

# THE INDUSTRY

by JG



**JUST FLEW BACK FROM NEW YORK**, and boy, are my arms tired! That's what happens when you beat the fuck out of a chick and strangle her to death.

And jack off to pictures of her being beaten.

And get beaten senseless and hung over a ledge by some Mafia thugs.

And get thrown out of a Brooklyn bar onto the sidewalk by a fat Elvis impersonator who then hocked a gob on my cheek.

And hire a prostitute who was so blasted on heroin that she, too, looged on my face while riding me on top.

And drink bottles and bottles of whisky.

And what's best, it was all good, clean, LEGAL fun!

I committed all of the above acts in my role as Detective Jim McCormick, a vile, washed-up, alcohol-swilling private dick who spends fifteen minutes thrashing and killing the title character of *The Suzy Evans Story*. The feature-length film was scripted by **Dave "Doomsdave" Taylor** and *Exotic* columnist **DebraJean Danger**; Dave directed it, and Debra stars in it.

Acting's so much easier than writing. Acting has been a lifelong deferred dream for me. I wanted to be an actor throughout my teens. I even got accepted to study theater at NYU in 1979, but I never went. But more than twenty years later, these spoony-eyed kids offered me a golden chance: Not only the chance to act, but the opportunity to beat a woman legally and in front of a camera.

During the totally improvised murder scene, I got all Stanislavski on everyone's ass and went buck-wild. Breaking glass. Screaming. Threatening. Slapping. Dragging. Strangling. Talking all psycho. Then smoking a cigarette, looking defeated, and walking out of the room. Since it all happened at 3 AM in a mid-town apartment building, it's a miracle no one called the cops.

After the scene was shot, Dave was crying and said it was one of the most powerful things he'd ever witnessed. DebraJean was shaking; she thought her arm was broken and says she actually lost consciousness during the filming.

Fun times. Good places. Summer nights.

**I LIVE IN THE WEE CITY OF PORTLAND**, but I was Philly-born and raised. Grew up amid soft pretzels and white knuckles and brick buildings. Then I spent a couple of years in the NYC area. Then I lived seven years off Hollywood Boulevard. And then it's been Oregon since 1994. But my mannerisms are still more East Coast than West, more jerky douchebag than surfer dude.

This recent trip was only the second time I'd been back East in the past fifteen years. I flew back with **The Dancing Jew**, who's from Portland but sounds more New York than everyone in New York and acts more East Coast than the very soil which comprises the East Coast. We spent a fun week together in her Upper Manhattan pad, then the little cartoon character flew on to London while I kept filming in NYC.

I had brought a thick deadly chest cold with me from Portland, hacking up rubbery green sea creatures, the cold-spring NY mist making it worse. Hacking and straining like the old man I nearly am, I vainly searched for an antibiotic to suck the disgusting green pudding out of my lungs. And since drugs are bad for the immune system, I didn't do any Ecstasy, Viagra, heroin, acid, cocaine, magic mushrooms, Xanax, or weed. (New York is about ten times bigger than Portland, which means that by the time you get the drugs, they're ten times weaker.) Bored, I shaved my balls one morning, chewed on some raw garlic cloves to try and chase away my chest cold, and then worked out to The Jew's sister's Lynyrd Skynyrd CD.

Ashen-colored, depressed-looking huddled crowds. Shitty exhaust-pipe air. Gunmetal raindrops and the purring wheezing air conditioner in the back of the late-night First Avenue bus, liquid filth churning into the sewers from a sudden spring rainstorm. The rude, invasive, bug-swarm humidity. 4 AM subway rides where everyone on the train is stoned or crazy or both.

I didn't go to Ground Zero and I didn't see a Broadway Show and I didn't go skating at Rockefeller Center. I ate a cheese cannoli and slurped a root-beer water ice in Hoboken, gobbled a potato knish at LaGuardia Airport, and walked around The Bronx by myself, feeling like John Wayne among the Injuns, munching bravely on one of those Puerto Rican Meat-filled Pop Tart things. There are fewer places on earth I love more than the blown-out, psychotic, don't-ever-go-there Bronx, a million crumbling tenement buildings like jagged teeth in the devil's mouth. I got kicked out of a South Bronx *botanica* because I was sniffing too many of the essential oils. *No es bueno, no es bueno*, admonished the little brown voodoo man, shooing me out the door. The Bronx is still the *real* New York, but, sad to say, even The Bronx has seen worse days.

New York sports a lower Lesbian Quotient than Portland, or at least fewer openly lesbian gals. Whether this is good or bad depends on where you stand on the whole Lesbian Question. And there are clearly more fags in NYC...and every one of them skips faggily through the Village leading a fruity French bulldog around on a gay little leash.



Your editor surveys what remains of New York's sex industry after Rudolph Giuliani.

**EVERYTHING IN NEW YORK SEEMS HAPPIER** and gayer and safer these days. One never expects a city to *heal* once it starts going bad, especially one that used to be as sick as New York. To my dismay, I kept finding places such as Williamsburg and Alphabet City, bullet-ridden wastelands when I left New York back in 1987, are now yuppified hipster finance zones. These days, apart from 9/11 and anxiety about another terrorist sucker punch, New York seems almost uncomfortably tame, like a huge tumor in permanent remission.

I almost felt sorry for this pitiful giant of a town which used to fascinate my Philly-boy mind. New York used to scare the hell out of me, and that's why I idealized it. But against my better wishes, I learned a long time ago that the average New Yorker wasn't a serial killer or a jaded sophisticate, but rather a female Mets fan from Queens with a slight mustache riding the subway with her four kids. The girls aren't any prettier there and the people don't dress better. I moved away from there almost fifteen years ago, and I don't regret it.

New York seemed more fascinating in the 1960s and 70s, back before I was ever there, back in the Dark Ages of Son of Sam and garbage strikes and The Great Northeast Blackout. New York, psycho heroin murder mecca, babies thrown out of project windows, Kitty Genovese murdered while her neighbors watched and did nothing. That was the New York I never got to see.

Back in those days, New York and San Francisco were *venting* what we now call the sex industry and which thrives with such viruslike heartiness in Portland. **Al Goldstein** and **Ralph Ginzburg** were getting busted for obscenity left and right back in the day, planting all those seeds of destruction which would render something such as *Exotic* publishable almost forty years later, making room in the world for such a beacon of sweetness 'n' light as Yours Truly.

**Times Square** used to be Sex Industry Central. It was to sex what the Lower East Side still is for drugs...you could get anything you want, so long as you had the cash and the imagination. XXX movies and peep booths and sales on dildos and real hookers and fake heroin for the stupid white boys from Queens.

It was cheesy and microbial and dark and shame-ridden. It was nice.

But then came along Nazi Mickey Mouse mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who wiped away the Times Square sex industry as if it were a glob of snot on his Mercedes windshield. Times Square is now a Disney/McDonald's glistening Tokyo-style Jumbotron monument to All Things Family.

There's still a New York sex industry, boldly sputtering within the police-cordoned yellow-tape zone where the authorities have quarantined it; you see it in

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most NY dailies and weekly-freebies, whose back pages are stuffed with full-color ads for bony, scared-looking Asian escorts and puffy, airbrushed Superblondes. Manhattan in particular seems crazy for phone sex, which makes sense, because everything's so cramped you even order *groceries* and *drugs* by phone from your tiny apartment. And a New York escort section, whether it's in *Screw* or *Newsday*, wouldn't be complete without a full *page* or two of those she-male ads, the kind I've never seen once in *Exotic*, the kind with hot Latinas danglin' thick pepperoni 'tween their legs. Why are New Yorkers so fond of Chix with Dix? And if there's an honest explanation, do I really want to hear it?

The New York sex industry is still there, if shamefully and fatally neutered by Giuliani's morality police. But there's no OBVIOUS sex industry like there used to be in New York and like there still is in Portland, where there seem to be as many strip clubs as Plaid Pantries and certainly more jack shacks than gas stations.



**PORTLAND LOOKED SO PITIFULLY SMALL** as I headed toward downtown on the Max from the airport, such a feeble excuse for urbanity that I wanted to nestle it under my armpit and protect it as if it were a malnourished baby canary.

But after nearly two weeks in New York, it looked like heaven. I love few things, but I love this town. I'm fidgety and like to travel. I've been to forty-seven states (forty-eight if that strip club in Alaska flies us up next month), and I'm here to attest that Portland is one of the most ridiculously livable places in all of fair America-land. You could walk through Portland's worst neighborhood (that would be the one where I live) naked at three AM with little to fear, whereas in New York one never feels totally safe, even when fully clothed.

You can't get a good vanilla egg cream in Portland, but besides that, we're superior to New York in just about every way that counts to me. And in some ways, Portland does the East Coast better than the East Coast does itself. The potato pancakes are actually better at the Jubitz truck stop in North Portland than at the Kiev restaurant in the Village. And if I want some good Philly cheese steaks and hoagies, I just amble down to that place in Sellwood. And I don't do heroin, but all the junkies say the heroin's better here, and there's no question that the weed's better than that freeze-dried, worse-than-Mex, two-joints-to-get-mildly-buzzed New York ragweed. Not that I smoke weed, either.

If porn's your thing...and judging that you probably picked up this magazine at a strip club, porn is, sadly, your thing...there's really no need to go back East anymore. The sex industry, pound for pound, is much healthier here than the bleeding East Coast sex beast which the authorities have almost fatally gored. The cops and the laws, for the time being, are cooler here about everything industry-related than they are back East. Just pray that no psychopathic sadist such as Kevin Mannix becomes governor and does to Oregon what Giuliani did to New York. The Banana Joe-ification of Burnside has already started, and I think I feel sick.

But we still have Bigfoot and Buzz Martin and STRONG coffee and white-capped mountains. We have Tom Peterson and Scott Thomasen and Pete Scottersen and all the rest of those dudes. Fuck, this town is so backward that everyone still gets excited when a movie is filmed here.



We have perfect cultural collision of loggers and lesbians, of rural and urban. The omelettes are better out here. The air is fresher. The jails are nicer. You know, Portland, I've faced one high-scale personal disaster after the next since moving here almost eight years ago, but I still love you, baby. You're almost the Perfect American City.

Just like in sex, bigger and dirtier doesn't always mean better. Not always.

Cities are like hookers. The most expensive ones aren't always the best. And these days, Portland's looking mighty cheap and nice.