

Topless dancers shed story behind the nudity

By Bob Lannin

Her promo poster reads, "Wanted—The Texas Bandit. Description: Height 5-4, Weight, 120, 38-26-38. Wanted for Stealing the Hearts of the Male Population."

The Texas Bandit is Dusty Summers, featured topless dancer at BJ's Hideaway, 5100 N. 48th St. Dick Coons, owner of BJ's, said he books a feature performer like Summers and a go-go performer as a lead-in for the feature.

Candy Delight, 23, served as Summers' lead-in performer. Delight said she works at BJ's on a weekly basis, "just on the side." She said she has a full time job as a nurse at the Tabitha Home.

Summers, 27, was working a two-week stint in Lincoln, working six days a week and putting on five shows a night.

Although she declined to say how much she is paid, Summers said she receives a weekly fee, set by the national agencies that arranges her performances. Summers said she has toured throughout America, and left Lincoln for a performance in Canada.

Delight also declined to reveal her salary. She said she also has traveled, performing in Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Kansas City.

Coons said that the salary range for a feature performer is \$550 to \$1,000 a week, while go-gos are paid between \$220 and \$450 a week.

Escape small town life

Summers said she began performing as "an escape from a small home town to something bigger." She said she previously had been a waitress at a "strip bar." Before taking up performing, she also worked as a restaurant manager, clothes salesman and make-up salesman. Rampant unemployment also lead her to her career, she said.

Delight said her family in Kansas City was involved in go-go and disco dancing. She said that the money she's paid keeps her performing.

"If it wasn't for the money, I wouldn't be dancing," Delight said.

Summers said that she likes dancing, and doesn't "see anything wrong in getting paid for wanting to dance."

She said she wanted to prove to herself she could be successful at dancing. She said she hoped to prove this to herself before she reaches 30, but whether she achieves this success, she plans on quitting within two years.

Working nicer clubs in Florida and Las Vegas would constitute success, Summers said, and currently she doesn't think she has achieved this success.

Summers said she dislikes being on the road by herself, since her husband lives in Houston and doesn't travel with her. She said performing has put a strain on her marriage and that she and her husband were nearly divorced a few years ago.

"It's like any job," she said. "There are good days and then there are bad days."

Audience determinative

Delight said the audiences play a big role in determining what kind of night she will have. Audiences at times could show more appreciation for her performances, she said. She said she appreciates the crowds at BJ's because "they don't reach up and grab you. They don't say any smart remarks. Sometimes it just amazes them (the audience) the things I can do."

Delight said she likes performing because she can meet new people and have the chance to travel.

"And I feel with a body like mine, why not?"

Since she wants to settle down and have a family, Delight said she will perform for about another three years.

"I'm trying to make a career out of being a nurse, and hope to be a doctor someday if I can."

Delight said her goal in life is "raising a good family and learning how to deal with people so my life can be good."

Summers said college students make the worst audiences. She explained that some students are rude, "saying things that

others wouldn't say." Students sometimes feel the need to show off, she said.

She added that there "really is no safe age bracket" for audiences and that it comes down to a matter of the personalities in the audience and how mature they are.

"I don't listen to the audience," Summers said. "Comments go in one ear and out the other. I know what I am and what I do so I don't pay any attention one way or the other. "This kind of life is just like any other one where you're in the public eye. After a while, you can't take the people, the questions."

Future questionable

Summers said her future is torn between being a professional country singer, ("I have a pretty good voice"), or a real estate salesman.

Her goal in life, Summers said, is to "be remembered by people as being good and having done something that made people happy."

Summers said she puts in about 12 hours of practice a week for her performances. She said some of her acts may take up to six months to prepare, and that she has invested more than \$3,000 in costumes and props.

Delight said that dancing comes natural for her and therefore she doesn't practice.

Summers said she has never been recognized off-stage by others who have seen her perform, and added that she hopes it never happens.

"Dusty Summers, the performer, and the real person, are two different people," she said.

Both Summers and Delight agreed that performing is an art form.

"The people come out here to see the pretty girls and see how good they are. As far as a turn-on, I don't think so," Delight said.

Summers said, "I think it takes a lot of balls for anyone to get up and take their clothes off in front of 100 people."

"Here (at BJ's), they come to watch you take off your clothes," Summers said. "They don't care about talent."

Delight emphasized her feeling that there is nothing dirty about performing.

Dancer's art

"A girl doesn't spend the money on the costumes just to turn the men on—that's her art. It's up to the man if he wants to get turned on. It's what he's got on his mind at the time."

Summers said off the job she enjoys lifting weights and doing calisthenics. She also said she believes in her marriage.

"The real Dusty Summers is just like the girl next door. I want to be recognized as a human being and not the stereotype stripper."

Summers said she gets propositioned a lot, adding that "you have to constantly be on your guard." Delight said she has not encountered the problem of getting propositioned.

"There are girls who do this just to turn a trick on the side," Summers said. She estimated that about 20 percent of the performers look at their job seriously and artistically, while the rest are in it for any money they can get. Through her work, she said she has run into a lot of pimps and prostitutes.

"I've run into a lot of things. I've grown up. I'm glad I'm not the little naive girl who left Michigan."

Coons said that BJ's also features amateur contests twice a week in addition to regular feature performers. He called the amateur performers "a lot less professional."

He said that BJ's gets about 15 to 20 calls a week from people looking for a stripper for a stag party but added that he wants no involvement in these affairs. He said that stags can get "real rough and mean, with no element of control."

About four different laws are broken once a stag party involving alcohol takes place, he said, ranging from dispensing liquor without a license to second-degree sexual assault.



Photo by Mark Billingsley

ee short stories

A university study of several years ago found that UNL students tend to be more conservative, religious, and lonely than other university students in the country. University students in general seem to be more lost than any other segment of the population.

In our own newspaper, personals constantly appear from people who seemingly fall head over heels for people they happen to see in restaurants and classrooms. Not only do they appear regularly, but they get answered. You get the impression that almost everybody is looking for somebody or something.

It's all part and parcel of the libido shuffle we all do at one time or another. Infatuations come and go of course, but they are constantly fed by the pre-ordained ideals that have been forced-fed to us over the years in movies, magazines, TV, and school. In the end it is somewhat dehumanizing, and the fantasies often become more important than the reality of just dealing with other people.

It is no wonder that the women's movement has shown a very real anger against

being pigeon-holed by restrictive relationships. As Pink Floyd has been singing, "all and all, it's just another brick in the wall."

It is tough to separate our fantasy life from our own shattered sense of reality sometimes. Who hasn't had an intense eye-contact affair with somebody in one of our classes?

What makes fantasy illusions so strong and sometimes so painful is their inability to measure up to reality. How many fantasies realized measure up to expectations? While I would wish that for everyone, I doubt that it happens very often.

Maybe that is just as well. Fantasy gives us a close-up view of ourselves. There is a lot of personal power in strong infatuations. That so much of our dreams are illusion gives us some ultimate perspective on our own inner workings. While I hope they never go completely away, I hope the learning, that goes along with it helps me to get on with the business of living and touching what is real.