teeth and the ratty (vintage) buckskin jacket who wanted to make a positive and tremendous impact on their birth experience. People care something else during this precious time, big soft dykes overgentle with envy or else those angular breeding machines in pastel-colored sack dresses. But I knew something the Gottwalds didn't. It was a very busy season. Maybe my name sat at the bottom of their list, but they'd call their way down to it. They wouldn't be sorry, either. These uptight success types with their antique Ataris and sarcastic sneakers make me sick, but it's not about them. It's not even about the baby. It's about the job.

The Gottwald baby is only a few days old, just a tiny blind worm of boy, but it's obvious he's going to be dealing Ritalin in clubs or else become a Promise Keeper by the time he's 17. The Gottwalds are that annoying, especially while I'm trying to demonstrate proper swaddling techniques. So folding is not my forte.

"You're choking him," says Mrs. Gottwald.
"They like it tight," I say. "Womb-y."
"You're crushing him!"
I peel the blanket away. Baby Gottwald is gasping.
"Okay," I say, "you've seen how it's done. Now it's your turn."

"Gee, thanks," says Mrs. Gottwald.
To think that yesterday not only did we do a group hug but later, while the baby slept, I gave them all shoulder rubs, even Ezekiel. We ate gourmet lasagna, and Mrs. Gottwald said, "I can't believe we almost went through this without you, Mitch. This is so much better than the last time. Do you remember when we came home with Zekey, hon?"

"A goddamn nightmare," said Mr. Gottwald. "Hooray for the doula."

"Doulou," I said.
"Gentle now, big fella," said Mr. Gottwald.
Big fella has always been a trigger for me, not least of all because I go 255 or 260 on a good day, most of it solid flab, but I forgave him. There was such high gladness in Mr. Gottwald's eyes, not to mention the pillow shimmer of his wife, all that evolutionary love dope coursing through her, I felt us all cocooned in some invincible sweetness.

But that was yesterday.

Today Mr. Gottwald paces the loft, fiddles with the earpiece in his ear. He's been talking to his office non-stop since the hospital. Apparently the man is a crucial component of the pharmaceutical industry's advertising efforts. Apparently we'd all be covered in leeches and spooning up mercury if he took a day of paternity leave. Ezekiel sobs quietly on the carpet, hovers over a toy cheese board, tugs apart some Velcroed wedges of fake Manchego. We may need to have a chat.

Mrs. Gottwald lies in bed with her newborn, the swaddling blanket bunched at her feet. She shivers with fever. Clogged milk ducts would be my guess. She's also having bowel trouble, and I may have to administer an enema. I'm beginning to believe the mister could use a good flush too.

The baby cries, sleeps, cries, sleeps, cries, then doesn't cry or sleep, curls up against Mrs. Gottwald. Here on the leather sofa where I'm drinking Gatorade, catching the American League highlights, I can just make out his pinched little mug. I'm wondering if I can sneak out for another smoke before he goes off again.

"Mitch," says Mr. Gottwald and steps in front of the TV, blocks a particularly insightful slugging-percentage graphic.

"Yes, sir."
"The baby is crying."
"Good call."

Mrs. Gottwald's trying to tuck the baby under her breast like they teach in those birth classes, the so-called football grip.

"Fumble!" I say, stride over, remote in hand, but I guess nobody's in the mood for sports jokes. Baby Gottwald wails louder, lunges for his mother's breast, gums the cracked flesh. His lips slide on a film of milk and spit.

"Oh, sheesh," says Mrs. Gottwald. "It hurts."
"It's like a keg he can't quite tap," I say.
"Oh, is that what it's like?" says Mr. Gottwald.

"It really hurts," says Mrs. Gottwald. "It wasn't like this with Zekey."

"Work the hurt," I say.
"What the hell does that mean?" says Mr. Gottwald.
"It means whatever helps it mean something," I say.
"You're an idiot," says Mrs. Gottwald.
"It's okay," I say.
"No, it's not," says Mrs. Gottwald.

Nobody's born a doula. Or maybe the early doulas, those slaves, maybe they were born doulas. I'm no historian. It's the future I care about. The future of the families I assist in these first fragile and hugely awesome hours. The future of my bank account, too.

It's true I just sort of fell into this work while stalking my ex-girlfriend, but once I came under the tutelage of Fanny Hitchens, the former doula to the stars, I knew I'd found my calling, even though the calls never came. It was tough going, but Fanny encouraged me, even from that (continued on page 142)



"Don't you have a stereo?"

WELCOME TO THE NEXT LEVEL

This fall, killer hardware and weird worlds will kick next-generation gaming into overdrive. Tag along as we salute the only industry that has as much fun as we do

We're always told that change is good. We're told it may seem hard at first but in the long run we'll be happy about it—and that's usually about the time you find out your dad met your new "mom" at the Bada Bing and he's putting the house in her name. Luckily, this line of reasoning is far easier to swallow when we're discussing video games, for which change typically means bigger explosions, better game design, faster machines and shinier worlds. Of course it also usually means plunking down a decent chunk of dough for a new console, peripherals and apps. (Hey, at least you don't end up with a 50-year-old bleached blonde named Trixie parked in your living room.)

The past 12 months have been the most radical period of change the industry has seen, with the launch of Microsoft's Xbox 360 in fall 2005, the upcoming debuts of Sony's PlayStation 3 and Nintendo's Wii, and radical increases in processing power for PC gaming thanks to dual- and quad-core processors and souped-up video cards. These changes force game makers to stop patting themselves on the back for solving yesterday's problems and start running full speed on tomorrow's—and that's a good thing. Speaking of good things, if you look to the right, you'll see our third annual Women of Gaming spread. In years past we ran individual pictures of digital Delilahs; this year, however, we invited our favorite characters from 2006's top video games—*God of War II*, *Splinter Cell: Double Agent*, *Scarface: The World Is Yours* and more—out to the Mansion for a private party. Didn't we tell you change is good?

—Scott Alexander

Making a killing: The Crusades-era Middle East comes to life (and death) in Assassin's Creed, due in 2007.

SURVIVAL OF THE FUNNEST

Big money and bigger egos are on the line as gaming's big three wrestle for control

Microsoft

A juggernaut sails on

The philosophy behind a product is often revealed in its most mundane features. So it's no surprise that we can tell a lot about the Xbox 360 from its controller parts.

Historically, game consoles have used connectors that don't work with machines from a different company. But for the 360 Microsoft went with the USB standard—the ubiquitous plug that lets you connect your mouse and keyboard—found on PCs, TiVo boxes, even the PlayStation 2 and 3. Through using a common connector standard is unusual for a game company, it's the norm in the PC world, where hardware is designed to work with as many products as possible. With a single driver installation, Xbox 360 controllers will work on PCs running Microsoft's new Vista operating system. And if some guy in his basement wants to make a 360 controller out of a RealDoll, he can theoretically do it with off-the-shelf parts. (Halo is a whole different game when played this way.) The same philosophy is seen in the 360's ability to play music directly from almost any MP3 player, even the iPod.

This openness stands in sharp contrast to the company's 1990s image as a monopolistic and rapacious PC-market bully. But between the billions of dollars Bill Gates gives to charity and the company's gaming charm offensive, Microsoft is getting awfully hard to hate. The second wave of 360 games, coming this fall, look amazing, from *Gears of War* to *Mass Effect* to *Too Human*. And Microsoft's XNA Games Studio Express aims to create an inexpensive set of 360-platform tools for independent game programmers. Coupled with the built-in distribution system of Xbox Live Arcade, it's like a farm system for video game development. You'll forgive our stalling; we've just not used to megacorporations being this smart or this nimble.

SONY

Betting the farm on Blu-ray

Packing a mass-market game console with cutting-edge tech and pricing it at \$600 (that's \$200 more than its nearest competitor, if you're keeping score) takes some serious cojones. This kind of strategy is either a masterstroke whose wisdom will be obvious a decade from now or the kind of gross misunderstanding of your customers that can fitter away a massive and dearly bought market lead.

Although the feat may seem impossible or at least paradoxical, the PS3 manages to be both absurdly high priced and a fantastic bargain. First off, Blu-ray is a compelling high-definition video format, and even at \$600 the PS3 will likely be the cheapest Blu-ray player on the market by hundreds of dollars. Then there's the new architecture of Sony's cell-processor chip, which is capable of doing two teraflops—that's 2 trillion calculations a second. Turns out that's fast. Whereas the 360 pumps out a 720p hi-def video signal, the PS3 can produce 1080p, the best possible hi-def resolution (though as yet no games have been announced that will take advantage of it), and it's the first console to use the high-definition digital HDMI standard to connect to your TV. Plus, the PS3 games coming in 2007, such as *Genji: Days of the Blade*, *Resistance: Fall of Man* and *Verhawk*, look spectacular.

But even with all that techno-goodness inside, it's hard to escape the fact that for the price of a PS3 and one game, you'll be able to buy both a 360 and a Wii. And for a market in which a decent chunk of the demographic is too young to work, the wisdom of selling such a high-priced hardware remains to be seen. Still, on its raw horsepower alone, the PS3 makes our whirling, clanking tech-junkie hearts skip a beat. As big-time fans of the future, we have to admire a company with the stones to gamble this big on it.

Nintendo

Putting your body into it

These days you pay for your games up front, which means that after you buy a given title, your loving or hating it doesn't much matter to the game maker's bottom line. Back in the arcade era, however, if a company lost your interest, it also lost the next 400 quarters you were going to drop, making it a brutally Darwinian environment where survival was keyed to who could tickle customers' neurons best. As the only arcade veteran still making consoles, Nintendo knows a thing or two about how to create irresistible gameplay.

Twenty-five years after *Donkey Kong*, and coming off an anemic showing with the GameCube (which was inexpensive and performed as advertised but did little else), Nintendo plans to show it can tickle with the best of them with the Wii system and its iconoclastic controller. Whereas using a conventional controller makes you look as if you're doing a perp walk at your local jailhouse, Wii's controller is split into two pieces, letting your arms move independently. The controller is motion-sensitive, meaning you swat at tennis balls to hit them and point at meesters to shoot them. A slash with your katana turns the next thing you encounter into sashimi.

Hotly anticipated games include the guns-and-swords-oriented *Red Steel*, *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption*, *Rayman Raving Rabbids* and *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, in which you'll use the Wii controller for everything from shooting a bow to fishing. The controller promises new ways of interacting with game worlds and will be more accessible to traditionally underserved population segments, particularly the old and young. It may not have the 360's or PS3's horsepower under the hood, but at least it will get people off the couch. Nintendo's bet is where it has been from the beginning, on gleefully addictive gameplay and the science of pure joy.



The Women of Video Games 2006: Party at the Mansion

SARAH MORRISON

Game: *Idolra Rasa* (PC)

Profession: Plc. in Army of Allied Free Sentients.

Hobbies: Whiskey, fieldstripping plasma rifles, fistfights.

Turn-ons: Explosive-tipped armor-piercing bullets, jet fuel, a free planet Earth.

Turnoffs: Whiners, cheaters, quitters, the Bane.

JESSICA MCRAE

Game: *Scarface: The World Is Yours* (PC, PS2, Xbox)

Profession: Fashion designer.

Hobbies: Cocaine, gangsters, jai alai, dubbing, more cocaine.

Turn-ons: Power, jewelry, cash, pharmaceutical-grade product, wanton violence, six-pack abs.

Turnoffs: Cops, tourists, Colombians, cellulite.

LEDA

Game: *God of War II* (PS2)

Profession: Queen of Sparta and consort of Zeus.

Hobbies: Hiking on Mount Olympus, orgies, animal husbandry.

Turn-ons: Swans, god-on-mortal action, human sacrifice.

Turnoffs: Athenians, siege machines, compliments about her daughter's looks.





A man with dark hair, wearing a light-colored jacket over a dark shirt, stands in a grocery store aisle. He is eating a sandwich and holding a brown paper shopping bag. The store is overflowing with food. To his left is a large display of fresh produce, including oranges, lemons, watermelon, and various berries. To his right, shelves are piled high with boxes of instant noodle soups, mostly 'MAMA' brand. On the floor in the foreground, there is a large, messy pile of discarded food items, including cans of soups, boxes of instant noodles, and other packaging. The scene suggests a state of food waste or overconsumption.

BRING MORE METAL



INTO YOUR WORLD.

Get your favorite U2 videos, live concerts, exclusive music, and more on America's best wireless entertainment network. Amp'd Mobile. More mobile than you're used to.



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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ONLINE

Connecting with the big-three consoles



Remember how useful your computer was before it could go online? Neither do we. You'll soon feel the same way about your game console.

For centuries games from chess to pinball have provided a social way to exercise man's natural competitive instinct—that is, until video gaming started keeping us indoors, staring at our screen instead of one another. Connected electronic gaming has existed since the 1970s, first on university mainframes and then, in the early 1990s, on networked PCs when three-dimensional shooters such as *Doom* and *Duke Nukem* became popular. But for years console gamers were left out of the party, playing what amounted to very elaborate and compelling versions of solitaire.

In 2002 Microsoft introduced Xbox Live, an online gaming service that allowed you and your remotely located friends to compete in certain games online as if you were sitting on the same couch. Sony's PS2 could also be played over the Net, but its lack of a central infrastructure made it a far less exciting proposition, and it lacked a clear killer app. As David Hufferd, product management director for Xbox, puts it, "Xbox 2 defined the Xbox Live experience." Nintendo released an online adaptor for its GameCube system, but only a minuscule number of games used it.



• Geometry Wars (Xbox Live Arcade).

That was then. Today's 360, PS3 and Wii all have big plans for Internet connectivity. Microsoft led the way by making a massive upgrade to Xbox Live in conjunction with the Xbox 360's release. "Live is in the DNA of the 360," Hufferd says. "It's a huge part of the strategy." True enough, Xbox Live comes built into every unit, and the base service is free. (Users pay for online gaming, as well as voice and video chat.) Connected Xbox 360 users can download previews and extra levels, trade their own content and stay in touch with friends by instant message. At this point the most popular feature is Xbox Live Arcade, a sort of iTunes for games, whereby users can buy simple yet oddly addictive titles like the card game *Hearts*, such retro classics as *Jeopardy!* and *Pac-Man* and original games like the breakout hit *Geometry Wars*. So far the numbers are impressive: Sixty-five percent of Xbox 360 owners have downloaded some kind of content, although the company would not say how many have opted to pay for a multiplayer gaming subscription. Next year Microsoft's master plan will emerge when the company's Live Anywhere venture makes the Xbox Live environment accessible from Windows Vista, as well as cell phones.

Nintendo's Wii and Sony's PlayStation 3 will also go online. The Wii will have an always-on feature allowing the system to download content while it's not in use, as well as a "virtual console" that can access all—that's all—the games the company made for its Nintendo, Super Nintendo and Nintendo 64 systems plus retro titles from other companies, giving it a formidable selection out of the gate. At press time Sony hadn't released the specifics of its online plans for PlayStation 3 other than to say the console will have a sophisticated online component. Chris Ert, director of marketing for EA Sports, says *Madden NFL 07* will work online on the PlayStation 3, but Sony has sworn him to secrecy on the details. Frankly, we can't imagine Sony failed to notice how well online services have performed for Microsoft, so we expect big things. And we couldn't be happier that playing games is once again a social affair.—Robert Levine



• Super Mario Brothers (Wii).

MASSIVE ATTACK

New breeds of MMO take on *World of Warcraft*

Massively multiplayer online (MMO) games are shared worlds where thousands of people can coexist and that don't pause when you turn off your machine. Until recently most MMOs were variations on the breasts-and-headswords model, the most dominant being the gargantuan *World of Warcraft*, which accounts for roughly half of all MMO play. Lately, however, we've seen a sharp uptick in MMOs that have nothing to do with orcs, paladins or mystical amulets of defenestration. Here are five that break the mold.

At its heart, NCSoft's *Arche Assault* (arceassault.com) still revolves around combat and leveling up your abilities, but its postapocalyptic vehicle-centric concept twists things to appeal to both the mechanic and the Mad Max in everyone.



If you're more *Yogi Berra* than *Mel Gibson*, *Ultimate Baseball Online* 2006 (ultimatebaseballonline.com) is probably more your speed.

Turning conventional video game baseball on its head, *UBO* doesn't offer you control of a team; instead you control a single player on your squad from a first-person perspective. You and your team play against others in leagues and tournaments for prizes and glory.



Similar to *UBO* (though not team based) is *Shot-Online* (shot-online.com), a golf MMO in which you create an avatar and play lush 3-D courses while contending with realistic wind, weather and ball physics. After you purchase the game, online play is free, but you'll need to spend real-world cash in the pre-shop to upgrade your shoes, balls, clubs and so on. Luckily, unlike in real life, the more you golf is this world, the better you get.



We were waiting to see who would make the first big-budget sex MMO—now we have an answer. The same people who brought

the world's Naughty America porn site are creating an as-yet-unnamed game that will combine social networking with interactive sexual high jinks in a cartoonish environment with voice and webcam support. Just about every imaginable variety of carnality is an offer, and you can amp up your character's appeal with a visit to the plastic surgeon. Of course, all the same caveats of chat-room cybersex apply. In other words, you may figure out that the 23-year-old symphonic you've been dallying with is an overweight 55-year-old man who hasn't bathed in weeks.



When that happens, you're going to want to shoot someone. So it is *Buxley* (buxleygames.com), a hybrid role-playing game and first-person shooter that supports 200-character firefights and seamlessly blends in story and character development as you progress. Unfortunately, it's not due until 2007, so you'll have to live with your shame a while longer. —John Gaudiosi



DADDY, WHERE DOES TESTOSTERONE COME FROM?

Macho men of yesteryear teach gaming's punks how it's done

There's no shortage of games on the market that will turn you into a one-man death storm, but a generic ragefest too often leaves us flat. That's because true toughness comes from a combination of fortitude and style—and too many game characters, while strong on the former, sorely lack the latter. Luckily the cavalry is on its way. In the past year we've seen games based on *The Godfather*, *Franz Biberkopf* with *Love and the Warriors*, and over the coming few months cinemaphiles will be able to relive more of Tinseltown's bloodiest scenes.

First up is the just-released *Reservoir Dogs*, which channels filmmaker Quentin Tarantino's breakout 1992 diamond-heist flick. You'll smash heads through glass windows and slice off ears as you play out signature movie moments along with events merely hinted at on-screen, such as Mr. Blonde's prior psychotic rampage and the off-screen caper that sets the film in motion. The game requires more than just a run-and-gun (and slice-and-dice-and-torch) approach; in this world intimidation is usually more effective than violence. If you're good, you can win without firing a shot—though perhaps not without burning someone's face with a cigar.

Speaking of cigars, say hello to our little fren' *Scarface: The World Is Yours*. Set in a parallel universe where coke kingpin Tony Montana has survived the film's climactic scene but lost his empire in the process, the game allows you to help him with both his (admittedly improbable) escape and eventual return to dominance over Miami. It's unbridled, pain-bringing, kilo-slinging mayhem as boats, guns and luxury autos propel you through an open-ended, expatriate-laden world. With a script penned by David McKenna (*Blow*, *American History X*) and a "balls meter" you fill by killing, dealing and taunting people, *Scarface* avoids the leaden pacing that mars the structurally similar *Godfather* game through a liberal application of hedonism and explosives.

Completing this fall's testosterone trifecta is *Stranglehold*, John Woo's game-only sequel to his shotgun ballet *Mare Nostrum*. Directed by Woo and featuring a virtual Chow Yun-Fat reprising his role as Inspector Tequila, the game will delight Hong Kong-style action junkies. Players double-pistol their way through legions of sneaking Russian mobsters, using an intuitive combat mechanic that lets you improvisationally mimic Woo's elegantly brutal "gun fu" fight choreography on the fly. Special credit should be given to the cracking, splintering and disintegrating backgrounds—you'll never destroy a tea shop the same way twice.

And don't think the recycling trend is done: *Dirty Harry*, *Indiana Jones* and *Heat* are all on the horizon for next year. So grab your gun, polish your revolver and stock that humidor, because when it comes to video games, it's still a man's world.

—Scott Steinberg



LEGENDS OF THE FALL

You want more? We'll give you more. A brief look at the best games for fall and beyond



• *Gears of War* looks to be this year's *Halo* and has the best graphics on the 360.

• A crumbling art deco palace on the ocean floor gives *Bioshock* its setting.



You can drink booze on the Vegas Strip, but can you rock an Uzi? Find out in *Ten Clancy's Rainbow Six: Vegas*. • Drift racing is back, and off-road canyon racing is new in *Need for Speed: Carbon*. • *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* continues one of gaming's longest running—and best—franchises on the Wii. • *Rayman Raving Rabbids* pits Rayman against rabbits bent on world domination. • Racing purists rejoice: *Forza Motorsport 2* is coming. • Next-gen daylighter *Warhawk* lets you pilot a plane by turning the PS3's tilt-sensitive controller. • Sci-fi shooter *Tenacious* puts you on the front lines of man's eventual showdown with the machines. • *Gangli: Days of the Blade* has you slaying demons in a mythical ancient Japan. • *Assassin's Creed* lets you play a killer in the Crusades-era Middle East and is so pretty it hurts. • Third-person shooter *Army of Two* is a co-op game even when you're playing alone. • *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots* stars a prematurely aging Solid Snake, who must solve a mystery before his body gives out. • *Spare* lets you create and evolve organisms over thousands of years, from single cells to interstellar species. • Space opera *Mass Effect* is a hybrid shooter-RPG with innovative systems for combat and conversation. —Marc Saltzman



• In *Red Steel* you'll use the Wii controller to both slice and shoot the bad guys.

• *Resistance: Fall of Man* posits the 1940s without Nazis but with really grumpy aliens.





KYLE GASS + JACK BLACK.



TENACIOUS D

DOES ANYONE ROCK HARDER THAN JACK BLACK AND KYLE GASS? THE GREATEST BAND IN THE WORLD TELLS ALL, AND EVEN BETTER, THEY'VE WRITTEN A SONG JUST FOR YOU

Q1

PLAYBOY: There are many different versions of Tenacious D's origins. Some claim you were raised by a blind blues musician, while others insist you made a pact with the devil to become mock-rock superstars. Would you care to set the record straight?

GASS: You'll have to wait for our new movie, *The Pick of Destiny*. We did it as a way to satisfy public curiosity about us once and for all. We're finally going to give it to you straight, but we're not giving anything away for free.

BLACK: We're doing this for the fans. This is their chance to learn the truth about the band, to get answers to all those epic questions that have been asked through the ages: "How did you guys meet?" "Why are you called Tenacious D?" "How are you able to rock so hard?" "When did you first meet Sasquatch?" At long last you're going to find out.

Q2

PLAYBOY: Just how much of this movie is autobiographical?

GASS: Everything is completely accurate. In a lot of ways it's almost a documentary. Maybe not the Pick of Destiny part—when we go searching for the guitar pick used at one time by every great musician in rock history—but the relationship between Jack and me is pretty truthful. When I met Jack I was the wise mentor and he was my student in rock. He looked up to me for about a day and a half, then realized I was full of shit and completely took over and dominated me after that. I think we capture that pretty well in the movie. In a lot of ways it's a typical Hollywood story: Boy meets boy, boy teaches boy how to rock, boy loses boy, boy gets boy back, boys reach rock supremacy.

Q3

PLAYBOY: Is there anything you don't share in this movie? Anything that was too personal?

BLACK: Not at all. We're not holding anything back. Whenever we do something, we do it like we think the earth is going to explode tomorrow. We put it all

out there. We're not saving anything for the next movie. It's all coming now, all the way, full guns ablazing.

GASS: You mean full throttle?

BLACK: That sounds dumb. I like "full guns ablazing" better.

GASS: Let it be known that Jack was making a motorcycle-throttle hand gesture. So I'm not misrepresenting him.

BLACK: We're gonna open up the, uh—
GASS: Floodgates?

BLACK: We're releasing the hounds.

GASS: We're opening the gates and releasing the hounds. Simultaneously.

Q4

PLAYBOY: We find it curious that neither of you has a love interest in the movie. Are you trying to tell us something about your lifestyle choices?

GASS: Well, I don't think people want or need to know that Jack and I are lovers, but I guess, in a way, you could say there's a subterranean gay undertone to the movie, though we never intended it. In (continued on page 136)



Southern Comfort

A FEW SHOTS OF DELECTABLE
MISS NOVEMBER

You look at this woman and think, Yes, she is beautiful. She is sexy. But she is so much more than that. We're willing to wager that in the time it takes to read this short article, you will fall in love with Miss November Sarah Elizabeth. She is that kind of girl: You spend an afternoon with her and find yourself wanting to spend every afternoon that way. Let's start at the top.

Sarah was born in Phoenix, Arizona and lived there for most of her 23 years before moving to Panama City, Florida three years ago. "I moved here because I wanted a more laid-back vibe," she tells us. "The sign on the highway into town reads, THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BEACH, and it is. The sand is white and like sugar. The water is emerald green and blue, and when you're in a boat, you can see dolphins swimming underneath you. It's paradise." In some respects, Sarah is a perfect tomboy. She likes to spend her days in the water, throwing a football. She can play poker with the best of them, and as a matter of fact, she has a few tricks up her sleeve—when she's wearing sleeves. Sarah considers deep-sea fishing one of her great passions. (No, we're not making this up.) "I've never caught anything big, like a marlin, but I've reeled in grouper, snapper, king mackerel," she says. "People don't want to take me fishing, though, because I like to catch and release." She cares about the fish! We adore this girl. But it gets better. After a day





in the surf Sarah heads to her favorite beach dive. "I walk in and I don't have to tell them what I'm ordering," she says. A cold beer lands in front of her in seconds. "There's never more than 10 people in there. I walk in wearing jeans and flip-flops, with my hair in a ponytail, and put \$5 in the jukebox. Then I'm good to go."

Miss November may be casual off the clock, but when she's working she's all business—sort of. She says she loves modeling and is as comfortable nude in front of a camera as some people are alone in the shower. "I'm a very sexual person and comfortable with my body," she says. "Modeling isn't work to me." You get the feeling she hangs out at her place looking as she does in these pictures even when there's no camera around. And when she's not working or lovingly releasing Moby Dick from a lure? Sarah would like to go to a game. "It's a five-hour drive to Atlanta," she says. "Maybe when the Braves play the Diamondbacks, my team from Arizona, I'll drive up there in my Diamondbacks attire and get booed."

So let's add this up: She's a "very sexual person" who loves cold beer, deep-sea fishing, ball games, more cold beer and a hand of poker. We told you you'd fall in love.













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





MISS NOVEMBER

PLAYBOY'S PLAYMATE OF THE MONTH



Sarah Elizabeth

PLAYMATE DATA SHEET

NAME: Sarah Elizabeth
 BUST: 34D WAIST: 23 HIPS: 32
 HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 110 lbs.
 BIRTH DATE: 8-9-83 BIRTHPLACE: Glendale, AZ
 AMBITIONS: To be successful in my modeling career and real estate. I also want to be a good role model.
 TURN-ONS: A man who is genuine and honest, can make me laugh, be romantic, smell good and play darts is perfect.
 TURN-OFFS: Laziness, rudeness, liars, cheaters, bad breath and people who can't laugh at life.
 MY GUILTY PLEASURES: Cheese crisps in the middle of the night, Dirty Dancing, Court TV, Sex and the City.
 FAMILY SNAPSHOT: I miss my family in AZ. We're very close. We have dinner every Friday; it's awesome.
 PREVIOUS MODELING GIGS: Ocean Drive magazine, Surtaki eyewear, Liberator ads, FHM.
 THE PLACE I MEET THE MOST GUYS: Wow, this is sad. I don't meet a lot of guys, but I would have to say the beach.



Me in seventh grade, rockin' the orange smiley shirt!



My first year cheerleading. I was the girl they threw around.



One of my first modeling shots, 18 years old.

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

Doc, you've got to help me," a woman said to her proctologist, "I've got a strawberry stuck up my ass."

"Don't worry," the doctor replied. "I've got cream for that."

A man walked into a bar with a roll of quarters taped inside the crotch of his jeans. He became very pleased with himself after he noticed an attractive woman constantly glancing down there. "Hey," he said, "is there anything I can get for you?"

"As a matter of fact there is," she said. "I need change for a dollar."



It's for my husband," a woman told a gun store owner while shopping for a rifle.

"Did he tell you what gauge to get?" the owner asked.

"Are you kidding?" she said. "He doesn't even know I'm going to shoot him."

How does James Bond like his pussy?
Shaven, not furred.

How about letting me have one of your women for a little while?" a pilgrim asked an Indian chief.

"That depends," the chief said. "How much money do you have?"

"I don't have a wooden nickel," the pilgrim said. "All I have is a bag of corn."

The chief accepted the corn and led the pilgrim into a tepee, where he found an Indian woman who offered him her backside. Flustered, the pilgrim asked for her vagina.

"No," she replied. "That's my money hole. You get my corn hole."

What did the doe do on her day off?

Went down to the Elks Club to blow a few bucks.

A man sat crying into his beer at a bar. "What's wrong?" the bartender asked.

"My mother-in-law," the man replied. "I have a real problem with her."

"Cheer up," the bartender said. "Everyone has problems with his mother-in-law."

"Yeah," the man replied, "but I got mine pregnant."

What's the difference between Thanksgiving dinner and a vagina?

You can have your fill of Thanksgiving dinner.

On the way to a strip club a guy told his friend, "I can go in, but I can't get a lap dance. My wife thinks it's cheating."

"Cheating?" the second said. "That's ridiculous."

"You're telling me," the first answered. "And what's worse, my girlfriend agrees with her."

A wife said to her husband, "If I die first, I want you to promise me that in the funeral procession you'll let my mother ride in the first car with you."

"Okay, if you insist," he replied. "But it will ruin my day."

A man walked into a bookstore and asked a saleswoman, "Can you direct me to the self-help section?"

"Sure," she replied, "but wouldn't that defeat the purpose?"



Redd Foxx

A doctor had sex with one of his patients and felt guilty the next day. No matter how hard he tried to forget about it, his shame and sense of betrayal were overwhelming. But every once in a while he'd hear a reassuring voice in his head that said, "Don't worry about it. You aren't the first medical practitioner to have sex with one of his patients."

But then he would hear another voice, one that jolted him back to reality. "You are a sick bastard," it whispered, "and a terrible veterinarian."

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

Crisson



"Somehow, John Alden, I don't think you're speaking for Miles Standish anymore."

HOW SUITE IT IS

THE NEW HUGH HEFNER
SKY VILLA IN VEGAS
REDEFINES HIGH ROLLING

Ladies and gentlemen, we are beginning our descent into Las Vegas International Airport. Say hello to Sin City, the desert enclave where the spirits of Elvis, Sinatra and Mike Tyson's right uppercut will live forever. You are about to experience the best weekend of your life. As for your accommodations, let us recommend the new Hugh Hefner Sky Villa, a duplex suite on the 34th floor of the Palms Casino Resort Fantasy Tower. The Hef suite debuts this month. (A few floors above, the first Playboy Club to open in more than 20 years does as well.) An incarnation of the Playboy Mansion, the suite spans 9,000 square feet. Yeah, it'll run you about \$35,000 a night, but you won't find more sumptuous lodgings anywhere. Don't believe us? Let us take you on a little tour...



PHOTOGRAPHY
BY ARMY FREYTAG



Every detail in the suite has polish. Hef himself oversaw the selection of art that hangs on the walls, including life-size portraits of Marilyn Monroe and other Playboy icons. Left: Amanda and a friend relax in the foyer on the first floor. You find yourself in this room when you enter the suite. Don't let your jaw hit the floor—it's marble. To the right of Amanda is a glass elevator worthy of a Roald Dahl novel. The first floor also features a media room with couches and three flat-screen TVs, an elegant dining area, a kitchen and a fully stocked stainless-steel bar with a red glass surface. Bottom left: Athena, Jordan and Sara kick back in the second-floor sauna, which is big enough for you and your six favorite girlfriends. Things can get hot in there. There's also a massage room with a table should you need a proper rubdown the morning after. Below: Original mock-ups of the futuristic infinity pool, arguably this playground's most lavish accoutrement. Notice the windows and lounge chairs. By day you've got the best tanning spot in Vegas.



Right: The girls in the finished infinity pool, which juts 15 feet out over the city of Vegas. The entire thing is encased in Plexiglas. You'll notice that Jordan is missing. "I'm afraid of heights!" she says.



When the party starts to wind down, the clothes begin to disappear. Above: Still life with Amanda. The modernist tube couch offers plenty of room for two, though we don't mind when Amanda has it all to herself. The door to her left leads to an outdoor deck and also to the pool. Right: Athena lounges on a couch on the black-marble island that sits in a separate decorative pool on the suite's first floor, complete with romantic bottom lighting and its own miniature waterfall.

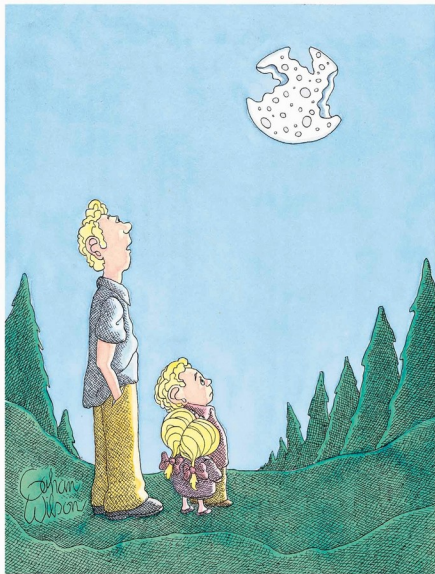




f the first floor of this duplex is for partying, the second is for romance. Top: Sara sinks into the eight-foot-diameter master bed, which spins just like the one Hef had in his Chicago Mansion back in the day. Next to the bed (not pictured) is a Jacuzzi that accommodates six. The upper floor also has a second, smaller bedroom, plus the sauna and massage room. Above: An original mock-up of the main bedroom.

116 Right: Jordan rinses off in the massive master bath. Talk about good clean fun.

Take an animated tour of the Hugh Hefner Sky Villa at playboy.com.



"...But then it turned out there weren't any WMDs on the moon after all."



Left: A rendering of the Palms Casino Resort with the new Fantasy Tower on the left, sporting the Playboy Rabbit Head logo. Above: The Hef suite's main lounge, with floor-to-ceiling windows. Start your party here before moving upstairs. We've dressed the place up with (foreground from left) Playmates Amanda Paige, Jordan Monroe (in red), Sara Jean Underwood and Athena Lundberg.

ISHMAEL BEAH > A LONG WAY GONE

> WE SLIPPED SIX HOT-TOPIC WRITERS INTO WARM WINTER FASHIONS APPROPRIATE FOR THE SETTINGS OF THEIR WORKS. PERHAPS YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER, BUT YOU CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT AN AUTHOR BY HIS COAT

Book Jackets

> "AT A YOUNG AGE I WAS FORCED TO FIGHT IN MY COUNTRY'S CIVIL WAR. IT WAS CRUCIAL FOR ME TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCES AS A BOY SOLDIER SO THAT PEOPLE COULD PUT A HUMAN FACE TO THE CONFLICTS IN AFRICA."

FASHION BY JOSEPH DE ACETIS * PHOTOGRAPHY BY JUDSON BAKER

OPPOSITE PAGE: Ishmael's Jacket (\$538) is by *Armani Jeans*. His shirt (\$550) and pants (\$950) are by *Giorgio Armani*. **THIS PAGE:** Tony's Jacket (\$1,345) is by *Belstaff*. His shirt (\$225) and trousers (\$225) are by *David Chu*. His shoes (\$280) are by *Camper*. Her Top, skirt and headscarf (\$175) are by *Kilimanjaro Fashions*. Her necklaces (\$12 to \$36 each) are by *Laekan Designs*.

TONY D'SOUZA > WHITE MAN

> "LIVING IN AN AFRICAN VILLAGE FOR THREE YEARS BROADENED MY CONCEPTION OF SEXUAL BEAUTY. IT WAS LIBERATING. IT HAS MADE EXISTENCE THAT MUCH MORE REWARDING."

EMERGENCY EXIT

THIS PAGE: Michael's hat is by *Borsalino*. His trench coat (\$200) and tie (\$25) are by *Stafford*, and his shirt (\$45) is by *Stafford Executive*. His jeans (\$135) are by *Jack of Spades Jeans & Khakis*. Accompanying gentlemen (from left): Eduardo's suit (\$1,595), shirt (\$210) and tie (\$110) are by *Canali*, and his pocket square (\$75) is by *Best of Class* by *Robert Talbott*; Carson's suit (\$1,495), shirt (\$215) and tie (\$115) are by *Canali*, and his pocket square (\$75) is by *Best of Class* by *Robert Talbott*; Nathan's suit (\$1,370) and shirt (\$225) are by *Paul Smith London*, and his tie (\$125) is by *Best of Class* by *Robert Talbott*; Brandon's suit (\$299) is by *Stafford*, his shirt (\$40) is by *Stafford Executive*, and his tie (\$25) is by *J. Penney* by *JC Penney*. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Andrew's jacket (\$465) and shirt (\$135) are by *Façonnable*, his henley (\$275) is by *London Fog*, his jeans (\$135) are by *Jack of Spades Jeans & Khakis*, his belt (\$88) is by *Joseph Abboud*, and his boots (\$498) are by *John Varvatos*. Her outfit is courtesy of Alan Chow of the Chinese-American Arts Council.

> "I WROTE MY BOOK TO COMBAT THE FIERCE SUFFERING OF THE POOR AND TO EXPOSE THE SOCIAL POLICIES AND POLITICAL PRACTICES THAT BROWN THEM IN A TIDE OF MORAL INDIFFERENCE."

► "THE HIGH-TECH TRADE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE WEST PROMISES A NEW ERA OF UNDERSTANDING IN A RELATIONSHIP THAT IS STILL TROUBLED BY CULTURAL STEREOTYPES ON BOTH SIDES."

ANDREW ROSS ► FAST BOAT TO CHINA





> "AMERICA IS A SPIRITUAL SUPERMARKET WITH OVERSTOCKED SHELVES AND PANICKED SHOPPERS PERPETUALLY COMPARING PRICES. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE PROMISED LAND PEOPLED BY THE HOPEFUL AND THE GRATEFUL?"

> "TOO MANY MEN FAIL TO ACT WHEN THEY HEAR OR WITNESS OTHER MEN DISRESPECTING OR COMMITTING ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE DEFENSELESS. STAND UP. BREAK THE SILENCE."

OPPOSITE PAGE: Walter's coat [\$4,950] is by London Fog. His sweater [\$88], shirt [\$88] and pants [\$78] are all by Joseph Abboud, and his shoes [\$135] are by Johnston & Murphy. The Goth bride's dress with Jacket [\$98] is from Blacklist by Lip Service. Her skirt with train [\$62] is by Tripp NYC. Her gloves [\$40] are by LaCrosia, and her pumps [\$30] are by Pierre Silber. The bride in white's gloves [\$40] are by LaCrosia. Her pumps [\$27] are by Highest Heel from Trash and Vaudeville. **THIS PAGE:** Victor's coat [\$225] is by John Varvatos. His shirt [\$1,750] is from Estate by Robert Talbott.

Centerfold's On Sex



A LIGHT TOUCH

I'm always the good girl. I talked on the phone with my boyfriend for a month before we went out, and I didn't kiss him until the third date. I like shy guys. Shy guys are mysterious. I can't stand the loud, obnoxious type, and I get annoyed if guys talk a lot. Like if they talk about their car or their place within the first five minutes, they're gone. That just says they're stuck on themselves. When a guy talks to me at a club, I don't really care, because I know he's just trying to pick me up. But I do like it when my boyfriend tells me I'm the most beautiful thing he's ever seen.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

On an ideal date a man would pick me up in his car, and we would go to a sushi restaurant and drink sake. Afterward we would take a walk, then go dancing. He would take me home, and if things went right he would get a good-night kiss. Then he'd call me the next day. A guy should not wait two or three days after a date to call a girl!





"The turkey was good, but the stuffing was even better."

POETRY IN LOTION

THE GIRLS OF HAWAIIAN TROPIC



You have to hand it to Ron Rice, the Hugh M. Hefner of sun-care products. In the late 1960s Rice was working as a chemistry teacher and part-time lifeguard. On a trip to Hawaii he had a eureka moment. Why not make a skin lotion that protects you from the sun's rays while allowing you to tan? Backed by a \$500 loan from his dad, Rice began experimenting with coconut and avocado oils, mixing batches in a garbage can in his garage. The first bottle of Hawaiian Tropic sold on July 16, 1969. Today Rice runs a multimillion-dollar company and is living the life. In 1984 he launched the Hawaiian Tropic International Pageant. Every year thousands of beauties from all over the globe compete in a tournament of bikini contests. In the spring, judges pick Miss Hawaiian Tropic International, who takes home a modeling contract and a pile of cash. Think of it as a business concept: Stunning women rub your product all over their nearly naked bodies and smile for publicity cameras. It's genius. For your viewing pleasure we photographed a handful of contestants—sun-bronzed women with dazzling bodies and hearts of gold, bikinis not included.

Sun, water, lotion and naked women are four ingredients that make for a hell of a party. Just ask Candice Guerrero (brunette) and Carin Ashley (light brown), shown above and on the next page. Carin hails from the Sunshine State (surprise) and likes working out (surprise again). Texas-born Candice says modeling is her dream job. "When PLAYBOY called, I thought one of my friends was playing a joke on me."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARNY FREYTAG AND REPORTAGE PHOTOGRAPHY BY RIC MOORE







n case you've never sunk your toes into the sand on one of Europe's exotic beaches, we've brought the sight-seeing to you. The U.K.'s Natalie Weston (opposite page) studied politics and law in school and loves skydiving and bungee jumping. Hungarian beauty Edina Pantinchin (above left) is a budding actress. Another native of Britain, Natalie Thomas (above right) says her heroes are sex goddesses Marilyn Monroe and Madonna.





Headed for the surf are beach babes (from far left) Melissa Tingley, Carin Ashley and Candice Guerrero. This trio of golden girls roomed together during the shoot. In case you haven't noticed, they all have quite the beach bum. "Running on sand gives my butt this particular shape," Melissa explains. "I love it."





S

amantha Harris (above) of Orlando, Florida has modeled swimsuits, lingerie and—for the first time—nothing but her birthday suit. We scouted Alba Nadal (opposite page) at a Las Vegas Hawaiian Tropic International Pageant. The Vancouver vixen, who grew up on a family farm near Barcelona, says she loves the attention that bikini and nude modeling bring her. "They make me feel more sexy!"





ona O'Connell (above) enjoys the camaraderie of her fellow models. "One night after hanging out in a bar we stripped and went skinny-dipping," she says. But camaraderie has its limits. While competing in Hawaii for Miss Hawaiian Tropic International, Sicilian stunner Loredana (opposite page, left) roomed with Miss Greece. "When I brought the trophy back she flipped out, so I punched her in the face," she says. Amanda Corey (right) used to feel odd wearing a bikini in a bar. Now? "I'm comfortable in my own skin." Clearly.

See more of these girls at cyber.playboy.com.



TENACIOUS D

(continued from page 97)

A lot of people think, I'm not thin enough to be a rock star. But look at us. We're doing just fine.

Hollywood it's almost de rigueur to have some sort of love interest. Even when it detracts from the story, they always tack it on anyway. And it's never funny. But this movie is just about us. We're egotistical enough to think that's all people want to see.

Q5

PLAYBOY: You've spoken openly about your rivalry with Satan. Will the D finally settle the score in *The Pick of Destiny*?

BLACK: We gave Satan a major speaking role, though we don't actually do any hand-to-hand combat with him. There is a battle between a wizard and the devil. Some people will say we stole it from *The Lord of the Rings*, but that's BS.

Q6

PLAYBOY: They say the camera adds 10 pounds. Since you're both already on the hefty side, did you feel compelled to get in shape for the movie?

GASS: We knew it was coming for a long time, and as you know, we've had a lifetime battle with our weight. So I thought, Okay, this is the time. I got the trainer, I exercised every day, and I got the special diet food delivered to me. I was working as hard as I could. I probably dropped 20 pounds. Then we started the movie and there was a full buffet on the set. Somebody must have said, "Jack and Kyle love to eat. Let's not spare any expense." We'd have a full breakfast; then craft service would show up with doughnuts and nachos and any snack you can think of. When I'm working and there's any sort of pressure at all, I find solace in food. I literally gained it all back. We shot the last scene on the first day, when I was still looking very crisp and good. But when we finally got around to shooting the earlier scenes, I looked like Jabba the Hutt. I created my own continuity problem.

Q7

PLAYBOY: POTR star Ron Jeremy claims he gives hope to old, out-of-shape guys: If he can get laid, anybody can. Does the same philosophy apply to Tenacious D? Are you providing an example for bald, overweight guys who want to be rock stars?

GASS: Oh absolutely. That's what we're all about. A lot of people think, I'm

not thin enough to be a rock star. But look at us. We're both eating too much, and we're doing just fine. You don't need to have electric guitars. You don't even need a rhythm section. It's not about volume or chops. It's about what's in here. Please make a note that I'm pointing to my head and heart simultaneously.

BLACK: A lot of people don't know it, but Kyle is actually not bald.

GASS: That's right. This is a fashion choice. I have a full head of hair, but I choose to shave my head.

BLACK: He's like that guy from the Prodigy, the singer with the reverse Mohawk. He's making it cool to be bald. It's an artistic choice.

Q8

PLAYBOY: You're the self-proclaimed greatest band in the world. Can you confer that title on yourself? Doesn't it have to be given by some higher rock authority?

BLACK: You're absolutely right. It's stupid to call yourself the greatest band on earth. Somebody else has to call you that. But I don't think we've ever uttered the phrase "We are the greatest band in the world." Not once. As far as how we stack up in the rock hierarchy, that's not for us to say. We leave that for others to decide.

GASS: Actually, I think we have said it.

BLACK: What? When?

GASS: In the movie. I'm pretty sure you say it at some point. [Long pause. Black glares at Gass.]

BLACK: Oh yeah, that's right. It's the last line of the movie. Good call, Kyle. Good call.

GASS: Oh, wow. Can we erase that part?

BLACK: You fucking idiot.

GASS: I feel horrible. If you have any pity on us, you'll just forget that I said anything.

Q9

PLAYBOY: You languished in relative obscurity for most of your career, but now you've signed to a major label and are in a feature film. There's no nice way to ask this: Have you sold out to the man?

BLACK: I take issue with that question. What does it mean to sell out? Does that mean you've stopped doing good work because you've sacrificed your integrity? If the product you're getting paid to make is just as good as

the product you were making for free, I don't understand what the sellout is. We're doing exactly what we want. Nobody fucking wrote this movie for us. Nobody writes our songs for us or tells us what to do. How have we sold out? It makes no sense.

GASS: Well, it is possible to sell out. Look at Eric Clapton back in the 1970s. He was doing the hard-rockin' stuff in Cream, but then he started pandering, trying to get the hits and fit into a marketable genre. Or look at what Kiss did with its disco album, or Soul Asylum with that "Runaway Train" song.

BLACK: I feel I kind of sold out a little bit when I did the movie *Shallow Hal*. I had an opportunity to work with some dudes I thought were really funny, but it didn't turn out as I'd hoped. I wasn't proud of it, and I got paid a lot of money, so in retrospect it feels like a sellout. But the D never sold out. We never did a commercial, and we've been offered a few. We could've gotten paid more for this movie, but we wanted creative control.

Q10

PLAYBOY: *The Pick of Destiny* has a lot of famous cameos, from Amy Poehler to Tim Robbins and Ben Stiller. How did you persuade them to appear in your movie?

GASS: Most of them owed us favors. Ben Stiller was originally just a producer on the movie, and we told him, "Dude, you've got to come down and actually earn your paycheck." At some point Will Ferrell was supposed to be in it. I said, "You know, I was in *Elf*. How about some reciprocity?" He promised to do it, and then he was busy. Thanks, Will. We really appreciate it. So Ben stepped in and hit it out of the park.

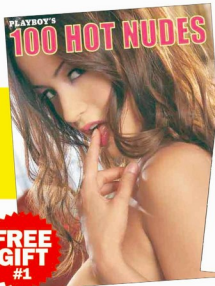
Q11

PLAYBOY: You've collaborated with a lot of mainstream musicians, including Dave Grohl, the Dust Brothers and Page McConnell of Phish. Are they fans, or do you suspect they may be a little envious of the D?

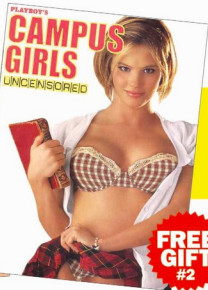
BLACK: Well, it goes back to that old cliché: All actors want to be musicians, and all musicians want to be actors. You know, the grass is always greener and all that. Dave Grohl is a funny guy. I think there's a frustrated comedian in him. He supported us early on, before we got the HBO series. He checked us out at the Viper Room and gave us a big boost in confidence. But I don't think Dave or any of the other musicians are jealous of us. It's not as though they're trying to replace Kyle. Nobody wants to break up the

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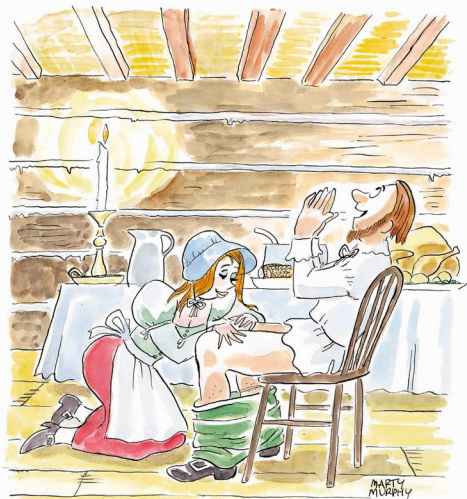
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"For what I am about to receive, I am truly thankful."

D. They just want to inject themselves in there and become the third member. Whenever it's just me, they'll say, "Where's K.G.? Is he around the corner?"

GASS: [Laughs] They're usually pretty satisfied with just you.

Q12

PLAYBOY: Meat Loaf plays Jack's father in the movie. Was he picked for his musical ability or his large girth?

BLACK: I always thought of him as the perfect choice to play my dad. We look alike, obviously. He looks as if he could be in my family. But it was mostly his energy that inspired us to cast him. Just watching him sing is an education in rock. We basically said, "Will you sing in the movie, yes or no?" He said, "For you guys, yes, because I like your stuff."

GASS: This is the first movie he's sung in since *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, so we were pretty fortunate.

BLACK: I'm sure directors ask him all the time and it just bugs the shit out of him.

GASS: You think?

BLACK: Dude, how could he not be asked a thousand times to sing in movies?

GASS: Well, then why wouldn't he do it? BLACK: It's like John Travolta. He didn't want to dance in any movies after *Saturday Night Fever* until Tarantino got him to do it in *Pulp Fiction*. We are to Meat Loaf what Tarantino was to Travolta.

GASS: I guess you're right. If you're reading this, thank you, Meat.

Q13

PLAYBOY: Do you consider *The Pick of Destiny* to be a rock musical or a comedy?

BLACK: I don't know. I don't think of it as a musical. But it's not a straight comedy, either. What's a movie that has the same amount of music? *Eddie and the Cruisers* maybe? We have more music than that. It has about the same amount of music as *This Is Spinal Tap*, but that's not really a musical or a comedy. It's more of a mock rockumentary.

GASS: Our movie is similar to a musical except we never bust into song apropos of nothing.

BLACK: No, we never do. And that's the difference.

GASS: Wait, that's not true. There is that one scene.

BLACK: What are you talking about? [Gass whispers something to Black.] Oh yeah, I guess we do. But just that one time. Maybe we should cut it.

Q14

PLAYBOY: You've always had a devoted following of female groupies, but now that you've become major stars do you spend your evenings servicing an endless stream of backstage Betties?

GASS: You would think so, but no. I've heard stories, but I'm still waiting for the deluge. Jack gets it more than I do.

We're at different levels. Jack is a megastar, and I'm basically the other guy. I'm eight steps behind him. I've been able to live off his scraps. But even so, it's helped my dating life. I've had women pretend they like me. And that's fine. Even if they're pretending, it's still pretty good. BLACK: I'm still mostly attracted to girls who don't like me, so not much has changed.

GASS: If they have most of their limbs, I'll take all comers.

BLACK: You'll take all comers, and then you'll come on all takers. Oh yeah! High-five! [Black and Gass high-five.]

Q15

PLAYBOY: Speaking of groupies, Cynthia Albritton, the infamous Plaster Caster, has made casts of the most famous penises in rock. Has she ever approached either of you to lend your sexual gifts for her art?

BLACK: No, neither she nor anybody else has ever asked to make a plaster cast of my coxles. Why? What have you heard?

GASS: I don't know if I'd do it. I wouldn't want to be judged against Tommy Lee or Jimi Hendrix.

BLACK: Yeah, you don't want your goodies to be on display next to Gigantor. I'd be cool if she just wanted to put my name on the Jimi Hendrix cast. She probably made two of him, so just put my name on the extra one.

Q16

PLAYBOY: You've written several songs about sex but nothing about love. Is the D afraid of intimacy?

GASS: I was thinking the same thing. We should have at least one classic love song.

BLACK: You mean like that Chicago song? [sings] "If you leave me now, you take away the biggest part of me."

BLACK AND GASS: [Singing in unison] "Ooooh oh, baby, please don't go!"

BLACK: Yeah, we should do that. We wrote a new song for the movie, called "Dude, I Totally Miss You." That's kind of emotional. But you're talking male-female love, aren't you?

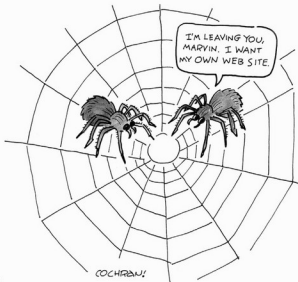
GASS: Maybe we need to grow up and write something about adult love.

BLACK: Let's try to write one. Right now. [sings] "I fuckin' love you, baby. I think about you./I'm gonna buy stuff and hang out with you and put my penis next to y-y-you./I want to hold you tight and give you kisses at night, 'cause I love your brains, your brains and pussy, too./Your brains and your pussy, tooooo."

GASS: I think we have a title: "Your Brains and Your Pussy, Too." Well, PLAYBOY readers, you heard it here first.

Q17

PLAYBOY: If your musical canon is to be believed, Tenacious D has spent a



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lot of time mastering sexual technique, from using French ticklers and sucking toes to fucking your partners gently when appropriate. Have you ever considered making a sex-instruction video?

BLACK: That's a fantastic idea. We're already putting out the *Tenacious D* exercise video. It's called *D-zercise*. We should go back to the studio and shoot an extra part about pleasing your partner. Then we'll put it out as a two-disc DVD set. One disc will be called *D-zercise*, and the other *Tenacious D Sex Tips*. Together it'll be called *Getting Hard With the D*.

GASS: On one disc we'll be in our workout clothes. And on the other we'll be in our sexy nighttime workout clothes.

Q18

PLAYBOY: So what kind of advice would you give?

BLACK: Lots of tongue exercises. You've

got to know how to use the tongue if you're going to please your lady [*demonstrates by flicking his tongue*].

GASS: It looks like a lizard's.

BLACK: The tongue is a muscle, and you've got to work it out. I was watching Internet porn the other day and checking out Nina Hartley's tips on eating pussy. She gives some great advice.

GASS: What does she say?

BLACK: She says love the whole pussy. Don't just love that little spot. Give the side flaps some attention. Stick a finger in slowly; don't just jam it in there. Get it all wet. And remember, the ladies have a taint, too. Give it some attention. But don't go too far. I don't think the ladies really want a finger up their ass.

GASS: You think so?

BLACK: You stick your finger in the anus, dude?

GASS: No.

BLACK: Do you stick your cock in there?

GASS: No.

BLACK: But don't you kind of want to, though?

GASS: I do now. I think it depends on the lady. I would say I've never done it on purpose.

BLACK: I would say to a lady, "I've never done this before. Could we just try it this one time?" Then she'd be like, "I don't know." And then I'd put on a Chicago record. [*sings*] "If you leave me now, oooh oh, baby, please don't go."

GASS: See, I'd put on "Back Door Man." BLACK: Dude, that's not the song they want to hear. It sounds a little too aggressive.

Q19

PLAYBOY: Gene Simmons of Kiss has a scrapbook filled with photos of his sexual conquests naked. Do either of you have a similar collection?

BLACK: At times I wish I had pictures of the women I've been with. But that wouldn't be enough for a scrapbook. I could fit them all in my wallet. And I wouldn't want to show them to other people. They would be just for me to look at and think back on the good old days and maybe masturbate to.

GASS: I think Gene Simmons may be the grossest rock star out there. He's a Republican, he's arrogant, he's unsavory, he's a misogynist, and he wears a codpiece.

BLACK: It's scary just how unsexy he is.

Q20

PLAYBOY: Before your live shows you've occasionally warned fans, "If you don't want your asses blown out, leave the room." Are you suggesting your music acts as a laxative?

GASS: The live show is pretty entertaining. You could feasibly laugh the shit out of yourself. I don't think that's far-fetched.

BLACK: They say laughter is the best medicine, and if you're constipated, the D could do the trick.

GASS: I think we could heal just about anyone if we laid our hands on them. You can accomplish a lot with just the power of suggestion.

BLACK: We could cure almost any vaginal—. Wait, no. I was going to say we could cure any vaginal disease if you let us put our penises in you. But we don't want to put our penises in diseased vaginas. Never mind. I didn't think that through.

GASS: I think we can cure a lot of depression—with a smile.

BLACK: Oh God, that's crap. That's the kind of quote that'll haunt us forever. Way to go, K.G.

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DOULAS

(continued from page 86)

Bringing home a newborn is not all cuddles and fluff. It's more like a boat crashing into a dock.

very first day I slipped into her lactation and newborn-care class at the church. My ex-girlfriend's new goon of a boyfriend, Richie, a Special Forces interrogator and one of the few troops I actually don't support, had shown up at my AA meeting across the hall, and I needed someplace to hide. When I blundered into the room, Fanny Hitchens didn't even blink, just told me to join the others, the swollen ladies and their sullen men, on the

rubber wrestling mats. Soon enough the tricks of the miracle-of-life trade had me hooked. Later Fanny told me I could be a pioneer. I loved Fanny. If she hadn't been in her late 80s and rotted through with cancer, I would have married her. Also, she rejected my proposal. But we did make love a few times, and it was sensational. You can lubricate practically anything.

Fanny hoped I'd become a birth doulo,

and I was happy to oblige. Childbirth is a beautiful thing. Even all the poop and gunk that slides out of a woman during childbirth is beautiful. The plastic bag under the woman's butt to catch the poop and gunk is beautiful too. But I was a birth-doulo bust. I couldn't fend for women and their families in the hospitals. I couldn't stand up to the godlike doctors. They all reminded me of my older sister Tina. Tina's not a doctor, in fact she's a lawyer whose specialty is suing doctors, but she's godlike, at least to me, and godlike in that cruel, capricious Greek way, too, even when we were growing up. One minute she'd buy me peanut brittle, and the next minute she wouldn't, tell me she'd just bought me peanut brittle. Mixed messages can damage a child.

Anyway, I decided to do the postpartum thing, which is grueling in its own right. Nobody wants to hear this, but bringing home a newborn is not all cuddles and fluff. It's more like a boat crashing into a dock. And I'm the skipper, yanking on the wheel, trying to steer this heap to safety. But the boat's already crashed.

So now I'm guiding Baby Gottwald's little fish mouth back toward his mother's thick burgundy nipple. It's true the words *thick burgundy nipple* excite me, but it's also a fact that latching on can be a monumental bitch. I'm supposed to be agenda-free on the subject of breastfeeding, but I have an agenda. Who doesn't have an agenda? You open your eyes in the morning and you have an agenda, Fanny Hitchens used to say. Her agenda then was not to die a virgin.

"Ow!" says Mrs. Gottwald. "It hurts! It hurts worse than before!"

"I know, but we've got to do this. We've got to get this latch-on on."

The baby is doing beaver gnaws. Mrs. Gottwald clutches her chest.

"I can't," she says now. "It hurts too much!"

"Come on!" I say. "Don't quit!"

"No!"

"Come on, honey?"

"No, no. It hurts. I can't. Stop!"

"No stopping!" I shout at Mrs. Gottwald. "No stopping!"

"Get some!" I shout at the baby.

Tears stream down Mrs. Gottwald's cheeks. Blood streaks down her breast. The baby is screaming. Little Ezekiel is screaming, waving his Manchoego. Mrs. Gottwald is screaming. Mr. Gottwald is speaking in low, lawyerly tongues, something about something being actionable, but I ignore him.

"Get some!" I shout again, and then, I'll be damned, Baby Gottwald latches on. Soon he's slurping away in peace. Mrs. Gottwald sinks back against the headboard. I stroke her damp hair with the cool, curved edge of the remote control.

"That's it, sweetie, you did good. Look at Baby Gottwald."

"He has a name."



"All this talk about downsizing is making me kinda nervous...."

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

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

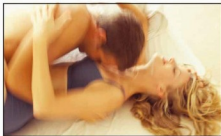
Thankfully, I didn't have to make a difficult decision because everything changed a few days ago. I came home from work and he basically tore my clothes off before I even made it through the door. Right there on the stairs he practically pounced on me. Confident, aggressive, he made all the right moves.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

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

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"Don't worry about it, honey. Just be proud. You're doing a really good thing."

And I start to tell her why this is such a good thing, how the antibodies in the breast milk are crucial for the development of a top-shelf baby, and besides, I continue, think of the alternative, think of somebody like me, kept days after birth in a sleek, antiseptic hospital designed for maximum alienation of mother from child. There were no doulas then, no midwives, no lactation consultants, at least not in our neck of the woods, which weren't woods, but so what? My mother, I tell Mrs. Gottwald, she did the best she could, which consisted of being a drugged-up cow and nodding listlessly at anything her cruel and capricious godlike doctor told her, including the completely unfounded notion that she couldn't produce milk, not to mention the sage advice she not visit with me, a light-shocked babe desperate to bond, until she'd fully recuperated from the so-called ordeal of labor, which I don't think she ever truly accomplished or else maybe she wouldn't have left my father for an insurance executive slash cowboy poet named Vance and moved to Montana. I don't blame my mother, I tell Mrs. Gottwald. I blame the patriarchy that indoctrinated women into the idea that they were second-class citizens, foolish, feckless whose slash Madonna complexes, only good for being barefoot and so forth. But we know better now, I tell her, the steady progress of Progress is truly fucking stupendous, whereupon I feel Mr. Gottwald's hand on the collar of my shirt as he tugs me away from his wife and into the kitchen area. Ezekiel follows with a wheel of Camembert, some kind of polymer.

"Listen," says Mr. Gottwald, "plucks his earpiece out of his ear, 'I just want to say—'"

"Don't thank me," I tell him. "Your wife is the brave one here."

"No, listen," he says, a little sterner, and I can see now how he commands so many people with such a diaphanous electronic device. "I think it would be a good idea if you left now. I think we can handle the rest on our own. How much do we owe you?"

"You owe me the dignity of doing my job," I say. "This may take weeks, and I'm not going anywhere. I admit I have failed to establish the nurturing environment this family needs to thrive during the oh-so-delicate newborn phase. But I'm going to turn shit around."

I take out my cell phone. The oligarchs cut service a few weeks ago, but I start dialing anyway.

"What's your basic take on anchovies?" I say.

"Excuse me?"

"What about filberts?" says Ezekiel.

"You can't put filberts on a pizza," I say.

"Filberts are nuts," says Mr. Gottwald.

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"You can't have nuts, period, young man."
"Crazy, all this, right?" I say to Ezekiel
after his father has left.

"I hate pizza."

"You hate pizza? Wow, they really must
have done a number on you."

"Which number?"

"Listen, Z-Man," I tell him. "You need
to be strong for your baby brother. No
more whining. Look alive. When you
were a child you acted as a child. You
played with toy cheese. But now is the
time to put the toy cheese in the box
marked childish. *Capice?*"

Ezekiel regards his Camembert, lays
it gently on the kitchen floor, which is
made of a hard, bright material similar
to the Camembert.

"Good boy," I say. "Now go get some
pizza money from your dad."

I still need to order the pie. There's a
phone here on the wall next to the
Sub-Zero refrigerator. I'm not paranoid,
but I do prefer a headline when ordering
pizza. Choice of topping is too much
of a tell. When I'm done I check my
messages at home.

There's one from Tina. She's flown

to Montana—there's something wrong
with our mother. She leaves some num-
bers, which I dutifully erase. There's
one from somebody in what sounds like
a very large room full of people calling
other people. "Hello? Hello?" he says
and hangs up. These people call often.

The last message is from Monica
Bolonik at the Doula Foundation. She
says it's urgent. She's not my boss, but
she's got power over my continuing
certification. It's no secret I've been
jousting a bit with the regional lead-
ership. Seems there have been com-
plaints. Seems without Fanny Hitchens
in your corner, being a pioneer in the
doula community isn't so appreciated.
Monica is what in a more primitive
stage of my emotional development
I would have called a ballbuster. But
I'm not like that now. I'm not perfect,
but I'm not the guy who once wrote,
"Vice Principal Avery has thorns in
her cunt" to the senior lockers, either.
Not anymore.

I call Monica back.

"Mitchell," says Monica.

"I'm on the job," I say.

"I know. A certain Mr. Gottwald
informed me."

"It's going really well here."

"That's not how he put it, Mitchell."

"It's Mitchell," I say. "My mother calls
me Mitchell."

"You don't like your mother, do
you, Mitchell?"

"Was there anything else?"

"We're reviewing your certification.
You are tainting the name of our
organization."

"I'm a damn good doulo," I say.

"It's hard enough to gain acceptance
in society without your insanity. And
there's no such thing as a doulo."

"Then who might you be talking to?"

I say, notice now that Ezekiel has wan-
dered back into the kitchen area. He
nibbles on a neon-green broche.

"Tell her how well things are going,"

I say.

Ezekiel leans into the mouthpiece.

"They did a number on me," he says.

I've had a lot of jobs. Substitute gym
teacher, line cook at a rib joint, mail

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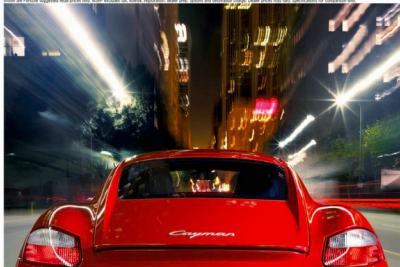
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PORSCHE

boy at my late father's accounting firm. I was even in the movie business for a while, spent a few years as the guy with the walkie-talkie who lurks around the trailers, tells you to cross to the other side of the street.

But I'm long past reinvention. I'm practically middle-aged, deep into cell degeneration or worse, relocation. I remember my Uncle Don had these weird patches of hair right under his shoulder blades. They made me want to puke. Guess who's got them now? Guess who pops his lats in the mirror and wants to puke?

Point is, it's going to take a hell of a lot more than Monica Bolonik to dedoulo me. We're talking acres of paperwork.

I'm teaching Mr. Gottwald how to change his baby's diapers.

"Wipe front to back," I say.

"Thanks for that," he says. "This is my second kid. And I happen to be potty trained myself. I can't believe you talked me into letting you stay."

I did talk him into letting me stay. Maybe it was the promise of another shoulder rub. Maybe it's the fact that Mrs. Gottwald's still running a fever and Ezekial's nanny, due back today, called in sick. The guy is feeling overwhelmed.

"You're feeling overwhelmed," I say.

Mr. Gottwald lifts the baby and crosses the loft to some wide windows that overlook a cobblestone lane, starts humming a lullaby I soon recognize, an ancient power ballad. The baby's wails turn to burpy moans. Soon he's nearing sleep. Good going, G.

We're about the same age, I realize, maybe not that different after all, probably got drunk at the same kinds of high school deck parties, pumped our fists at the same dumb arena shows, parked behind the Burger King and watched some version of unattainable beauty hand sacks of french fries into people's cars. So he went to college, business school, and I stayed parked behind the Burger King. So he got rich, got married, sired a child he sings to about roses and thorns and I bounced around, took a chance at city life, fell into some jams. We're still the same ordinary joes, at least now, here, both of us just trying to cope with this wondrous and horrible and confusing moment.

"That song!" I shout, "I know that song!"

The baby jerks awake, bawls,

"Sonofabitch!" says Mr. Gottwald, and I notice his lower lip has acquired a severe spasm.

I've seen worse. I'm seeing worse right now, namely Baby Gottwald.

Picture a red onion with a mouth that isn't even a mouth but more some kind of incredibly loud air horn used by Satan to signal his minions to move.

WHERE
&
HOW TO BUY

Below is a list of retailers and manufacturers you can contact for information on where to find this month's merchandise. To buy the apparel and equipment shown on pages 32, 37-40, 118-123 and 174-175, check the listings below to find the stores nearest you.



at Robert Talbott stores nationwide. *Blacklist* by Lip Service, lip-service.com. *Borsalino*, borsalino.com. *Camper*, 408-246-4481. *Canali*, www.canali.it. *David Chu*, available at Saks Fifth Avenue. *Estate* by Robert Talbott, available at Robert Talbott stores nationwide. *Flaconable*, 877-322-2595. *Giorgio Armani*, giorgioarmani.com. *Michael*

GAMES

Page 32: *Every Extend Extra*, namco.com. *Gangs of London*, scca.com. *Hot PXL*, atari.com. *Killzone: I*, scca.com. *Lumines II*, namco.com. *2K Sports*, 2ksports.com. *Rat Size Matters*, scca.com. *atlus.com*. *Scarface: The*, sierra.com. *Splinter Cell*, ubi.com. *Star Trek: Leg*, .com. *Tekken: Dark Resur*, .com. *WTF d3publisher*

MANTRACK

Pages 37-40: *Baldwin-Motion*, official baldwinmotion.com. *Cuff links*, juscufflinks.com. *F.L.P. Laser Turntable*, laserturntable.com. *Four Seasons*, fourseasons.com. *Omega*, omegawatches.com. *OmniGang*, omnigang.com. *Punta Mita rentals*, punta-mitaproperties.com. *Spyderco*, spyderco.com. *Sock UK*, www.sock.uk.com.

BOOK JACKETS

Pages 118-123: *Armani Jeans*, emporioarmani.com. *Belstaff*, www.belstaff.com. *Best of Class* by Robert Talbott, available

[illegible]

up all the infernal poop and gunk that spills forth from his fiery pangendered holes as he gives birth to every evil in the world. It's a lot to picture, I know, and some of it isn't a picture at all, but you get the idea.

"We're all going to die here," says Mr. Gottwald.

"You've got to relax," I say. "It's a process."

"You've got to be the worst fucking doula in the world."

"Doublo," I say.

I'm washing dishes, folding up the pizza box, when Mr. Gottwald comes in and hands me his phone. It's Monica Bolonik. I'm decertified. I guess it doesn't require that much paperwork. If I remain on the Gottwald premises, Monica warns me, she will call the police. On the other hand, she may call the police.

"You have no jurisdiction," I say, but the line is already dead.

"I guess that's good-bye," says Mr. Gottwald.

"Good-bye? Because of a lousy piece of paper? Did a piece of paper educate you on newborn care? Did a piece of paper keep all the balls of nurturing in the air?"

"Balls of nurturing?"

"Gentle now, big fella."

"What say we call it even," says Mr. Gottwald. "What say you just leave and I don't press charges."

It's hard to hear him because of Baby Gottwald, who hasn't really stopped wailing since I woke him a few hours ago, but I think I get the gist. I get a better sense of the gist when Mr.

Gottwald leaves the kitchen area and comes back with a few throwing stars jutting from his knuckles.

"Let's not get ahead of ourselves," I say.

"You came highly recommended. That woman Fanny Hitchens sent us a fabulous letter."

Thing is, I'm touched by this because I wrote the letter and I guess I really nailed it, even got Fanny's signature right, which is pretty famous and appears on the jacket of her book.

"Why don't you put that ninja crap away," I say. "Press what charges?"

"Endangering the life of a child, for starters."

"A child who, by his very definition, is endangered," I say.

"I'm sorry," says Mr. Gottwald. "Excuse me?"

"This life," I say, and my arm does this kind of grand sweepy thing I'm not quite able to control, "this thing we so blithely and with a detestable dearth of gravitas call life, it's not all cuddles and fluff, you know. It's also, methinks, a boat. And so we must ask ourselves, Who's got the helm? Where's the skipper? Doth a proper pilot dwell upon this heap?"

"What the fuck are you—"

"Here comes the dock! Look out, man!"

I Frisbee the pizza box at Mr. Gottwald, bolt. Mr. Gottwald and a squealing Ezekiel scramble after me, but I'm already there at the corner rack, the nunchakus up in full fierceome bolo over my head. I slide-step to Mrs. Gottwald, who shrieks, shields the baby. Mr. Gottwald assumes a poignant fighting stance, throwing star cocked.

"Barry, don't!" cries Mrs. Gottwald. "You'll hit Prague!"

"Yes, Barry, don't," I say. "Prague?"

"That's the baby's name."

"Prague?"

"We love the city. Now step away from my wife."

I lift Mrs. Gottwald's swollen breast from her nightgown.

"This is going to hurt," I say, "but we've got to clear those ducts."

I lean down, suck hard. Mrs. Gottwald stiffens. My arm is going dead, and I begin to sense the nunchakus, our invincible cocoon of buzzing wood, slowing down, but in a moment it doesn't matter, nothing matters. The milk is sweet, drips thick in my mouth as Mrs. Gottwald's hind ducts open and all that deep cream starts to flow and I am suddenly every tiny helpless thing that ever wanted nothing but to survive another hour in this foolish, feckless universe. I am one particular tiny helpless thing, too, namely Mitch, mewling newbie Mitchell Malley, latched onto his lovely and exhausted mother, the mother of his alternate-reality dreams, the mother who will welcome wounded dugs, exult in throb and split, the mother who will spurn the antiseptic credos of the medical-Madonna complex, who will love her little Mitchell creature no matter what fate forces him to become, who will cherish his butter-colored teeth and ratty (vintage) buckskin jacket.

I guess it's probably a good thing my actual non-alternate reality mother's not around to witness this. How could she, though? She's in Montana with Vance and Tina. She's on life support, if I heard my sister's message right, though a part of me is still convincing the rest of me I didn't hear the message right.

Everybody thinks I hate my mother, that all of my so-called shenanigans can be traced back to some primal trauma, but honestly, I'm the only one who ever called them shenanigans. The judges and the court-ordered psychiatrists used other words. And though I'm not exactly a rabid Vance fan, I love my mother. Like I said, she did the best she could. That's what I'm trying to do too, as I raise my lips from Mrs. Gottwald's nipple and press Baby Gottwald's mouth there. The hungry worm starts feeding and Mrs. Gottwald groans sweetly, and I get to work on the other breast.

"Zekey," whispers Mr. Gottwald, "911."

"Did it," says the boy in a faraway voice.

When Fanny was dying in her apartment uptown, I sat with her most days and nights. I'd hold her birdlike hand—not that her hand looked like a bird, it looked more like a very old and sick hand—but I'd hold it as she



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whispered the wisdom of the doulas to me one last time.

"Mother the mother," she said. "Mother the father. Mother the room."

"Nurture," she said. "Nurture, nurture, nurture. Plus nature."

"And remember, don't spring for the pizza."

Okay, that last one was mine, but what I'm trying to say is all I ever wanted was to carry on Fanny's legacy, be part of a loving continuum.

There's a thud in the pillar near my head. A dull metal star quivers in the wood. Now comes the sound of many men in non-nurturing boots. I can see them from the corner of my eye, padded black turtle-necks, batons. One stomps over, jabbing at the air with a weird-looking gun. He seems very judgmental.

My story won't end here. I'll start my own foundation, certify myself. The American League got a late start, but doesn't it win its share of All-Star games? No more forged letters from Fanny, either. I'll find the families that need me, appreciate my craft. I'll start with my building, with Paula the Crack-head down the hall. There's no question she's knocked up, and I'd wager she could stand for a little doulou-style tenderness. Trust might be an issue, but we'll build toward trust. I'll pay for a hand job, take things from there.

Out the window the evening is strangely bright, and I wonder if the gods aren't having a festival of capricious cruelty in the sky, which for some reason I picture including a hot buffet, maybe because I can almost smell one, but then I notice some trucks parked down the block, big floodlights, reflectors rigged for a night shoot. Men and women with walkie-talkies mill around a food cart.

There but for the grace of God, and Fanny Hitchens, mill I.

Now the man with the weird-looking gun is shouting some official speech about the electrical nature of his weapon, which he vows to fire if I don't drop the nunchakus.

"Be advised," he adds.

"Be advised?" I say. "You've got it backward, buddy. I'm the doulou! I advise!"

I don't drop the nunchakus. I whip them at his gun. They miss, skitter across the loft.

So fighting is not my forte.

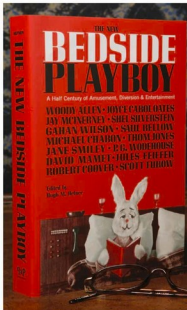
So I never found my forte.

"Zap this fuck!" calls one of the turtle-necks, maybe the turtle-neck team leader.

The volts ed up my spine, out my arms and legs, and as I'm going under I can see my fist pumping in the air, pumping once, twice, until finally it flops into a gentle caress of absolutely nothing.

I call it the Doulou Salute.

It's mine, too.



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WORST BREAK

(continued from page 82)

me with erection after erection. Is this how often I get hard-ons? I thought, Christ, I'm a pig. And they still curved to the right. After a week I could walk without a limp, and the pain was diminishing. But I was still panicked about sex. At my two-week checkup the urologist told me to wait four to six weeks. Which was it? Four or six? "You'll know when you're ready," he said.

Eventually erections stopped being painful and felt merely uncomfortable. After a month we decided to try a test run. Insertion would've made me scream like a Catholic schoolgirl, so I rubbed myself on Susan's buttocks. It was strange and wonderful, pleasurable but also painful. I was terrified, looking for evidence of nerve damage, when instinct suddenly took over. It wasn't long before Susan was looking for a washcloth. I wasn't 100 percent, but my cock worked.

I was concerned about the pronounced bend to the right, but the doctor said it was normal because of the scar tissue building up inside. He recommended regular exercise to stretch out the scar tissue. That's right, for the first time in my life I was under doctor's orders to jerk off. And I trained like a champ. No 14-year-old has ever played with himself as often as I did. The pain diminished, and the hook became less pronounced. The stitches began to pop out, and as the urologist had predicted, I realized I was ready.

The slight hook made it difficult to enter Susan, and it was tough not to think about what had happened last time. So we took it slowly—very slowly—which was perfect. We were like teenagers trying it for the first time. For the second time in two months I was reduced to tears by my cock.

With the progress I made, I was comfortable enough to tell the story to a few friends, always over a few pitchers of beer. Some of them have gotten dizzy or left the table, but it's a story that's hard to top. There's a little scarring. I can still feel the lump where the repair was done, and I still have what any golfer would call a mild slice. But I avoided all the worst symptoms. Erectile dysfunction will have to find another way to plague me.

I've always thought of myself as indestructible, but now, after breaking my cock, I feel mostly fortunate. I've vowed to take better care of myself, treat every day as a gift and host fundraising events for the hospital that saved my shaft. And of course I'll continue to masturbate frequently. What's the point of having a great doctor if you don't follow his orders?



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"The hellfire for you, you slut!" says a bearded teen to the girl in jeans. "Fear God! Fear God!" says a veiled student.

takes center stage—his dark-brown-tinted beard hugged tight by a red-and-white-checkered kaffiyeh—to hearty cheers of *"Allahu Akbar!"* ("God is the greatest!") from the worshipping crowd.

"The whole world is harnessing its troops to confront 'terrorism' and 'Islamic fundamentalism,'" Nofal says, spitting out the words. "And of course they are egged on by agents who instigate them and incite them and recruit them against the Muslims. And behind them all are the elders of global Zionism.... But by the will of God, their fate will be the hellfire. By the will of God!"

His eloquent Arabic flows regally, evoking a premodern world of classical Islamic texts, which tends to resonate with religious Arab Muslim audiences. But Nofal also peppers his sermon with down-home Jordanian and Palestinian slang, and he caps his lengthy statements with the quaint, melodic lilt of his parents' native Haifa, now a city in Israel. It's authentic Jordanian-Palestinian populism designed for an audience that appears to be split roughly down the middle between the two ethnic groups. The crowd loves it.

Every man-made ideology in the world, Nofal says, from Marxism to capitalism, was invented by the Jews to dissuade Muslims from their faith. The governments of America and Europe, moreover, are Islam's enemies because

they're under Jewish control. He tells the faithful to be servants of God—not "servants of women and servants of the dollar"—and he throws curses down on "Bush and Blair." He praises the armed struggle against Americans in Iraq and Jews in Palestine yet seems to refrain carefully from an overt call to violence against Western countries, inviting the audience to draw its own conclusions about methods.

If Nofal's sermon sounds vaguely familiar, it may be in part because his early career was deeply intertwined with the progenitors of Al Qaeda. In the early 1980s he pitched tent in the Jordan Valley with the legendary Palestinian-born preacher Abdullah Azzam, spiritual mentor to Bin Laden. Nofal and Azzam teamed up to send fighters across the Israeli border to attack Israeli encampments. But Azzam's ambitions went further than Nofal's; he urged armed jihad to overthrow "un-Islamic" regimes everywhere—even if the head of state happened to be a Muslim. When the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan was revving up with American and Saudi backing, he made a permanent pilgrimage to the war front, where he preached total Islamist war against Soviets, Jews, Americans and secular Arab rulers, until a land mine took his life in November 1989. Nofal stayed in

Jordan, but an Amman journalist says the elder cleric has been known to tell his students, "The spirit of Abdullah Azzam lives on in me."

Like the Lebanese Hezbollah militia, Brotherhood franchises in nearly every Arab country also operate a large network of health and human services that benefit followers from cradle to grave. They have become adept at media relations and politics and have won big in every Arab democratic election since the Iraq war—including in the Palestinian territories, where Hamas, the local Brotherhood branch, now rules.

A few days after the sermon I return to the University of Jordan campus to meet Nofal during his office hours. My guides, Nur al-Tayyan and Hanin Khatir, the young women I met earlier, tell me they were up late partying the night before but offer to walk me over to Nofal's building, "so you can see what it's like to be as surrounded by Islamists," says Khatir.

The girls' tight jeans and tops blend in among most of the students we pass near the school of business administration and the college of literature. This is a vast, sprawling modern campus, like that of a Midwestern American state school built in the 1970s, though the glare coming off the white cement promenades reminds me that we're not in Kansas. So does the range of Arabic accents I pick out among the various crowds—a girl from Bahrain or Kuwait flirting with a Syrian guy, a geek who looks Egyptian helping an attractive local girl with her textbook problem set. One brunette in a flowery skirt comes up to Khatir and embraces her. I'm later told she's also a foreign student, an Arab citizen of Israel from the port city of Jaffa.

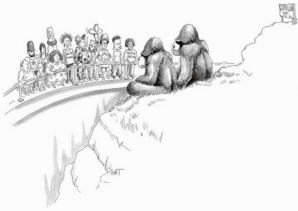
But as we approach the chalk-white building that houses the faculty of Islamic law, curses start pelting Tayyan and Khatir like pebbles.

"The hellfire for you, you slut!" says a bearded teenager in a robe and sandals. "Fear God! Fear God! Fear God!" says a girl, masked in black from head to toe.

"Typical," Tayyan says, puffing on a Marlboro Light. "They also hate it when girls smoke in public. They say it's okay for guys but not girls."

"You know this is why they made the law of student-council elections," Khatir adds. "Can you imagine if the Islamists got to control the campus?"

A law passed in 2000 makes fewer than half the student-council seats in any state university contestable by ballot, in response to Islamists' overwhelming success at winning elections large and small. On several campuses Islamists have taken the contestable seats by a landslide, only to see the majority bloc given away without a fight to their liberal rivals by order of the government-appointed dean.



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"Are they really the majority on campus?" I ask. "It doesn't look like it from the way your friends are dressed."

"No, they're definitely not," Khatir says. "But they stick together—just like the Jews. That's how they win. And if it's a thousand rabbits versus one lion, the lion wins the election."

Large glass windows at the entrance to Nofal's building are plastered with glossy images of slain Hamas leaders, the captions reading, "Pride is restored at the price of blood" and "Bandage the wound and resist!"

"I think we'll leave you here," says Tayyan.

I walk up three flights of stairs and pick out Nofal's little office from a long white corridor of possibilities; his is the only one with a line of students waiting outside. Young women in gray gowns, heads and faces veiled in white with slits to expose their eyes, giggle nervously as they catch a peek of their teacher at his desk. Nofal holds court for a trio of young men seated purposefully around him and lets in two or three women at a time for rapid Q&A.

"Dr. Ahmad," asks the next in line, "I wanted to ask you about the Shiites. Do we view them as infidels, or are they Muslims?"

He responds instantly, "They're Muslims, my daughter, even though they worship incorrectly. We should admire them. In south Lebanon Hezbollah fought the Jews and beat them. For this, they should be respected, even though they're Shiites."

Next question: "Dr. Ahmad, the pictures of the martyred fighters downstairs—even though we admire them and we pray for them and we pray for all the brothers in Hamas, isn't it like idol worship to have their images on our walls?"

Trick question, apparently. Nofal seems to hesitate for a split second. "No, it's fine."

I sit through a discussion of one cleric in training's master's thesis, on the Koranic story of Joseph, and watch the Q&A crowd peter out. Eventually the professor looks me over and starts making small talk, meeting my peculiar dialect of Arabic halfway by affecting an Iraqi accent.

"Your mother, is she an Iraqi Christian?" he asks.

At this awkward question, Sheikh Mustafa's friendly warning—"Watch your back"—kicks in. But I choose to ignore it.

"Actually, she's Jewish,"
Long pause. Nofal's cheeks flush red. I wonder whether I've made a mistake in coming here.

"And your father?"

"Also Jewish."

"And you?"

"Same deal, alas."

Not your typical office-hours visitor to the Islamic faculty center.

Nofal's eyes scan me from the bottom up, then peer out briefly through the open door. "You are welcome here as our guest," he says, "but we will fight you in Palestine and Iraq until you get out of there."

"And where else would you fight?" I ask, remembering his controversial talk on jihad in Brooklyn with the blind Egyptian sheikh.

Another trick question.

"Wherever there is injustice and oppression and aggression against Muslims," he replies, warming to the topic. His eyes light up with the excitement of his younger days. "Jihad is one of the pillars of Islam."

"Your young disciple who introduced you at the mosque the other day," I recall, "says the ministry of Islamic affairs won't let him travel to the United States. But his friend thinks it wasn't the ministry that banned him but actually the intelligence services. What do you think?"

"In this country, my brother," Nofal says, "the ministry of Islamic affairs and the intelligence services are one and the same, praise God."

His bearded students chortle in response.

"It's all in collusion with the Zionists and the Americans," he goes on. "You know what I'm talking about. You know there were days when I used to be on public television here three times a day, brother! Morning, noon and night! Now even my name you don't hear on TV."

I ask Nofal how far he thinks the attempt to marginalize him in Jordan may go. One of his students answers for him.

"All Jordanians love Sheikh Ahmad. He shows us the Islam of centrism and moderation. We defend him with our very being. To the death we defend him."

Nofal excuses himself; he has a class to teach on the interpretation of the Koran. I watch his three disciples follow him down the hall like soldiers.

Thanks in part to generations of persuasion by the Muslim Brotherhood, one third of Jordanians attend Friday prayer. Given the many women who stay home and cook while their sons and husbands go to mosque, this statistic is probably weightier than it seems. In all likelihood, the mosque-going population embraces the majority of Jordanian households. According to the prophet Muhammad, "He who takes a bath, comes to Friday prayer, offers the prayer that was destined for him, keeps silent until the preacher finishes the sermon, then prays along with him, his sins between that time and the following Friday will be forgiven—and even of three days more."

But if you're an authoritarian ruler of an Arab Muslim country, this

prophetic advice has grave implications. It means that a Friday sermon delivered by the likes of Nofal may command the ultimate captive audience—even more than your own televised speeches. "At prayer time," says a veteran Iraqi cleric who is an old friend of Saddam Hussein's, "the believers' hearts are open and ready to receive an important message. That's why, if you ask me, the clergy in a Muslim country should be handled just like the army. You should place it under strict command and control."

This is more or less what Jordan's government is trying to do with its Muslim establishment. Every mosque in the country is now legally subject, at least in theory, to the detailed religious rulings of the state. And every preacher must answer to a hired staff of moderate Islamic bureaucrats housed in concrete buildings protected by AK-47s.

Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate is located in the quiet Amman neighborhood of Abdali. Just across a sandy parking lot from this Stalinesque complex lies the four-story Ministry of Awaqaf, Islamic Affairs and Holy Places; the name over the front door is embossed in white-on-green Arabic calligraphy beneath a six-foot color photograph of the young King Abdullah. Turbanned sheikhs nod to the armed guards outside and adjust their headgear before removing keys, coins and any sharp objects from their pockets and entering through the metal detector. It's payday for government clerics.

"If you want to preach in this country today, you need a license," explains Sameeh Athamneh, a senior ministry official, in a musty second-floor office. "We give them out, and sometimes we take them away."

Thick texts of Koranic commentary and hadith, the oral traditions of the prophet Muhammad's sayings and doings, clutter the desk, spread open under Athamneh's stubby fingers, beside a half-written sermon scrawled on a blotter. The burly Islamic scholar, who wears a suit and tie, has been chosen to preach to the nation at its main event mosque this Friday, his talk to be broadcast live on Jordanian public television. It's the very program on which Nofal once appeared regularly, using it routinely to preach about armed jihad. But this week's assigned topic is Islam's view on women, in honor of International Women's Day, a UN-designated holiday. "I'm going to demonstrate that Islam is actually very progressive on women's issues," Athamneh explains, "and criticize the tendency of some Jordanians to celebrate only the birth of a boy. When the baby turns out to be a girl, it's unfortunately common in our culture to say, 'God willing, next time it will be a boy.'"



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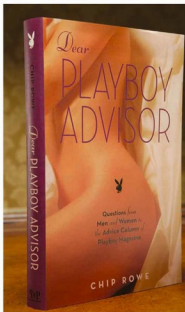
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CHIP ROWE

FEARLESS, FUNNY AND FASCINATING

DEAR PLAYBOY ADVISOR

Questions from Men and Women in the Advice Column of Playboy Magazine

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Cultural change may be slow going, but prodding it forward is part of Athameh's job description. An outspoken critic of the Muslim Brotherhood, he edits the ministry's monthly journal, *Hadi al-Islam* ("Islam's Way")—required reading for licensed preachers—which attempts to set the record straight on hot-button religious issues in the kingdom.

In the March 2006 edition, for example, the scholarly paper "International Relations and Respecting Treaties and Contracts in Islam" provides an Islamic argument for honoring the country's peace accord with Israel. ("Even though the Jews usurped Palestinian land," Athameh says, "it's a virtue for all

Muslims to abide by their leader's decisions.") Terrorism gets a rough working over in another lengthy article, "Excess, Extremism and Terrorism and Islam's Position on Them." ("Just read the Muslim sources," Athameh urges. "Today's extremists are outlaws!")

All these views, the sheikh explains, serve only to elaborate on an official statement about what Islam really means, issued three years ago by decree of King Abdullah himself. "In my view," the king remarked two years after the statement's release, "Islam is going in a direction that's very scary, and as the Hashemite Kingdom, we have a moral obligation to stand up." *Hashemite* means the kings

of Jordan claim a direct familial line to Muhammad, which gives the royal family a sense of personal responsibility toward the interpretation of Islam.

The "Amman Message," an eight-page manifesto in Arabic, lays out a tolerant vision of Islam, stressing the essential unity of all three monotheistic faiths and banning all violence against non-combatants. "There is to be no fighting against nonfighters," it reads, "no assault on civilians and their properties, on children in their mothers' laps, on students in the schools, on older men and women." Clerics in the kingdom's mosques, according to the document, have the special responsibility of serving as "role models in their religious manners, conduct and speech...[to] help our whole nation meet the challenges of the 21st century."

More than 100,000 copies of the message have been printed and distributed to schools, mosques and social halls across the kingdom, and the Islamic affairs ministry, according to Athameh, is charged with keeping school lessons and weekly sermons nationwide on message. "The shady clerics who meet after dark are somebody else's department," he explains. "Ours is the Islam of broad daylight." The government's brand of Islam even has a name: ministry officials refer to it as Islamic centrism.

The ministry pays each certified cleric a monthly stipend of roughly \$300, slightly less than the average civil servant's salary, and provides free housing in the government-owned mosque to which he is assigned. But if a cleric defies the spirit of the "Amman Message" in his sermons, he risks losing all these perks—and may face interrogation, or worse, at the Intelligence Directorate next door.

Sheikh Mahmoud al-Rawashdeh has grown a hip brown beard, an Arabian cross between a goatee and a Vandyke. It does little to obscure the fact that he's only 29 years old. Tall and wiry, he chants Koran up-tempo in a white skullcap and amber gown at the Mosque of Peace, a newly built prayer hall where he lives and works in the ritzy Amman neighborhood of Abdoun. But when he drives through the city, inspecting mosques, he puts on black slacks, a black sports jacket and shades—which may have something to do with the DVDs he watches in his spare time.

"Anything by Van Damme or Arnold," he says. "Do you think Schwarzenegger is going to run for president?"

Sheikh Mahmoud is the youngest preacher ever to be appointed a first cleric by the ministry of Islamic affairs, a designation he shares with about 100 other trusted holy men kingdomwide. The title means that in addition to preaching and tending to his own flock in Abdoun, he conducts weekly spot checks



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on 35 other mosques in the city. He's half building superintendent, half probation officer: If the holy water isn't running in the ritual ablation room, Sheikh Mahmoud calls the plumber. And if a given cleric preaches a subversive message or otherwise deviates from the official line, Sheikh Mahmoud is the first responder for the Jordanian security establishment. How he chooses to handle a situation is up to him, though the consequences of leniency fall on his shoulders.

On a brisk Friday afternoon in April, I join 650 worshippers at the young sheikh's mosque. The sermon booming from the sanctuary's PA system hits the exact note the government is pressing for. "We must struggle against the forces of extremism and divisiveness in our midst!" he cries in his tenor voice. Feisty and defiant, the preacher trains his youthful ire not at America or secular Arab leaders but at what he dubs "the enemies of peace and security."

"We must instill respect for all humanity in our families!" After a pause for dramatic effect, he segues into the importance of charity. "How can we ever be secure if some of our brothers and neighbors do not have the essentials of food and clothing?" He urges the well-off to give to the needy and tells poor people their children's education is the key to a better future. And for good measure, at the end of his address he prays for victory against "the Jewish usurpers" and all enemies of Islam.

Asked about the sermon, he later explains that its two main themes of security and poverty were handed to him by his government superiors: "We're always asked to talk about security, and this week—because the government lifted the subsidy on gasoline in the kingdom, which will be a hardship for many Jordanians—we were also supposed to focus on the importance of charity and helping our neighbors." His mosque draws some millionaires from the Abdoun neighborhood, he says, as well as financially strapped bedouin and working-class families from the densely populated valley below.

"And notice that I didn't call for the defeat of all Jews," he adds, "just the *unhappy* Jews."

When Israel began its aerial bombardment of Lebanon in July, Sheikh Mahmoud says, he faced popular pressure to pay lip service to grassroots pro-Hezbollah sentiments shared by many Jordanians. "I didn't cave," he says. "I preached that we shouldn't confuse legitimate resistance with what Hezbollah did when it kidnapped the soldiers, and I repeated several times that Hezbollah is an arm of Iran. And while I bitterly condemn Israeli war planes killing hundreds of Lebanese civilians, I also remind my congregation that

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Israeli civilians are getting killed by Hezbollah rockets too. And a civilian is a civilian, no matter where he happens to live."

Gossip around the watercooler at the Islamic affairs ministry has it that Sheikh Mahmoud is on the fast track for a senior position, maybe eventually minister, a rumor he proudly confirms having overheard himself. What his

superiors see in him may well begin with ties of blood: An ethnic Jordanian, as opposed to an ethnic Palestinian, he comes from the same lush patch of villages in the kingdom's south where the present minister was born, near the red stone ruins of the ancient Roman town of Petra. His father, moreover, was a staff sergeant in the Jordanian armed forces, another obvious plus in

the eyes of a pro-government religious establishment now at war with enemies of the state.

But the junior cleric's sensitive job requires more than family ties. He has to cultivate a special talent: the ability to snuff out extremism in his countrymen, even where it's hidden from plain view. If there's truth to the old saying that it takes one to know one, Sheikh Mahmoud ought to be a terrific snoop. As he recalls at home after Friday prayer, he flirted as a teenager with Saudi-style Salafi ideology, which advocates death to infidels and the restoration of the caliphate, Islamic rule, over all nations. He was briefly recruited by the Muslim Brotherhood while a seminary student. Now he rejects all forms of radicalism; he says he has been preaching the government's "centrist" alternative ever since he got his license.

Which doesn't mean, incidentally, that Sheikh Mahmoud has become particularly liberal in the Western sense. The Turkish coffee and cake he serves in the living area adjoining his mosque are made fresh by his wife in the kitchen, but I never got to thank her for them. The sheikh carts the refreshments out himself and shuts the sitting-room door behind us, he explains, so his wife won't come into contact with a male stranger.

"We are all brothers in humanity," Sheikh Mahmoud says, a lesson he heard from his father and learned for himself over time. "That's the message of every religion, from Judaism to Islam." He quotes a saying of Ali, the prophet Muhammad's son-in-law and patron saint to Shiites: "Every man is either your brother in God or your brother in creation." These sentiments are a far cry from what he learned as a teenager from Salafi clerics, who condemn all infidels to death and preach that Ali and all Shiites are despicable characters, to say nothing of the Jewish people.

The ideal of a common humanity, he explains, helped get him excited about starting his own career as a preacher. It also appears to have insulated him from advances by the Muslim Brotherhood during his four years in religious seminary as a cleric in training. "I tried the Brotherhood for a month and a half," he says. "They'd sit together, talking and drinking tea, and talk about the jihad the same way we talk about prayer. But it wasn't for me."

"What turned you off from it?" I ask.

"Factionalism," he replies. "Factions destroyed the Muslim nation."

For his first gig as a licensed preacher, Sheikh Mahmoud took a post in Amman's skid row, at a government-owned mosque in the slummy neighborhood of Jofa, and preached his humanist Islamic message to the congregation. Though "most of them were with me," he asserts, a small clique of Salafi-oriented worshippers



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were so unhappy with the young cleric that they tried to end his career and perhaps his life.

"They went around telling people I was a closet Shiite," he says. "They declared me an infidel. Eventually, when that didn't work, they went to the government and claimed I had cursed King Abdullah himself. And everything they said was a lie."

The rookie sheikh was summoned by the General Intelligence Directorate to answer hours of questions about his critics and their accusations. Had their slander stuck—particularly the claim that he'd cursed the king—he might have wound up in prison. Instead he appears to have won the government's confidence and earned kudos for unwittingly uncovering a secret nest of militants. "Among them were some people who wanted to blow things up," he says.

He cooperated fully in an investigation of the Salafis within his flock. For his patriotism—and his protection—the Islamic affairs ministry moved him to his present parish in upscale Abdoun, at one of the more prized pulpits in the city.

"I would rather have stayed in Jofa," he claims. "They needed me there. I still go back sometimes to check on my friends."

We head out on mosque patrol in Sheikh Mahmoud's company car on a chilly Tuesday after the night prayer. The road wraps gently around a vast basin of four- and five-story apartment buildings huddled in descending rows—by a valley of winding asphalt streets and smudgy cement facades but now a stadium of lights under the darkening sky.

Each time we close in on a mosque, Sheikh Mahmoud precedes the pit stop with a tagline such as "The preacher you're about to meet is a Salafi, extreme in his views, and he's supported by

Saudi Arabia" or "This guy, I think he's sympathetic to the Shiites, and he's very active on the Internet."

"How do you know this stuff?" I ask. "They wouldn't volunteer that kind of information to you, right?"

"You'd be surprised," he says. "Some of them are very blunt. But just in case, I also have at least two or three sources in every mosque. I make sure the sheikh doesn't know who they are, but they pray there every week. And anytime the sheikh says something suspicious, they call me."

He greets each preacher with twin kisses on the cheeks, then puts his right hand to his heart in a show of deference.

Most of these men are twice Sheikh Mahmoud's age. A Saudi-trained, Kuwaiti-born man who preaches at the mosque across the street from the U.S. embassy speaks at length about his commitment to Islamic centrism, but Sheikh Mahmoud later says he feels the man is concealing something. In another mosque, Sheikh Mustafa, the Jordanian army veteran turned preacher I spoke to earlier, complains about the radicalizing influence of the local Muslim Brotherhood, and Sheikh Mahmoud nods his head in agreement.

His final spot check for the night is a "Koran study center," a mosque in practice, though not in name. One of 500 or so kingdomwide that the Brotherhood owns and operates, it's the busiest prayer hall we visit, with fathers and sons sitting together in circles on the lavishly upholstered floor, poring over holy books.

"The cleric in this mosque is my age exactly," Sheikh Mahmoud says. "We went to seminary together; only I've become a centrist and he ended up in the Brotherhood."

The two 20-somethings embrace and take seats facing each other at oak writing desks in a classroom adjoining the

main sanctuary. Sheikh Mahmoud's black blazer and slacks look as if they were cut from the same fabric as the jet-black gown of his former classmate, Sheikh Mu'tasim. The latter has cultivated a bushy black beard unlike Sheikh Mahmoud's semi-Vandyke—hip, perhaps, but to the taste of a different crowd.

"This is a private mosque," Mu'tasim tells me, "not subordinate to the Islamic affairs ministry."

"Actually, let me correct you on that," interjects Sheikh Mahmoud. "Every mosque in the kingdom is subordinate to the ministry. And the ministry can still evict a preacher, even from a private mosque."

Mu'tasim answers his old friend with an icy stare.

"I identify with the Muslim Brotherhood," he goes on, "the moderate stream in Islam."

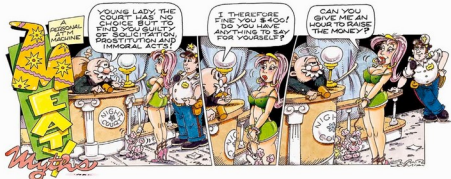
Sheikh Mahmoud, who has taken off his shades, rolls his eyes.

The cleric proceeds to offer a salesman's pitch for his movement. "We support the jihad in Iraq, but it must be against the clear occupier, the American troops, and we don't support, for example, the attacks by some Islamists on markets and mosques. And we'll participate in the democratic game the West imposed on us, even though we don't believe in all its details."

"Like what details?" Sheikh Mahmoud asks.

"For example, the rotation of power," he replies, and I suddenly begin to see where things are going.

"So, for instance, maybe the voter will elect Islamists. But maybe in the next rotation, secularists will win. And that's a problem. The final solution for all us Muslims is the caliphate, the establishment of God's rule on earth. We have a goal the same way Bush and Condoleezza Rice have a goal. They call the world to their authority, economically or



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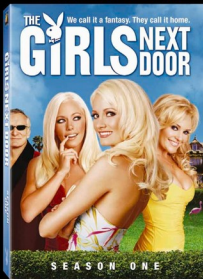
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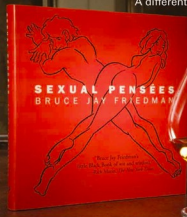
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militarily or culturally, the whole concept of globalization, and so do we."

"Then tell me, brother," Sheikh Mahmoud says, "if we want to rule over people just as the Americans do, what's the difference between us and them?"

At this the Brotherhood rookie stumbles but eventually regains his footing. "If we say we want to spread Islam in the world or control the world with our ideas, it's because we want people to benefit from what we have found. We want all people to be happy! We have found happiness, praise God, in Islam. So we oppose American rule, and we're resisting the American Army."

"But you want to bring back the caliphate?" asks Sheikh Mahmoud.

Mu'tasin pauses awkwardly. He's been trapped. If he insists he wants to see a Muslim empire, he would be implying an end to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan—not a smart move in a conversation with a pro-government cleric.

"No, I didn't say I wanted to bring back the caliphate. Did I?"

"Yes, you did."

Whoops.

Back in the car, Sheikh Mahmoud declines to answer whether he'll report on his former classmate. I'm guessing he will. "But I'll tell you this," he says. "The problem with the kind of Islam he believes in is its double standard. All empires are corrupt, from the Islamic empires of yesterday to America today. Even my own government is corrupt. So if he just wants to replace the American empire with his empire, what's the difference? Why would it matter who occupies Iraq?"

In every Arab capital in recent months, American and Israeli flags have been set aflame. Thousands of street protesters have hoisted banners praising the leaders of Hezbollah, Hamas and, often enough, Al Qaeda. Given this atmosphere, one Middle Eastern nation's struggle to streamline Islam may appear incredibly ambitious and perhaps naive. Weeks into Israel's military campaign against Hezbollah, King Abdullah publicly acknowledged his people's overwhelming sympathy with Lebanon. "The war will not solve anything," he lamented, "and Arab peoples see now in Hezbollah a hero facing aggression and defending its land."

Yet Jordan's Islamic reform project presses on. The king has called for closing the religious studies programs at several Jordanian universities by 2009. The new training institute that will replace them, he says, aims to "get bright people coming out who know exactly what true, moderate Islam is all about and who are not influenced by extremist teachings and thinking." A pilot program is even in the works to export progressive clerics from Jordan to mosques in the U.S.

and the United Kingdom, where Islamic radicalism has also been uncovered in the wake of 9/11 and last year's bloody London bombings.

Moreover, King Abdullah isn't acting alone. Similar efforts are under way in kingdoms and dictatorships across the Middle East. In Morocco, since an Al Qaeda suicide attack killed dozens in May 2003, the king has fused aggressive security sweeps with a campaign to take back the country's mosques from extremist preachers. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy has heralded the Moroccan effort as "a major change in both substance and style." Nearby Tunisia, a staunch secular dictatorship that was also the victim of an Al Qaeda attack, is now turning out spiritual leaders schooled in comparative religion—and opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood—through its state-run Islamic seminary. Classical Arabic grammar and the Koran are taught alongside Latin, Hebrew, the Torah and the Bible. Paris-based writer Lafif Lakhdar, who has studied the Tunisian system from the inside, describes it as having "no restriction on rational thinking." He credits the curriculum with insisting "that Islamic consciousness must reinstate the *other*, particularly the Jew and the Christian." Meanwhile, Tunisia's secret police, not taking any chances, have reportedly gone so far as to develop a new mosque worshipper ID card system, whereby each visit to a house of worship is automatically dated, timed and registered in a central computer database.

The movement is beginning to go international. Government religious-affairs ministries, from the tiny Gulf island of Bahrain to the most populous Arab country, Egypt, have been pool-

ing their resources. More than a dozen Arab states, including Jordan, recently signed on to a joint task force of sorts, to exchange training and expertise in a shared campaign against radical ideologies. One up-and-coming cleric I met in Amman was home on vacation from Tunis, where he is writing his Ph.D. dissertation at the state-controlled Islamic seminary thanks to a government-to-government Islamic exchange program. "What I learned about comparative religion from my Tunisian brothers is amazing," he told me. "It helps me see my own Islamic identity in a whole new light." Progressive clerics may be a minority among their robed colleagues in any one country, but bundled together across borders through coordinated government programs and conferences, they can feel encouraged and emboldened.

Some of the most remarkable changes in Islamic culture have been happening farther afield in vastly populated non-Arab Muslim countries. Take Indonesia, a Muslim-majority country of 245 million people and, for some, a feared breeding ground for Al Qaeda sympathizers. Former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid, an Islamic scholar by training, has formed a broad-based movement devoted to spreading liberal Islamic values throughout the country. The Wahid Institute aims to promote "tolerance and understanding in the world" and bring together Jews, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus. In testimony to the organization's progressive stance on women, its director and chief spokesperson is Wahid's striking 31-year-old daughter, Yenny. Radicals "have a very distorted view of what religion should be," she recently

told an American reporter. "Killing people meaning glory? It's lunacy. The prophet Muhammad said the greatest jihad is against yourself, how to make yourself a better person. It's not... running to kill people." Some 12,000 demonstrators showed their support for her leadership and ideals this past December in Jakarta, the Indonesian capital, in an "Islam for Peace" street rally against terrorism.

But will all these efforts make a difference? The answer to this question, like those to so many other questions about Muslim societies, depends on the future direction of the region's youth—my generation. Muslims aged 30 and under make up 60 to 70 percent of Arab countries' populations, courtesy of a maternity spike in the late 20th century that demographers have called the largest baby boom in human history. The Arabic-speaking generation I would have been born into had my mother stayed in Baghdad is also that of the Internet-savvy kids who cheer beheadings at Arab cafes and Sheikh Mu'tasim, the hard-line Brotherhood rookie cleric I met in Amman, as well as countless more Jordanian 20-somethings who buy into his message. Yet our contemporaries also include the Jordanian humanist Sheikh Mahmoud and Yenny Wahid. If such a vast swath of humanity tilts toward Islamic moderation, government-backed campaigns across the region could resonate and take hold, but if young Muslims veer in the opposite direction, a Jordanian king's best efforts will be judged in hindsight as too little, too late.

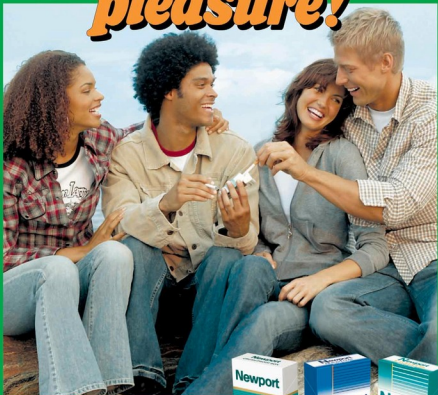
Recently, I have been listening to a song called "We Want Peace," an R&B single recorded in English and Arabic by Lenny Kravitz and the chart-topping Iraqi heartthrob Kazem al-Sahir. Released across the Middle East at the onset of the 2003 Iraq war, it has been heard by millions in the region. It was blasting from car stereos during my trip to Amman this year. The song begins with a Palestinian musician playing an impassioned solo on an Arabic lute; then Kravitz's R&B groove kicks in with Middle Eastern percussion fills by a Lebanese drummer. Kravitz and Sahir take turns shouting for peace in their respective languages, then join their voices for the chorus: "We want peace, we want it./ Yes we want peace, we want it." Judging from its popularity, this pan-Arab, transnational track, co-produced by an American of mixed race, may more faithfully reflect the aspirations of Middle Eastern youth than any stem-winding sermon. And if it does, Sheikh Mahmoud and his message of global oneness are only the beginning of a sweeping transformation. Let us hope.



"I thought we were the only species that gobbled."



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PLAYMATE NEWS



Miss December 1968 had no idea what was in store for her...in 2006.

CYNTHIA MYERS RETURNS TO THE VALLEY

Nearly 40 years after its debut, Russ Meyer's X-rated magnum opus, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, has been revived with nationwide screenings co-hosted by one of the film's stars, Miss December 1968 Cynthia Myers. "I had no idea it had become a huge cult hit," says Cynthia. "We've been on tour, and all these really hip, cool people show up at our screenings. A whole new generation has discovered this crazy movie."

As with many of Meyer's works, showings of the over-the-top film (which was scripted by Roger Ebert, the future Pulitzer Prize-winning critic) have been limited to campuses and independent cinemas. But thanks to an online petition

beseeching executives to commit it to DVD, the film got a new life this summer, both on disc and at campy midnight screenings in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix and Austin. Cynthia and fellow performers John Lazar, Marcia McBroom and Erica Gavin have received a star's reception. "It's like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*," marvels Cynthia, who plays bass guitarist Casey, a character as emotionally conflicted as she is pneumatic. "The fans know every line and song. They know the lines better than I do. It has been beyond anything I ever imagined." For more information on the *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* tour, go to www.cynthiamyers.com/appearances.



30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

Patti McGuire is a memorable Playmate for many reasons in addition to her stunning visage. The Missouri native was the Centerfold for the November 1976 issue, in which President Jimmy Carter admitted he felt lust in his heart; she later became the 1977 Playmate of the Year. She also appears with Hef on the famous Playboy pinball machine, and she went on to marry tennis star Jimmy Connors.



LOOSE LIPS

"The English accent is so sexy to us Americans. We can't get enough of it."

—Colleen Shannon



PLAYMATE PICNIC

Each May, when the new Playmate of the Year is announced at the PMOY Sunday luncheon and press conference, the presence of Centerfolds from throughout PLAYBOY's history turns the event into a kind of Playmate homecoming. From left: Miss March 2006 **Monica Leigh**, Miss May 2006 **Alison Waite**, Miss February 2006 **Cassandra Lynn**, Playmate of the Year 2005 **Tiffany Fallon** and Miss January 2006 **Athena Lundberg** were just a few of the Playmates who congratulated newly minted PMOY 2006 Kara Monaco.



HOT SHOT



JAMI FERRELL

MY FAVORITE PLAYMATE

By Bryan Cranston

of *Malcolm in the Middle*

My favorite Playmate is Miss January 1955 **Bettie Page** because she is the classiest and the one who started it all.



She was doing nude fashion layouts at a time when they were totally taboo. And for that I salute her.

POP QUESTIONS: DEBORAH DRIGGS

Q: You recently wrote *Hot Pink: The Girls' Guide to Primping, Pussion and Public Fashion*. What was your motivation?

A: Back in 1998 and 1999 there were quite a few books on sex; however, nothing had been written on public-hair grooming. So I got together with an author, Karen Risch, and we published *Hot Pink* as an e-book. We've had a great response, and now we're trying to get it printed.

Q: It seems that in the 1970s the style was very full, and gradually it became completely bare. What happened?

A: When I posed in March 1990 nobody was talking about grooming down there. At the

time, I was trimmed enough to wear a bikini but not groomed completely. The turning point was an episode of *Sex and the City* in which Kim Cattrall's character says, "It's just as important as the shoes you wear." And that's so true. I'd say the 1980s led us to a minimalist stage, and in the 1990s it was kind of like, Oh, who's going to be the first to just wax it all off? I think it's interesting to look at that decade. I would like to know who was the first to do the landing-strip style that became a fad in the late 1990s. I think the trend will eventually return to the natural look.

For more info go to hotpinkbook.com.



PLAYMATE NEWS WEDDINGS/CELEBRATIONS



Pamela Anderson of Vancouver was married to Kid Rock of Detroit in a ceremony aboard the *Altavita*, off the coast of St.-Tropez. Mr. Rock, 35, is a devil without a cause, and Ms. Anderson, 39, is really, really hot.

PLAYMATE GOSSIP

Playmate of the Year 2001 **Brandie Roderick** will appear in the upcoming film *The Nanny Diaries* alongside Scarlett Johansson, Alicia Keys and Paul Giamatti. She plays the trophy wife of a 75-year-old millionaire.... Miss August 2004 **Pilar Lastra** and Miss August 2005 **Tamara Witmer** appeared in *People* magazine's 100 Most Beautiful People issue as part of the cast of *Deal or No Deal*. Pilar is writing a humorous relationship-advice book titled *Treat Me Like Your Cat*.... Miss April 2005 **Courtney Culkin** and Miss March 2006 **Monica Leigh** celebrated PLAYBOY's July issue with the cast of *Rescue Me* at Stereo, a New York City nightclub.... Miss January 2004 **Colleen Shannon** stars in the reality hit *Love Island* on ITV, the U.K.'s largest commercial television network.... Miss April 1997 **Kelly Monaco** joined PLAYBOY cover girl **Brooke Burke** in New York City's Times Square to protest

Mike Lombardi and Jack McGee rescue Courtney and Monica at Stereo.



Playboy smells a conspiracy.

men who don't shave. Billed as a grassroots gathering organized by a group called NoScrub, the demonstration was actually a viral marketing event staged by Gillette.... The 1972 B-movie classic *Unholy Rollers*, starring the late **Claudia Jennings**, Playmate of the Year 1970, screened at the Trash Film Orgy festival in Sacramento, California.

MORE PLAYMATES

See your favorite Playmate's pictorial in the Cyber Club at cyber.playboy.com, or download her to your phone at playboymobile.com.

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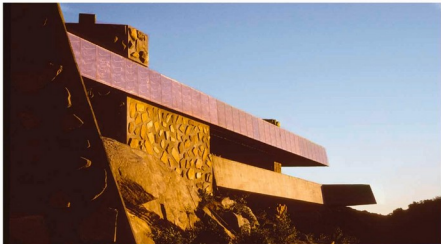
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Playboy On The Scene

WHAT'S HAPPENING, WHERE IT'S HAPPENING AND WHO'S MAKING IT HAPPEN



The Wright Stuff

Flying blind, architect Thomas A. Heinz brings a Frank Lloyd Wright masterpiece to life

What would Wright do? Thomas A. Heinz has asked himself that question countless times since beginning work on the Massaro house, on Petre Island in Lake Mahopac, New York. Frank Lloyd Wright drew up plans for the structure in 1950, but it remained unbuilt for more than 50 years until Joe Massaro, who owns the island, commissioned Heinz to bring the house to life. The scant five drawings Wright left behind provided

no clues about dimensions or materials, so Heinz drew on his encyclopedic knowledge of the legendary architect and his own architectural training to reverse engineer the building and interpret Wright's vision. The result is a 5,000-square-foot structure that incorporates a 1,500-square-foot skylight, a 28-foot-long cantilevered balcony and a 60-foot-long boulder. "Looking back at those old drawings," Heinz says, "we really got it right."



Club Jenna

Jenna Fairplay proves gamers need lap dances too

Jennifer Daw was looking for a break from nursing school and raising two kids when she entered Second Life (secondlife.com), an open-ended online social environment—in other words, a digital world inhabited by virtual characters created and controlled by real people. For fun, Daw invented Jenna Fairplay (pictured), a tall brunette in five-inch heels who looks like an idealized version of the real-life Jennifer, and the Edge, an open-all-hours virtual nightclub Jenna runs, which is usually full of gyrating topless dancers. How hot are Jenna and her dancers? Put it this way: The real Jennifer's little game has turned into a full-time job. She spends eight to 10 hours a day supervising the Edge's staff of nearly 300 dancers, managers and DJs as they entertain an international clientele of hundreds of patrons daily. Here's the catch: In this virtual world guests pay real money for lap dances (and more). Daw clears an average of \$5,000 a month. Not bad for a place that doesn't, technically speaking, exist. 171



What a Girl Flaunts

With her retro-glamorous style and passion for classic jazz and blues, there's a lot more to CHRISTINA AGUILERA these days. Particularly in the pectoral region.



Happy Birthday, Mr. Entourage

At Jeremy Piven's bash, the drinks flowed, the guests lounged on the beach, and Piven played the drums. Then LINDSAY LOHAN put on a backroom bikini fashion show. Guess you had to be there.

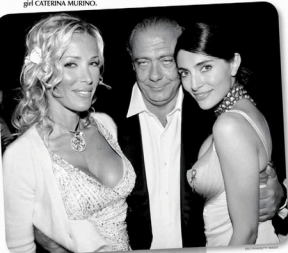


Burnt Sienna?

As Al Gore's movie tells us, it's important to wear sunscreen these days, especially on areas you'd normally cover up. We hope SIENNA MILLER has been paying attention.

The Look That Sold 1,000 Pudding Pops

Forgive this guy's Cosby-esque swoon. He is, after all, surrounded by four of the most coveted breasts in Europe, those of French singer OPHÉLIE WINTER and Bond girl CATERINA MURINO.



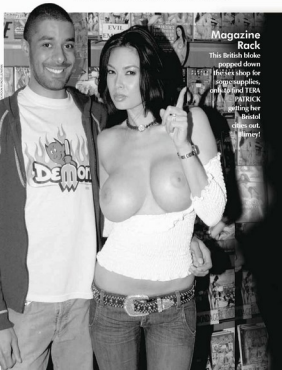
Revealed With a Kiss

We thought fans of the show *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody* would appreciate this shot of ASHLEY TISDALE. If only they were old enough to buy this magazine.



Material Girls Gone Wild

MADONNA has a history of making controversial videos; "Like a Prayer" and "Justify My Love" come to mind. What's next—"MILF Wet T-Shirt Contest"?



STUFF IT

Butterball fans, ask yourself this: Do you think the Pilgrims pumped their turkeys full of antibiotics and hormones? No. They were too busy shafting Indians. So short of chasing down a gobbler yourself, one of Lobel's organic free-range turkeys (\$60 for a 12-pound bird, lobels.com) will get you pretty close to the original, and professional chefs swear that, taste-wise, organic free-range meat is a whole different, uh, animal.



PLAYBOY: CELEBRITY NUDES

In 1953 Hugh Hefner had the brilliant notion to publish a nude photo of Marilyn Monroe in the inaugural issue of this magazine. Since then *PLAYBOY* has been the publication of record for photographs of celebrities in all their glory. A new 176-page book presents an amazing survey of celebrated women—from Jayne Mansfield to Naomi Campbell—shot by some of the world's great photographers. *Playboy: The Celebrities* (\$40, available in bookstores) is a must-have volume.



ON-SCREEN ROMANCE

These days, we're a little sick of Gwyneth, Brad and Tom (both Hanks and Cruise), just like you. Problem is, unless you live in a big city, the good indie movies never make it to your town. Mainstream is all you get. Buy a subscription to the Film Movement Series (\$13 a month with annual subscription, filmmovement.com) and the company's board of film curators will send you an award-winning indie or foreign flick on DVD every month—movies like *The Party's Over*, with Philip Seymour Hoffman, and *Masuto*, a Sundance winner. Every disc comes with a free bonus short film. You get all the sex, murder and romance of Hollywood—minus the Hollywood.



FACE TIME

Some men's facial products are like the halfback who gets drafted high and looks pretty but costs a lot and fizzles out over the long haul. Others are like the lineman who is chosen in a late round but ends up doing the job day after day, season after season. Nivea is that tried-and-true performer, and with a reformulated Energy Line (\$3 to \$7, available in drugstores) and new Active Firming Lotion (\$11), this vet just got a new knee.

A WELL-ROUNDED PLAYER

Shrinking prices have changed portable DVD rigs from luxury carry-ons to downtime necessities, and shrinking sizes mean they're easier to have in your bag every day. Here's the smallest we've seen: Philips's new PET 320 (\$130, philips.com), which squeezes a player and screen into a package the size of a CD Walkman. It's so minute, you won't be self-conscious when you take it out on a bus or subway. Until you start watching your Hello Kitty DVDs, that is.



ON THE BALL

There's nothing in this world more personal than your balls. You wash them lovingly. You carry them around in your bag. You fear losing them. They're yours, and no one can play with them without your permission. If you want to make your balls more distinctive, have Personalizedgolfballs.com put a little logo on them. The company will print just about any picture you want on your choice of brand—Callaway, Nike, Titleist. Pictured: Tour Power balls (\$12 a dozen and up).



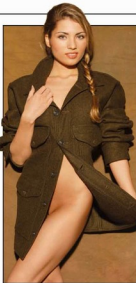
RUM'S THE WORD

We love a good sipping rum in winter. It's like a Caribbean vacation in a bottle. From left: Gosling's Family Reserve Old Rum (\$70), new for the U.S., is a hand-numbered bottling from Bermuda. The Barbaouet distillery in Haiti calls its 15-year-old Estate Réserve (\$35) the cognac of rums. One sip and you'll know why. Zaya Gran Reserva 12-year-old Guatemalan (\$40) may be the single smoothest dark rum we've ever tasted. All are available at fine liquor stores.



SHE WEARS IT WELL

What you see here is every man's dream. You wake up, roll out of bed and find a beautiful woman wearing nothing but your hunting jacket. Whether that's what Clinton C. Filson was thinking when he designed the Filson Mackinaw Cruiser (\$265, filson.com) in 1914, we have no idea. Filson made the jacket to protect timber cruisers while they hiked through dense forests for days at a time. The virgin wool is thick enough to keep you warm and dry in rain or snow but light enough so you can, say, fell a lodgepole pine without feeling cramped. With four big pockets as well as one for shotgun shells that holds three rounds, it's like having a backpack built right in.



AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODELS

Remote-control cars are fun, but we've never gone to them for our speed fix. That's changing thanks to the new Nitro XRC line of cars that zip along at up to 25 miles an hour. These puppies use nitromethane for fuel and go three times faster than traditional battery-operated toys, and because you can refuel them on the spot, you get to skip the recharge time. They're built to take some serious abuse, so start planning your ramps now. The stunt-oriented Ricochet (foreground, \$180, hasbro.com) will run upside down if it flips over, while the Revolution MT (\$130) is designed for speed and jumping. With combustion engines inside, they even smell and sound like real race cars.



Next Month



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WILLA—MASTER OF SUSPENSE **STEPHEN KING** RETURNS WITH A CHILLING PAGE-TURNER. WHEN A DERAILMENT LEAVES TRAIN PASSENGERS STRANDED IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, THEY SOON REALIZE NOWHERE IS SOMEWHERE THEY DESPERATELY DON'T WANT TO BE.

THREE SENATORS GORE—LITERARY STATESMAN **GORE VIDAL** RECALLS A TIME WHEN POLITICAL POWER WAS PREDICATED ON BRAVERY AND HEROISM. HOW DID WE GET FROM THE ROOSEVELT AND ADAMS FAMILIES TO THE CURRENT CROP OF POLS?

DIXIE CHICKS—GEORGE W. BUSH'S LEAST FAVORITE SINGERS TALK ABOUT THEIR CLASH WITH THE PRESIDENT, THEIR FEUDS WITH COUNTRY RADIO AND WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE THE BEST-SELLING FEMALE GROUP IN HISTORY. AN OUTSPOKEN PLAYBOY INTERVIEW BY **ALAN LIGHT**

DANIELLE LLOYD—BORN ON PENNY LANE, THIS LIVERPOOL LOVELY WHO BECAME MISS GREAT BRITAIN NOW RECEIVES OUR ROYAL TREATMENT AS, OB-LA-DI, OB-LA-DA, SHE DROPS

HER BRA. **ALSO**: THE BRITISH INVASION CONTINUES IN *BASE OF THE MONTH* WITH LONDON BOMBSHELL **KEELEY HAZELL**.

SAMUEL L. JACKSON—ONE OF THE HIGHEST-GROSSING ACTORS OF ALL TIME AND STAR OF THIS YEAR'S *SNAKES ON A PLANE* AND *HOME OF THE BRAVE* TELLS **STEPHEN REBELLO** IN 200 THAT HE HAS HAD IT WITH MOTHERFUCKING RAPPERS BECOMING MOTHERFUCKING ACTORS.

THE ULTIMATE FIGHTER—ACCLAIMED PLAYWRIGHT AND ESSAYIST **DAVID MAMET** SAYS BOXING IS FIXED AND WRESTLING IS FAKE. FOR OUR GENERATION'S ULTIMATE FIGHT, HE RECOMMENDS TURNING TO THE MEN IN THE OCTAGON ARENA.

LOVE, JERRY—WHILE SIFTING THROUGH HIS NEIGHBOR'S ABOUT-TO-BE-JUNKED LETTERS, **NEIL COHEN** DISCOVERS THE MISSED LINK THAT COULD LEAD TO A REINTERPRETATION OF ONE OF THE PAST CENTURY'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL WRITERS.

EROTIC PASSAGES—**JAY MCINERNEY**, **LAUREN WEISBERGER** AND OTHER LITTERATEURS COMMENT ON LUBRICIOUS WORKS.

PLUS: THE COLLEGE BASKETBALL PREVIEW, OUR ANNUAL MUSIC POLL, A VERY TWISTED CHRISTMAS, **VICTORIA FULLER** ON SEX, A GUYS' GIFT GUIDE AND ONE PAGE OF MISS DECEMBER **KIA DRAYTON** FOR EACH DAY OF CHRISTMAS.