

HOLY LEBOWSKI! THE COEN BROTHERS DO FASHION

# Esquire

MARCH 1998

MAN AT HIS BEST

**uma**  
(and other  
urban myths)

**SURPRISING  
COMEBACKS  
OF 1998:  
ANDY KAUFMAN!  
JIMMY HOFFA!  
BIG TIRES!**

**LEAVING  
PARADISE:  
A TRAVEL  
STORY  
IN REVERSE**

**VERY, VERY  
SHORT FICTION**  
By Tim O'Brien

**DOWN THE  
HATCH:  
THE LOST SCENES  
FROM TITANIC**

**TWELVE  
DEATHS IN THE  
NEIGHBORHOOD**  
By Charles  
Bowden

\$3.00



HEARST MAGAZINES MARCH 1998 VOLUME 129 NO. 3 08276

# Like a Virgin

## Sex and the single husband:

What happens when The Perfect Man is invited to touch a stranger's sacred spot?



### FRIDAY, 6:00 P.M.

This is just between you and me. Promise? I could never dream of stripping myself so bare in front of anyone else. To become The Perfect Man, I've sacrificed everything. I've turned myself into an infant in order to learn how to walk, talk, eat, and breathe all over again. I've made myself vulnerable when heroes of myth might have shrunk away. But now I'm terrified.

Now I have to learn how to *boink* all over again. Every other puddle that society tiptoes around I've always jumped into and splattered with both feet. Why does this one subject, sex, turn me into the same trembling ninny as everyone else? Still, here I am, about to admit to 119 strangers in Boulder, Colorado, that I know nothing about the one thing everyone pretends to

know *everything* about. I'm about to spend three days learning—and this *has* to stay between you and me—how to have seismic quarter-hour orgasms and transform a woman into an all-night Vesuvius. And do you know what's most frightening of all?

My wife is 1,463 miles away.

### 9:22 P.M.

Lord have mercy. I can't believe what I've gotten myself into. Imagine this: a roomful of doctors, lawyers, financial consultants, and filmmakers, all cross-legged on cushions, staring intently at a middle-aged man and woman who are talking about *wee-wees* and *hoo-hoos* amid tropical foliage and a psychedelic-purple backdrop. I'm on a hard-backed chair, trying to figure out if I'm lucky to have gotten the last spot—the sixtieth man to sign up—or a fool because the

sixty female slots were booked, which prevented me from doing this with my wife.

The instructors, Charles and Caroline Muir, are happily demolishing all my old vocabulary. No more calling my you-know-what my Bologna Pony, my One-Eyed Purple Zipper Buster, or Russell the Love Muscle. No more calling the *other* you-know-what Velvet Lips, Honey Pot, or Shangri-La. No more boinking, banging, boning, balling, humping, pumping, or porking. All those old words are vestiges of locker-room bravado. Now it's my lingam (wand of light) and her yoni (sacred space). Now it's tantra, the art of conscious loving.

*Conscious* loving. At the very bottom of my uneasiness is that word: *conscious*. What I've always loved about sex is *not* thinking, *not* knowing, the mystery and fear that comes from the absolute unconsciousness of it. The idea of *asking* the woman you've slept with for ten years for *permission* to enter her, of then employing a series of stroke variations calculated to steadily increase the sexual pitch, of using breathing techniques and squeezing yourself to *stop* your ejaculation... that's *got* to take the voltage out of boinking!

But these two are promising that if I approach this in a spiritual way, with a giving heart, my orgasms will be a hundred times stronger—tidal waves, they promise, compared with my pebbles pitched into a puddle. Did I just hear myself *harrumph*?

### 10:18 P.M.

Get this: I've got my right hand over the crown of my head, shaking it for all I'm worth. Then I lower it between my eyebrows, then to my throat, then my heart, then my navel, then my crotch, down to the base of my spine. Chakras, they call them. The seven seats of energy discovered in India thousands of years ago. By the time we stop, my hand tingles and throbs and feels as if it's tripled in size. "Imagine," says Charles. "That's how your whole body will feel."

Now he says it's time to do something with a partner. *Uh-oh*.

### 10:40 P.M.

Do you know how it feels to stand among sixty men and wait to be chosen by one of sixty women? Like all those women must

have felt in all those bars for all those years when I was prowling. There goes one, two, three, four... Your self-worth dips lower and lower each time someone looks you over and moves on. Then the relief, the groveling gratitude, when, finally, a slim sprite with short-cropped dark hair smiles and takes your arm.

Following instructions, I lie on my back and roll up my sleeve, and she begins to massage my arm from fingertips to shoulder. I'm nearly as shocked as my wife would be at how easily I shut my eyes and feel intimate with an absolute stranger.

**MIDNIGHT**

All those who came as couples are sent to bed. We singles are held back, introduced to one another, and advised that tomorrow night there will be—no, not homework, but *homeplay*. Each woman will choose, from those who are consenting, a man to touch her sacred spot.

I'd better call home.

**SATURDAY, 11:15 A.M.**

We're devoting the morning to controlling our ejaculations. Short breaths. Deep breaths. Held breaths. Squeezing on the

**I'm nearly as shocked as my wife would be at how easily I just shut my eyes and feel intimate with an absolute stranger.**

muscle you normally use to stop a pee cold when your mother-in-law bumbles into the bathroom.

Only the raw numbers induced me to do the yogi bit on the floor and try it. Charles puts it this way: The average American male has sex 2.34 times a week, and the average ejaculation lasts five seconds, meaning that during the course of a year, the sum total of male bliss is 608.4 seconds, or just over ten minutes—a figure that becomes scarier still when I do *my* numbers. The Perfect Man ain't even getting what the *average* man is! Not with a ten-month-old who won't sleep at night and a three-year-old who won't stop all day, not to mention the job, the bills, the weeds. If I opt for sex, I get no sleep. I ain't screwing, pal. I'm screwed.

**4:00 P.M.**

Now we're getting down to the bone. The women are off learning God-knows-what while we men are receiving pages of in-

struction, a two-hour lecture, and a forty-five-minute video on exactly how to find the G-spot, halfway between the back of the pubic bone and the cervix, and possibly trigger "cups, quarts, or even buckets" of liquid love.

The movie, frankly, makes me squirm. But I'm the only squirmer. In the air around me is a strange combination of increasing appetite and the growing nervousness of banjo pickers determined to master Beethoven by bedtime.

**MIDNIGHT**

What would you do? Charles says I can read the handouts, watch the films, and listen to the lectures, but the only way to know tantric ecstasy is to pair off, bow to your goddess, and just do it. He means right now.

They're all about to form a circle, the nineteen other singles, so that each woman can choose her man. To my left is a statuesque blond. To my right, a young nose-pierced redhead. Dead ahead: a well-coiffed fiftyish specimen of Middle Americana.

What would you do?

I run. I run to my room, leaving one woman high and dry, lock the door, exhale, and pick up the phone. I'm looking for

gratitude, affirmation—hell, at least an *Attabo!*

Instead, my wife yelps: "Cal, *pleeeeeease!* You may have gotten away this time. But how much longer?"

**SUNDAY, NOON**

It's a strange feeling, waking from a restful night's sleep to hear everyone around you babbling about the earthquake. I have to believe all the tears, all the voices struggling to squeeze out words.

"Hey, I'm not a cosmic guy," one dumbstruck survivor testifies. "But it was like God was in our bed."

A husband and wife, both lawyers, confess that they'd written up divorce papers and laid them on the kitchen table before their trip here and that last night they looked at each other and found an innocence and joy that they hadn't seen in years.

But I'm still the outsider; I still can't help wondering if all the emotion and rapture

could have as much to do with a preceding *lack* of intimacy as with the tantric techniques themselves. So I seek out the woman who massaged my arm and her husband, a cardiologist from nearby Fort Collins.

"You know," he says, "listening to everyone this morning, I had some of the same feelings that you did. We've been married fifteen years and have a really good relationship. I'm not going to tell you that last night dramatically changed our lives—but it's great to have some new tricks."

**10:45 P.M.**

Spent the afternoon getting tips on pleasing yoni. The topper was the Wonder Technique—closing your eyes and swaying your head back and forth like you're Stevie Wonder singing "My Cherie Amour." Even I join in clapping when Charles and Caroline, fully clothed, play out a dozen different positions. I've got to admit—I'm ready for a test drive.

At the finale, I'm right there on the pillow in perfect yoga position, holding hands with a stranger. Around me, the room is cooking—everyone locked in crotch-to-crotch embraces and kissing like there's no tomorrow. Anyone who hadn't been here for three days surrounded by so much earnest yearning and sensuality would find this moment preposterous. I don't.

**BACK HOME**

Big hug and a "See ya—can you watch the kids while I get some groceries?"

**THE NEXT DAY**

A story deadline looming. Kids howling. Wife frazzled. Yoga cushions and sacred spots seem far away.

**THE DAY AFTER THAT**

Fax from the couple in Fort Collins: "I didn't think we could be any closer. I was wonderfully wrong. . . . I know you had some reservations about tinkering with a good thing, but it's paying high dividends for us."

Enough is enough. Or too little is too little. As soon as the kids are asleep, I lead my wife into the bedroom.

"Wow," she says when the earthquake's over. "That's the best it's ever been."

I wink. "That's only one hundredth of what I learned."

"Uh-oh..."

*Next month, in the nick of time, The Perfect Man learns how to sleep.*

*For Source School of Tantra Yoga seminar schedules, call 808-572-8364.*