

**Madmen and English Dogs**

By Dan Wondra



**New humor magazine . . .**

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The drawing, by Chester Blum, already has received some attention in New York, and Vare said, he has gotten a request to make a poster out of it. "I think people really like the Kinski bit," he said. "Everyone has commented on the ads in general, particularly the one with Nancy Reagan and Jim Palmer, and the 'Cruciflex.'" (The latter features a compact sturdy soloflex work-out machine with a man nailed to a cross with the headline "No pain, no gain.")

"But our most controversial piece has definitely been the Jesus Christ interview," Vare said. "We've received the range of opinions on that. Some have said it was really funny, others have said it was in bad taste. There's a minister down in Orlando, Fla., that helped us to sell a few more magazines by picketing a newsstand that was selling Playbore." The Kinski ad was Vare's idea, but the entire magazine resulted from numerous staff meetings with editors and individual meetings with writers. Among those who contributed include Roy Blunt Jr., George Plimpton, Jeff Greenfield and Chris Miller, who wrote "Animal House" and was a senior writer with National Lampoon.

Vare is especially proud of the final product since the entire budget did not exceed \$500,000. "Everyone here, from the editors to the writers to the artists worked at a lower price than they normally do, just so we could get this off the ground," Miller said.

**Local printing**

The printing for Playbore was done here in Lincoln by Foote and Davies. (You can't find a printer on the East Coast that can print a million copies for you," Vare said. "Foote and Davis gave us the best deal and the best scheduling.")

In the future, American Parody and Travesty might be able to afford the best. Only seven real advertisements appear in Playbore, but with the quick success it has seen in New York, advertisers who had been waiting to see how it would fly should be willing to buy next time, Vare said.

But don't expect another Playbore. It is a one-time shot, and the next product from APT isn't scheduled to come out until April.

"People don't realize just how much energy it takes to be funny from month to month," Vare said. "You don't have any breathing room, and deadlines are definitely harsh."

Vare said the National Lampoon is an example of what happens when the ideas begin to run dry and there isn't time to work on a quality product.

"The Lampoon has changed its direction now. Their audience is younger, and they're aiming for a much less sophisticated humor. That's not what I want. There's no way I could work for a humor magazine under a monthly deadline."

For that reason the next product won't come out until April, Vare said.

"I'd love to tell what it is, because I'm really excited about it," Vare said. "But part of comedy is the surprise element, and I'd rather not take that away. I will say it's totally different in sophistication and standpoint than Playbore."

**Hefner endorsement**

There's only one thing Vare would change about the success of Playbore. When he was the guest on the "Today" show last week, he told Jayne Pauley that Hugh Hefner, the Hugh Hefner, was so depressed by the ridicule of he and his magazine that he refused to go out into public.

But the truth is, Vare said, the Hefner family loved the parody. Several Playboy writers had contacted American Parody staff members personally to say the investigative piece into the phony world of professional wrestling was "right on target" and "the perfect parody" of the Playboy investigative pieces.

Christie Hefner, whose alter ego Christie lists Japanese businessmen, inherited wealth and abortion rights as her turn-ons, told a business meeting in New York she was thrilled to be the "placemat" in Playbore. And, the main man himself, Hugh Hefner was quoted as saying, "Playbore is the funniest thing I've ever read."

"Unfortunately, Hugh liked it a lot," Vare said. "But, that means they're not going to sue us."

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