

**...IN NEW YORK**

## CHAPTER ONE

# GOD'S GIFT TO WOMEN

I had just suffered a month hanging out with New York's reigning "strikeout king"—an otherwise cunning men's magazine editor named Sammy Grubman. Poor Grubman spent his summer dreaming up endless ruses to score women—bogus rock video auditions, swimsuit contests, photo "test shoots" for his mag. Dumbstruck, I joined him in his nightly rounds at the Palladium and Studio 54 as he hit upon ballrooms of females. In his rumpled suit, skinny black tie, thick glasses, with nasal whine and sen-sen breath, I watched him viciously strike out under the rotating disco ball. I even got into the rhythm of failure with him, tossing out some dumb pickup lines myself. Losing wind after a hundred No's, he repositioned to the girls' powder room. The most common retort from spandexed chicks exiting, as Grubman propositioned each for a drink, was simply, "Fuck you." By 4 a.m., reeling from the dread of such monumental rejection, Grubman would bomb himself to sleep with codeine pills.

I too began wondering whether all women in New York were paranoid men-haters, terrified to smile at a stranger. Or was it just Grubman, rubbing off on me?

During this time, a fringe show-biz agent pal of ours, named Shark, began relating tales of the greatest barroom pickup artist alive. Shark reflected upon his own glory years in the 1960's. His organs malfunctioning from middle-aged alcoholism, Shark grew moist in reminiscence over the only activity that really mattered—sliding his pecker into trainloads of girls. He called

this perpetual state of scoring a “roll.”

“It’s a beautiful thing, being on a *roll*,” Shark recalled, his voice hoarse from substance abuse. “Catching the rhythm and keeping it up night after night. While you’re fucking one broad, you’re planning tomorrow’s menu. You establish your turf, your nightclubs, your clique of celebs, then the broads flock to *you* each night. But once you’re out of the rhythm, Jack, it’s *very hard* to get back in.”

Shark definitely seemed to have lost his chops as a pick-up artist, along with his best clients and his dough. He ran a skid-row agency, *Tops Models*, for mostly unemployable bush-leaguers—A&P checkout girls and bar hostesses with big dreams and bigger tits. Real lookers some were, but cursed by being an inch too short for Ford, a pound too heavy for Elite. They were unschooled and gawky in their runway gait. Some had white-trash bruises that healed slowly.

But Shark had become spiritually rejuvenated by the discovery of this protégé. He referred to him as the Stud. Through the Stud, he could vicariously live out the longest roll of his career.

“The kid’s incredible, like DiMaggio on a hitting streak,” claimed the agent. “There’s no one can touch him. He’s got 15 broads a day callin’, beggin’ to go out, 10 more from last week beggin’ for seconds. Walks out of clubs with three, four at a time, the best-lookin’ ones. He’s not interested in amenities, he don’t send flowers. He don’t wanna know their names, their jobs, where they’re from... I hung out with Namath. I hung out with Elvis. I hung out with Engelburt. None of these guys could hold the Stud’s jockstrap.”

I was suddenly struck by the antithesis of Grubman. The Stud seemed heroic, swimming upstream like an erect salmon against the tide of 80’s abstinence in the face of AIDS. The Stud’s reputation drove Grubman crazy. I decided to do two articles: One on New York’s premier pickup artist, and then one on New York’s foremost strikeout king (a title no man would relish). I would take a journey like Gulliver; I had been to the land of the Lilliputians. Now I would visit the land of giants.

## God’s Gift

**M**ike Florio is the Stud’s name, a special effects man in Local 52 of the movie business. At 31, he’s been on a 12-year roll, according to Shark, who passed the Stud my number. On the phone Florio is a far cry from Cary Grant. The timbre and accent of his voice could be that of any Brooklyn garage mechanic. Florio makes it clear, at first, that he hates men. “I always go out alone,” he explains. “I don’t need dead weight dragging along.”

A nephew of rib restaurateur Tony Roma, Florio began his career as a stunt man on *Kramer Vs. Kramer*. The production chief wanted him fired, Florio recalls, for “bangin’ dozens of chicks on the set.” So this very morning, a decade

later, he reports for work on the new Michael Douglas film, *Fatal Attraction*. He's setting up special rain effects, which he feels will garner him an Oscar nomination. The same production chief is on the movie, says he's impressed with how Mike's "matured," become professional, not chasing skirts on the job. "Then SAG calls the set this morning," huffs Mike, "claims there are four sex harassment complaints about me, looking up girls' dresses and stuff."

The Stud claims to be immune from disease, refuses to wear protection: "The last time I wore a rubber it ended up in 40 pieces." As we talk by phone, the Stud's call-waiting device is constantly clicking. These are the frustrated attempts of girls phoning around the clock. Mike clicks in some of his call-waiting gals, then phones a list of this week's conquests, with me listening on the party line. His voice is a haunting reminder of a night in which they slept with a stranger. In a dozen calls, the Stud arranges dates with roommates of girls who aren't home; a secretary will risk being fired and see him that instant; a girl in bed with fever will come out that night; three girls are each assigned to visit a different club—Arena, Limelight and the Milk Bar—pick up another girl, then come to his apartment, at two-hour intervals. Each girl whispered her willingness to sleep with him again. Mike has fucked many of them up the ass, he says, within an hour of meeting each one.

Perhaps these were self-destructive wackos, from amongst the exploding buyer's market of girls out there. Nightclubs are bursting with available females. There must be a dozen Studs in every city, I told Shark. Why glamorize the bastard in print?

"You've heard him with one type of girl over the phone," Shark insisted. "But he's a high roller. Take him out. There're a lot of super- models at the clubs around Christmas. The Stud's as good at scoring broads as Picasso was at painting."

That Saturday, I made the rounds with one of New York's premier pickup artists. Strikeout kings, read on.

### **Cafe Pacifico, 10pm**

We decide to rendezvous at Pacifico, a Columbus Avenue cafe which looks like a rejected stage set from *A Clockwork Orange*. "You'll know who I am," he predicted over the phone. Sure enough, several girls are milling about the front barstool. The hottest blonde in the joint is stroking some bloke's generous brown curls. He's wearing black suede boots, pleated slacks, a T-shirt under a fluffy cockpit jacket that momentarily makes him resemble a Saint Bernard pup. It's the Stud. He looks like some indeterminate pretty-boy corporate rock star. Somebody girls can't quite pinpoint.

"I love this chick. She's so sweet." Mike narrates the situation as if she's not in the room. Having just arrived himself, he removes his coat, professing to love all his jackets. He has dozens. Each jacket carries "a unique vibe," whether it cost 20 bucks or \$500. As a matter of fact, some chick wouldn't leave his apartment last night. He finally tossed her clothes in the hall to get her out. But the heap included one of his beloved jackets, a Willywear,

which she kept. It was like losing a friend. The Stud had no way to contact her to retrieve the jacket. Why get bogged down with names when you're banging several chicks a night?

The blonde stroking his hair has just signed with some new modeling agency. She's dripping with homemade jewelry. Her painfully long legs are twisting around the barstool, and she's terribly bored with everything in the world except this foxy guy who just took the adjacent stool. The Stud whispers in her ear, to her utter delight. Then her girlfriend enters the restaurant.

It's the girlfriend's 24th birthday, they're out to celebrate. Round of champagne, says Mike, an \$18 pouring for the three of them.

"Yeah, I like this chick," he says aloud of the blonde, "but I like her girlfriend better." And *viola*, the brunette birthday girl, an expensively decked-out lady with profound cleavage, is slayed by one insincere Mike Florio smile. The Stud reaches around the wall where the bartender unquestioningly allows him to rearrange the mood lighting for the entire bar. In this darkened atmosphere, he takes the birthday girl's hands, introduces himself as her birthday present, and begins soul kissing. The blonde model is miffed, a spurned pout on her haughty face. I feel invisible to both girls. The Stud's girl-mechanic hands travel over the outside of Birthday Girl's body like sonar, taking a reading on what's underneath those Bergdorf threads.

"Let's leave this dump and go to Columbus," demands the Stud, to both dames.

"I don't wanna go," whines the rejected blonde, swaying her jewelry to Huey Lewis on the jukebox. "I wanna dance at the Palladium."

"*I don't wanna*," sing-songs the Stud, in mock imitation. "The Palladium's a dump."

In actuality, the Palladium, Stringfellow's and Nell's have banned Mike from their premises—as pool sharks are banned from pool halls.

"You're giving me trouble," spits the blonde.

"The world is full of trouble," counters Mike. "Trouble makes the world go round. But imagine how much fun we can have when the trouble stops..."

The blonde giggles at this lame philosophy. Florio's style is to *parody* pickup clichés, with a wink—women love to laugh along, part of a spontaneous joke. Birthday Girl has her hands all over him, and pleads with her stubborn friend to follow us guys to Columbus. But the Stud feels he's given them both too much of his time, and stands to leave. Birthday Girl is deflated. But they exchange phone numbers. She enters his right into her address book in pen. He takes hers on a napkin, which he'll blow his nose with later.

### ***Columbus, 10:45***

The way most guys work a bar, Mike explains, reminds him of a moronic stop-action silent film. They flicker around in a circle. Mike centers himself at the middle barstool, where he can track all girls coming through. He sucks them over in two's and three's. "I've got eyes in the back of my head for

chicks,” he says, surveying the room like a speed reader. “That table’s all married; forget the blonde in the corner, she’s with a Colombian coke dealer; I already fucked the shit outta that table... .”

Columbus Restaurant is this year’s celebrity hangout on Columbus Avenue. Its vacuous soul is that of a mall—there’s no hearth, just unadorned windows for celeb gazing. The Stud comes through like a barroom Frankenstein. Ice-breaking one-liners spew out rapid-fire.

“Hey, I like you, what can I do about it?” *Bam*, one chick at his side. “A woman is a noun. I am a verb.” *Zap*, a second girl takes up position. “I got brand new bed sheets, never been slept in.” *Kapow*. “Take off your hat, what’re you trying to cover up, chemotherapy?” he cracks, grabbing the hat off a passing girl’s head.

Before you know it, he’s got an admiration society. All are TKO’s, any of them ready to leave with Mike should he so desire. I am virtually invisible at his side. Even the two at Pacifico were scored as TKO’s. “They’ll call,” Mike shrugs, matter-of-factly, “I’ll bang both of ‘em.”

Every line he speaks with blushing boyish charm, a sarcastic, Ultrabrite smile, creating instant camaraderie. “I’m married,” one girl retorts to his come-on.

“That’s your problem,” says the Stud, quickly disinterested, his Saint Bernard puppy expression fraught with disgust, making her feel it really *is* her problem.

When Florio sees a chick he likes, all he merely has to do is “Give her one of these.” He demonstrates waving his finger with effortless superiority, like Buddy Love in *The Nutty Professor*. This draws the attention of two curious girls. He introduces himself as the “lead singer of Cinderella.”

“Yeah, I’m headlining The Garden next week, wanna go?” One of the chicks nervously jots his phone number down, thinking she’s scored some heavy metal clod. “Yeah, gimme a call, I’ll be waitin’ by the phone *like a dog*.”

After several Heinikens, the Stud hiccups obnoxiously into every girl’s face at the Columbus meat rack. He intermittently apologizes, or snaps at them to “Shut up!”

“Wha’d he say?!” demands some guy, joining his girlfriend after a respite in the restroom. “Should I belt him?”

“... I hate men,” replies the Stud, with a cosmic sigh to the complainant. He leans over in confidence toward two mouseburger girls, out of the side his mouth: “I’m so horny. Just gotta get laid. But there’s no *good* pussy here tonight, you dig?” He hiccups in their faces.

“Please don’t do that in our ears,” say the homely girls, unflattered. The Stud gets more obnoxious with each downed beer.

“Would you prefer I do it up your ass? *Brrapppp*. You know, you two remind me of Mutt & Jeff. I won’t say who’s Mutt.”

The Stud approaches a group of hardened, out-of-work actresses in their early 30’s. They’re indignant over his demeanor, having overheard the last 10 minutes. They’re onto his game and they don’t approve.

“I’ll tell you something, all you women,” he announces, with histrionic

presence. "If you didn't own a pussy, you wouldn't have a friend in the world." After a half-dozen beers, the Stud seems to have slipped. This group doesn't want him. So, he blows his cover and confides to them he's a barroom pickup artist: "I'm God's gift to women. I really am. That's why he put me here—for you, and you and you. I live for women. I was born for you. I have a great job, in the movies, I work two, three hard days a week. Make lots of money, then come out at night for pussy. If I don't get it here, I go across the street. If I don't get it from you, I'll get it from her. But I'll *get* it," he shrugs.

The group listens with amused disdain. "I have a great penthouse apartment, full of *life*. It's filled with plants and Pacific Ocean fish tanks." Indeed, the Stud keeps two sharks on premises in his living room aquarium. The first is a one-and-a-half-foot Leopard shark, the other a three-foot Nurse shark. Both are capable of taking a serious bite out of a man, but they have a hypnotizing effect on women.

Still holding their attention, Mike quiets down to a soulful confession. "Don't analyze me in 10 minutes, baby, I got hours." Florio never had sex as a teenager, he says, was rejected throughout high school. Then when he was 19, he fell deeply in love with a girl. They planned to marry. Shortly after, one day, a doctor told him his father had 10 months to live. This hit him like a sledgehammer, since his dad was closest to him in the world. Thank heavens his girlfriend's father was chief radiologist at New York Hospital, who could provide the saving care Mike's father needed. But on the same day he planned to ask his fiancée for her family's help, she showed up arm in arm with another guy. Mike was dumped on the spot, at New York Hospital. "From then on," the Stud recalled, "I decided that *I'm* the one who'll do the fucking over, not girls."

The actresses are moved. They're talking softly with Mike now. Three more TKO's for the Stud. "I'm God's gift to women!" he bellows, a jungle cry to the bar at large.

"God's gift to women is a dildo!" screams back some drunk.

"Here, here," toast some hearty male voices at the bar.

Florio needs some grub before he can reach a second wind. The hostess seems hot for him and gives us a reserved table. This is an exclusive area at night, beyond the meat rack. The table next to us contains four young, high-toned models, strategically placed at Columbus's front window like an advertisement. Some heavy metal millionaire sits with them. At the table in front of them, however, is a big-time beauty with several male escorts. "Point me to whoever you want, I'll get her," he says, like a hunting dog. I tell him to turn around for the first true 10 of the evening. This knockout will be his target for tonight, he decides, deciphering her body as if wearing X-ray specs.

The moment the heavy metal idiot goes to the john, the Stud reaches over and taps a model on the shoulder. She's a black-haired heartbreaker with a cute, upturned nose job and pyramid tits.

"What's your name?"

"Courtney."

“Hi, Courtney. Joe Perry,” says the Stud, extending a sturdy handshake. For the rest of the evening, he’ll pose as a member of Arrowsmith. “Say, Courtney,” he goes, waving her closer in confidence. “Who’s *that*?”

“Why, that’s Carol Alt,” says Courtney. Carol has a natural, outdoorsy look, without much makeup. She’s wearing something like riding pants, as if she just stepped in from an afternoon of British polo. An elaborate fur is draped around her chair, and she’s seated with three male chaperones. She’s one of the world’s five top models, yet she doesn’t look so self-consciously *modelly* as the girls behind her.

The Stud has heard of her. “Look how *bored* she is,” he ascertains, as if she were in dire need of rescue. He can tell she goes to bed by one o’clock from her clear skin. “Got to work fast.”

Carol starts table hopping. She stops by Mike Tyson’s table, and he rises to kiss her cheek, looking pretty as a *GQ* cover after his three-round KO over Trevor Berbick. She schmoozes with the owners

of Columbus, then Danny Aiello. Then she stops at Courtney’s table. Warren Beatty takes a table, sits there innocently, not bothering anybody. “Look at him, he can’t even get laid anymore,” says the Stud. Neither can a member of Kiss, striking out left and right (anonymous without makeup and costume).

The Stud fidgets over the time the young models are spending with Alt. “These chicks are gonna fuck it up for me. They’re all like monkeys together.” Alt returns to her table, slips on the fur. All the minor models at Courtney’s table put on *their* fur coats. “Like monkeys,” he repeats, making his move.

Florio sits right down at Carol Alt’s table, introducing himself as the lead guitarist of Arrowsmith, about to leave to play with Gino Vanelli, and headline the Garden next month. He blurts out a few lines from “Walk This Way,” with a high cackle. Tells her he took lessons from the guitar player in the Tonight Show Orchestra as a kid. She says she was about to call it an evening at midnight. The Stud brings her back to our table, offering his last forkful of chicken pot pie.

“No, really, I’m just having one Scotch tonight,” she giggles.

“A Scotch in Carol Alt’s perfect bod?” he gasps, incredulously. She’s sweet, innocent and gullible. One of her chaperones is a bulky ex-Hell’s Angel and Vietnam vet, keeping an eye on her. The Stud says how much he would enjoy dancing with her at the China Club. Alt agrees to go. She’s very polite toward me, who the Stud has introduced as his manager (an incarnation I shudder from).

While she goes through the saying-good-bye ceremonies to friends, the Stud’s table is approached by several pairs of women who seem to know him. Some are former one-night affairs. Being invisible next to this caballero, I must suppress my ego. “Just remember,” Shark the agent had cautioned, “don’t even try to compete. Most guys’ egos couldn’t handle a night with him.” The Stud lays out tonight’s situation to the girls, who shrug and wish him luck. They are *rooting* for him to fuck the model.

The Stud engages two hot-looking chicks as he’s about to exit. “C’mon, let’s go dancing at the China Club,” he orders, as though they were anything

but strangers. Both accept. They're from Oklahoma, and have a BMW outside, offering us a lift there. But the Stud peers first into a double-parked Lincoln Town Car, pretending his chauffeur has disappeared.

Jackie Mason, at a nearby table, was confounded as to why so many broads came and went from our table. His lawyer, Jesse Vogel, one of Mason's entourage of alter cocker flunkies, is propositioning blondes, and asks the Oklahoma girls if they'd like to sit for a drink with a famous Jewish comedian, headlining 16 weeks on Broadway.

"I can play a romantic lead," declares Mason to his table. "Why shouldn't I? That ugly dumb bastard, Dangerfield, was the romantic lead in that last picture, what was it?"

"*Back To School*," comes the table.

"Yeah, he gets the goil, that Sally-what's-her-name, he was a romantic lead. And you mean to tell me, this skinny putz, wid the big nose and glasses, this bent-over sickeningly ugly weasel, Woody Allen, can play romantic leads, and I can't? He can sleep with Diane Keaton or Mia Farrow?"

Both girls decline Mason's lawyer's invitation, waiting patiently for the Stud.

"You think I have a chance? Florio wonders, his first glimmer of insecurity about scoring the supermodel. Quick deliberation—should he *walk* Carol Alt's party to China, or get into these chicks' BMW? Best Carol see him exit with other girls, he decides. We hop into the Okies' car. Alt shrugs—oh, well, there goes Mr. Arrowsmith.

The Stud makes the Okies park before a fire hydrant at the side of China Club. They're afraid of getting a ticket or towed. Florio guarantees he'll pay any ticket, and offers them full usage of his "limo" if they get towed, until he can bail out their car. They believe him. The Okies park.

### ***China Club, half-past Midnight***

The Okie girls expect to be whooshed in for free on the Stud's comet. Instead, he ditches them at the door. Florio claims to have "lost his pass" to the China Club box office marm. He flashes his Ultrabrite smile, and bullshits past the door charge.

It is a matter of honor that the Stud *never* pays the stiff entrance to clubs. Stringfellow's, for example, is the type of joint that considers it utterly uncool to admit human beings from New Jersey. The last straw occurred when Mike showed up with Miss America of 1980, her sister and an Elite model. "Just because you're with three gorgeous girls, you think you can come in for free?" sneered manager John Hawkins, with a British laugh. "That'll be a hundred bucks." The Stud started a fracas, threatened to hit the guy. The cops hustled Florio into a squad car, telling him he was going to the Pig Bar, a nearby establishment.

"But I don't want to go to the Pig Bar," Florio protested.

"You either come with us to the Pig Bar or get arrested." Florio accepted a police escort to the Pig Bar.

Now at the crowded China Club, Florio has bigger fish to fry. Alt's entourage won't arrive for 15 minutes. He has time to exercise his pick-up muscles, do some warm-ups. The Stud grabs a reserved table in a cordoned-off side area. Already, girls are flocking around, something I take for granted, the world is always like this.

A tall blonde hugs him, saying, "Hey, how're ya?" Mike leans to me, whispering, "Never saw her in my life." Girls often approach, acting like they know him. This one's an ex-Playboy Club bunny from the recently defunct New York branch. He plays it as if he remembers her, says she's even gained weight. Her girlfriend eagerly takes a seat on the Stud's right. A third female sits at the table, vying for Mike's attention. She also claims to know him. Reminds him that he fucked her six months ago, a memorable night. "Sorry," he shrugs, "I guess it wasn't so memorable to me."

The Stud's act is so well oiled, he can slip and slide women through these seats like a Detroit assembly line. As the big blonde is vacating her chair, the Stud simultaneously reaches over to an adjacent table, clutching the hand of a brunette stranger conversing with some fellow. She takes his hand, continuing her talk. Neither have even made eye contact. But then she sort of slithers into the vacant seat within seconds of the blonde's departure. An average-looking girl, overwhelmed by this groovy guy grabbing her hand. But she didn't even see the sucker, she must have responded to some primal musk.

"What's your name?" she asks.

"Does it matter?" The Stud isn't interested in names, occupations, he could care less about sentimental dolls girls keep by their pillows, or cooking tips. I remember Shark's initial testimony—"He don't send flowers, he don't care where they're from. He just lives to fuck."

"What do you do?" asks the enchanted girl.

"Does it matter? I thought you recognized me... Do you wanna fuck me?"

The girl's face closes in until they lock tongues, mouth to mouth. She's a goner, you can see stars around her head.

"Your place or mine?" he whispers. She practically comes in her seat, needing a spatula to be removed. She then gathers her composure and explains she visits the China Club often. If she's seen walking out with him, it will be assumed she's going to sleep with him. If the door bouncers see this more than once, they'll think she's a "slut." Therefore, they should exit separately and meet by the corner pay phone. As she runs her hands through his hair, the Stud's head spins to some foxy chick in the aisle, and he excuses himself for a minute.

"You seem to have landed my friend," I suggest.

"I know," she smiles, primping in her pocketbook mirror. "But *who* is he?"

"All I can tell you is a lot of girls have been after him tonight. But I haven't seen him take to any like you."

"I know," she glows, confident of her big score.

I ask if she'll go to his place or hers, and she says definitely his. I ask her

what she sees in him, having known him a total of five minutes.

"I love long hair," she says. "I want to run my hands through his hair all night. You know, I didn't really feel sexy tonight. But he brought it out in me. He's very oral, and so am I," she squeals, eyes widening in anticipation, as though I'm not even there.

"Are you ready?" she asks the Stud, upon his return.

The Stud is intently staring off in the distance, whale-watching for Carol Alt. She repeats herself. He gazes beyond, giving her the silent treatment. She looks at her watch, lights a cig, a bit confused, not yet hip to the game. The Stud turns to me and blurts, "I ain't gonna fuck *that*," hitching his thumb toward her. She tugs his sleeve. He swats her hand like a fly.

"Hey, what's going on?" she demands, horrified.

"I don't wanna fuck *you* any more," he says, sour-faced, like he's dealing with total shit. She doesn't believe her ears. "I don't wanna fuck you any more," he repeats. "Get lost."

"What!?" After it sinks in, she puts her hands on her hips. "Kind of brutal, huh?"

But Mike's not even paying attention, spotting his big-time prey at the entrance. The reject is mumbling incoherently, can't quite bring herself to accept the humiliation.

"Look—" says the Stud, with sympathetic compromise. "You still wanna fuck me, you have to go pick up another girl to come along. One better looking than yourself."

She's shell-shocked, but starts to consider. "Jailhouse Rock" comes over the house speakers, and the Stud lets out a battle cry of "Everybody wants to suck my cock!" in sync with the chorus. He's off in the crowd, lots of familiar faces from Columbus, like part of a duck-breeding migration. "Ya gonna sit in on drums with my band at the Garden?" he asks Mason Reese, passing the orange dwarf whilst following Alt to a prime table.

He's pure gentleman now, won't use any low blows in acquiring the supermodel. The Stud is past his feeding time—by now, he could have been home and back for seconds. Alt is clearly in charge of her entourage, it's her table. The Stud and I are invited to take seats.

"Are we mixing in London or L.A.?" The Stud asks me.

"Whichever city will let you in," I say, cringing at the thought of it. Sometimes Mike forgets which rock star he's already impersonated, and blows his cover with the prey. But this more likely happens at home, by which time he can convince the girl she should be flattered he went through the trouble.

The Stud guides the supermodel onto the China Club dance floor, where they appear like royalty. The get along famously, doubled up with laughter after four dances. She even requests "Walk This Way" from the DJ. But then the million-dollar model reveals she is happily married to hockey star Ron Greschner of the New York Rangers. The Stud trudges back to our table. "Something's wrong with the way she feels," he confides. "She doesn't have as great a body as I thought. If she was available, I would have had her already... There's not a woman on this earth I can't pick up when I'm hot as a pistol."

The Stud professes a code of honor that respects newlyweds or women in love with other men (unless they so much as wink first). And so, the Stud disappears into the horizon to divide and conquer new female territory. He leaves me with the supermodel.

She's out celebrating her father's birthday tonight, though she vowed to be home by one o'clock. He was a decorated fireman who passed away several years ago. I ask her a stupid question, like how many endangered species went into her fur. "It keeps me warm," she sighs, curling an eyebrow with interest. "So, you believe in things?"

God's Gift To Women reappears 10 minutes later to take his last shot. He tugs on Alt's elbow like a child trying to get a grownup's attention. But she doesn't respond. Never the less, he's lined up a pair of sisters, two barroom Doublemint twins in their early 20's. Both are running their hands over his leather cockpit jacket, caressing his neck, purring and anxious to get back to his big brass bed. They look like two dumb little lambs being led off to slaughter. He'll give them the thrill of a year, then show them to the door after he comes. Maybe he'll hit the Milk Bar before 4 a.m. for another score. Valuable minutes are ticking away, and he has to make his quota. Carol, meanwhile, has rejected him. But she engages me in an awfully friendly conversation, and it's the first time tonight I don't feel invisible.

## **Postscript**

Several months after my rounds with the Stud, I spotted a most unusual patron slumped down in his seat in the dank third-floor Triple Treat Theatre at Show World. It was the Stud! He slumped further in his seat, leather cockpit jacket unfurled around his neck, hoping I didn't see him. Like a dejected puppy dog, he finally owned up that it was indeed himself and shook my hand. In the company of dreaded men—legions of unlaidd masturbators, to boot—he looked around, sizing up the place. Some porn starlet was onstage. "You come here?" he asked. I was making my weekly rounds for *Screw's* Naked City listings, my weekly column.

"Hey, this is my first time here," he swore. "My first time ever." And then he let out a trademark sarcastic chuckle and choked a bit, like the cat who ate the canary.