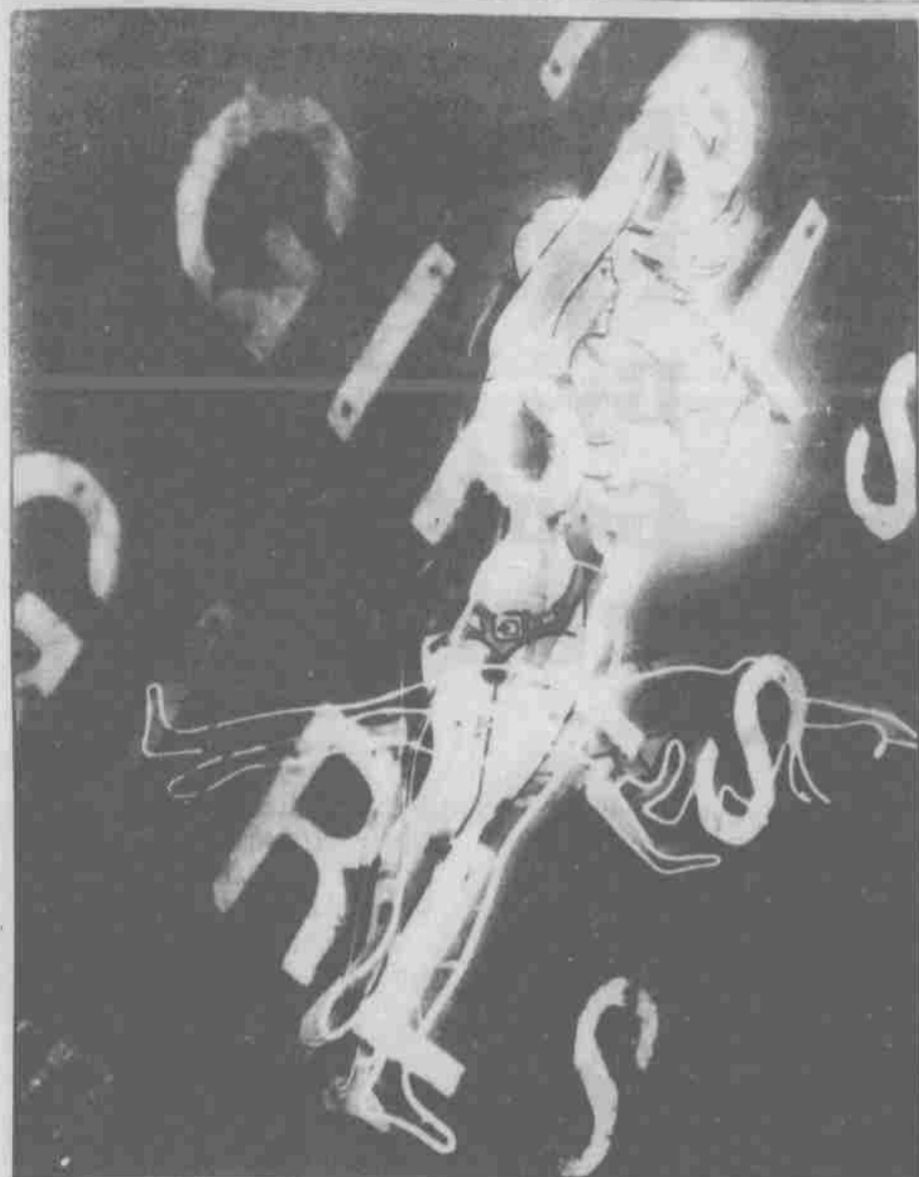


# "Touch"



Dave Bentz/Daily Nebraskan

## Great Plains Bump & Grind

By Lise Olsen  
Diversions

Discovering the sexual side of Lincoln isn't easy. The sleazy underbelly of the corn-fed capitol city

conceals itself well beneath the roomy sweatshirt of downtown-redevelopment projects.

But it exists, it can be found. It all began at "The Night Before," where a time became a place. A bar

that somehow swallowed up the thoughts of all who entered. A bar where the lights made the gin and tonics blue. And women danced.

Two trespassers observed and recorded:

"93.6 percent of the men here have mustaches."

"And beards. They all look about 40 and wear plaid shirts."

"The waitresses here are wearing leather G-strings and T-shirts that say, 'PARTY NAKED.'"

"She (the dancer) is wearing one black glove."

"Half the fun is watching everyone watch. Lots of heads shaking back and forth like 'Oh, that would be nice.'"

"Someone's put a dollar into her pants, or whatever you call it — G-string."

Jokes flash on the board — like the one in the union that provides soap-opera updates — behind the go-go dancer: "HOW ARE COWPIES AND OLDER WOMEN ALIKE? THE OLDER THEY ARE, THE EASIER THEY ARE TO PICK UP."

The women get on stage one by one and dance two songs with shirts and one without. They're not old. Not even close. They're not ugly either. They have long legs and almost no body fat.

"This really bothers me a lot. I feel like I'm watching a rodeo. I'm so embarrassed for them."

"It doesn't bother me at all. I don't know why. I don't think there's much obscene about sexuality."

"No, but she's just a sex object in this context, turning on a bunch of old coots."

Some coots speak to the dancer: "Hey, y'wanna go to a party later?" She (dressed in leg warmers, a G-string and a "PARTY NAKED" shirt) says, "Is everybody going to be naked?"

The coots yell.

She says, "All right! Let's go."

The red electronic sign flashes: "LINCOLN, SIN CITY NEBRASKA. IT'S A GOOD THING WE DON'T ALLOW ANY SHEEP IN HERE."

Through a speaker, Huey Lewis sings, "We've had our ins and outs. That's the way it's supposed to be."

Is it?

"The debate tonight is this — are women being degraded and treated like pieces of trash? Contrary to what we thought, there's no semen on the floor here, it's rather nice. Carpeting, rather clean. Your normal bar with a platform and dancers."

"This dancer, who is the best of all of them, was just swinging by the bar, on stage, like a monkey. One man said, 'Holy Christ!'"

"Another guy said, 'Baby I love you,' and I don't think he was sincere about that."

"Almost every time people clap for a dancer, it's almost always initiated by a woman. About 23 people are here — three women (not counting the dancers). With dates."

"That (clapping) shows that the women watching think it's degrading."

"Why do they think it's degrading if they're here?"

"They're not coming here for enjoyment, they're communist insurgents or contra rebels."

"This is actually rather tame. I think they're proud of their bodies. I saw a show once that said some do like it and treat it as a show-biz type of thing, as a talent they have."

"I wonder if any of the dancers have ever broken their ankles falling off their shoes?"

"There's something surprisingly human about it all, like the interaction between the dancers and the people. It's almost warm."

"It's getting dull, though." We leave. Destination: "Girls,

Girls. Girls. Topless. Topless. Topless." Another place that's a time. A time and an emotion: The Happy Hour. We enter this womb like a backwards birth.

"This is what I expected. The ashtray is filled on our table. It's dark."

"But the women still aren't ugly." A sign reads "Dancers, 11:30 a.m. to 1 a.m."

"They must not have trouble getting them."

"Hold on . . . This chick has tattoos on her breast." These chicks exit the stage through a small, black door. Rather symbolic, don't you think?"

Neon lips reflect kisses through a mirrored wall.

"These girls ride motorcycles, or on the back of them."

A row of mugs hangs behind the bar. A vase of fake roses sits in front of a long-haired beer-drinker.

"This is much more steaming, more animalistic."

The music blares "Oh baby, I love you, baby."

Who loves whose baby?

What is love in this place?

"She has crosses in her ears. She's gone to the ceiling at the edge of the stage and swung out so she kind of straddled this guy's head. I think that's rather acrobatic."

Men yell "yee, hah." Others ignore it, engrossed in a game of eight-ball.

"I wonder if this causes their breasts to prematurely sag?"

A portable heater lights up orange ZZZZs near the exit door.

"It gets to be very boring. Tits, tits, tits, gyrations, gyrations, gyrations."

"Tits, gyrations, tits. Flesh, flesh, flesh. Gyrations, gyrations."

We kept searching. But the night before passed, leaving us in the confused light of the morning after. Somehow, unfulfilled.



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