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Jennifer Lopez

Talks Puff, bodyguards and the truth about the billion-dollar body

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Jennifer Lopez photographed by Firooz Zahedi

It's not fair, is it?

Jennifer Lopez can sing, she can act, she has an adoring megastar boyfriend and, *and*, she looks like this. Tiffany Rose asks how it feels to have it all

When Jennifer Lopez walks into the room, I discover, it's probably a good idea to be holding your chin. That way, your mouth doesn't fall open in a gormless fashion as you gawp at how gorgeous she is. Because however fab she looks in pictures and on screen, it's nothing to how stunning the film star, pop diva and other half of Puff Daddy looks in the flesh.

Yes, the 30-year-old Puerto Rican sex siren wiggles the kind of curves that make women stare just as much as men. And with her second album, *A Passionate Journey*, plus two new flicks in the pipeline

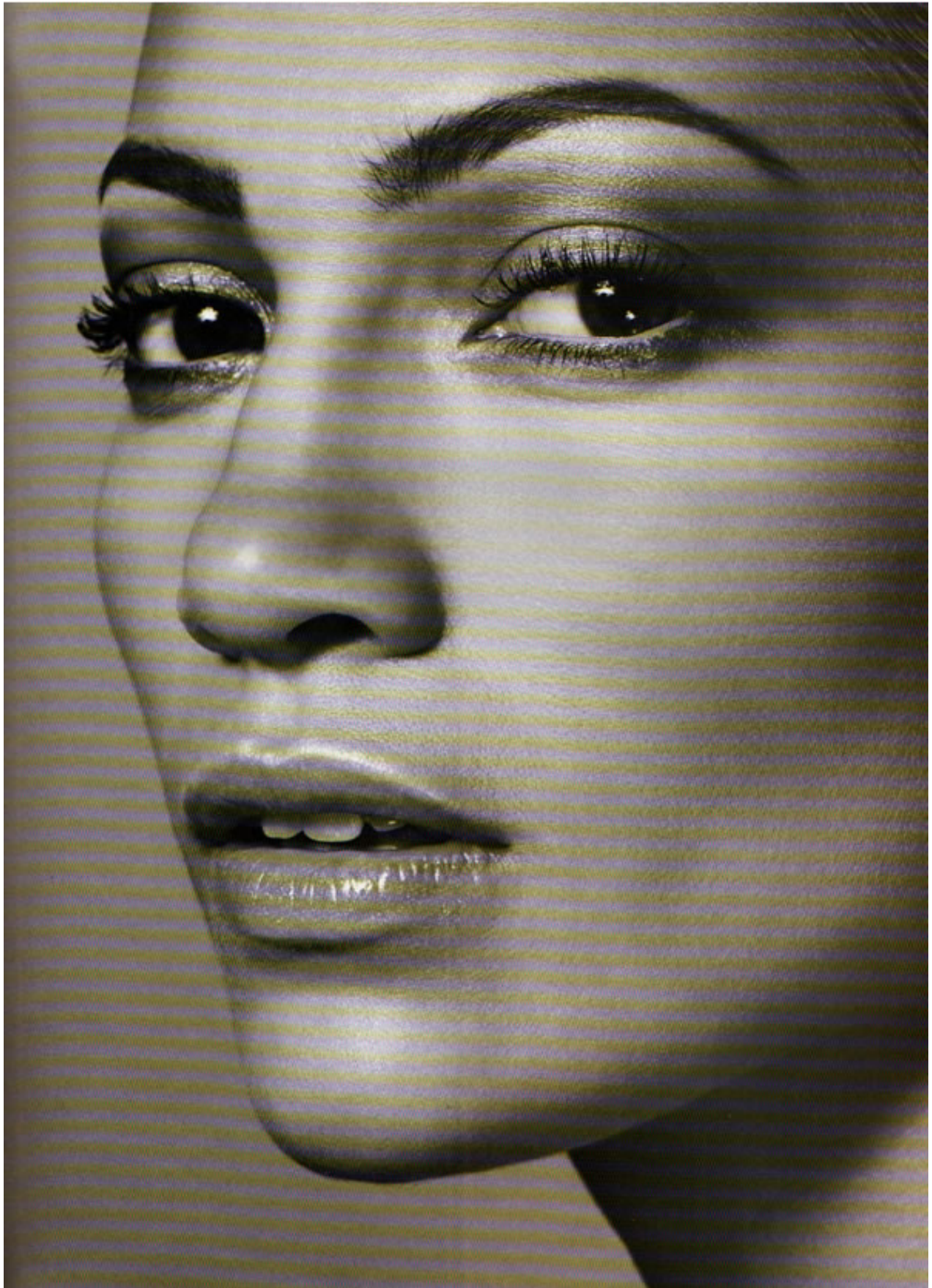
— romantic comedy *The Wedding Planner* with Matthew McConaughey and cop drama *Angel Eyes* — she's currently hotter in Hollywood than a chicken vindaloo.

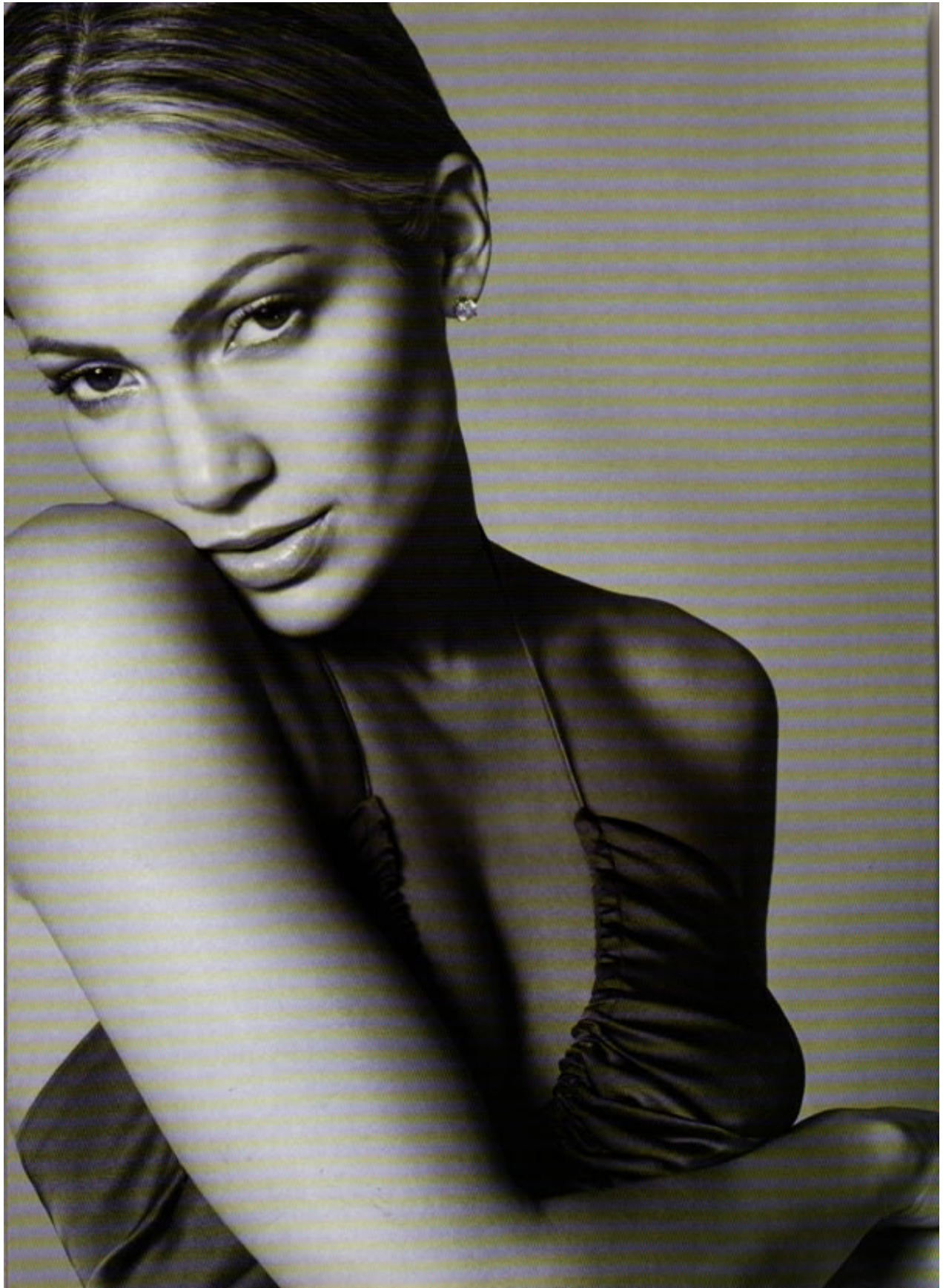
Talking of heat, it's a sweltering afternoon in New York and Jennifer is sitting opposite me in a majestic room at the plush Regency Hotel in Manhattan. But despite the oven temperatures outside, the air conditioning makes it feel like the Arctic in here. And as always, ever-professional Jennifer is the only one who has come prepared.

She snuggles into her baby-pink pashmina, crossing her slender legs and flashing chocolate brown, Manolo Blahnik

spiked heels. The rest of her immaculate outfit consists of a matching cashmere short-sleeved top and a knee-length tailored skirt that hugs her in all the right places. She's stirring her iced tea and mentions that she'd like more lemon. Immediately three people (a publicist, an assistant and a waiter) almost fall over themselves rushing off to find some. She's not precious, in fact she's really down-to-earth. But that's how people react when you're a '\$9 million-a-movie' star.

'I have great people who work with me and are like my family. They even call me Ma. My entourage are people who help me manage everything. I have a ►





◀ manager, a publicist and an assistant and I would not be able to function without them,' Jennifer explains.

'I'd love to be able to do it all by myself, but there are just not enough hours in the day,' she adds, almost embarrassed at being handed three plates of sliced lemons.

'But I hate security,' she laughs. 'I'm always trying to escape without the bodyguards and then Puff gets so mad at me. He's like, "You can't leave without security! You don't know what's going to happen!"'

Growing up in a strict Catholic family in the New York Bronx, Jennifer began her career as a dancer. Her first high-profile job was as a Fly Girl, a character in the hit US comedy sketch show *In Living Color*.

Then she gritted her teeth and aimed for the movies. In 1997, *Selena*, the real-life story of a murdered Latin pop star, made her an overnight sensation, and quickly she built on that success with *Money Train* opposite Wesley Snipes, *Out Of Sight* with George Clooney and the recent hit thriller *The Cell* with Vince Vaughn.

But while her career took off, her personal life suffered. She blames her ambition for her divorce from waiter-come-model, Ojani Noa after just a year of not-so wedded bliss.

But that's all history. Now Jennifer's head over heels in love with multi-millionaire rapper, Sean 'Puffy' Combs - aka Puff Daddy. Together they are one of the Hollywood A-list couples and, she says, 'despite all the publicity that surrounds us, we're just like two peas in a pod.'

So how does it feel to be red-hot movie and music property and half of one of the most famous couples on the planet? Only *The New Woman Test* can find out...

Be honest, is it hard work looking that gorgeous all the time?

Well, it's not all the time! I take care of myself. I think that's important because I feel better that way. I like feeling healthy, eating right, and I don't feel good when I eat too much, or the wrong things. I believe drinking and smoking really wrecks you, so I don't do that. I'm very disciplined.

And you have the sexiest curves... does it bother you when people make comments about your bum?

Thanks, I feel good with who I am. I don't feel I have to be like everybody else out there. I feel there's beauty which comes from inside and that's so much more important than what's on the outside. When people tell me my butt is too big, I don't really care. It's not about that. I mean, I look at my grandmother and I think, she's so beautiful. Her eyes shine, it's something inside.

What do you find sexy in a man?

Being secure with himself. A man who doesn't have a lot of hang-ups. It's hard loving guys

who have a lot of baggage. You're always trying to convince them that they're great!

They say you don't change when you get famous, but friends around you change. Is that true?

People around you do change, because they see you differently. Like I'll go back to my old neighbourhood in the Bronx and the people who played ball with me don't want to touch me as I don't seem real to them anymore. They forget I grew up there. They just see 'Jennifer Lopez' on billboards or on magazine covers, so it can be weird sometimes, you know.

When you were little, did you daydream about being a movie star with a pampering posse of stylists and make-up artists?

I didn't even know those people existed! I always wanted to be an actress and singer,

that was then. Now things have kind of picked up. I'm different and it's like I already know how to deal with it from that past experience.

Your second album, *A Passionate Journey*, is out soon - how does it compare with the first?

It's very similar... there's pop music, with a Latin and R&B flavour. Sean gave me a couple of songs, which I really love. I'm planning a tour for the spring. I'm very excited about it all.

But do you ever worry that people are more interested in your life than your work?

That's why I have to pull back from the media sometimes, to stay a little mysterious. I pray that the work speaks for itself.

What's the hardest thing about your work these days?

I think the travelling. I was shooting a film and I had to take a plane to Namibia for, like,

'DESPITE ALL THE PUBLICITY THAT SURROUNDS US, ME AND SEAN ARE JUST LIKE TWO PEAS IN A POD.'

but I had no idea what went with all that stuff. Like I didn't bargain on having no privacy and having to be made up all the time - you don't think of that. You think the star just shows up and that's who they are! There's a lot that goes along with it, which nobody can prepare you for.

So have you ever seen a psychologist?

Yeah. I was researching my role for *The Cell*, where I was playing a child therapist. I'd never gone to therapy before and I told her a problem that I thought I'd figured out. But she surprised me, kind of flipping it back on me. She was like, 'You're wrong.' I'm like, 'No, I'm not.' And she said, 'Yes, you are.' It was actually kind of funny though.

So, did you learn anything deep and meaningful?

In just one session I learned a lot, which was amazing to me because I think the perception of everybody who has never gone to therapy is 'why pay someone to talk about my problems when I can talk to my friends?' But they really have an interesting approach and they make you see the other opinion. It's sometimes good to have an outsider look into your world.

It's surprising you've never seen a shrink, though, considering the pressures of fame you've had to cope with.

Right. *Selena* was my break-out role and it was the first time I experienced the loss of my anonymity and privacy. All of a sudden things started being written about me. It was super weird. And it was a very, very scary time. But

a day and a half's shoot! Three planes in fact, which took 22 hours. Then we got on a helicopter, before we got to the tent. It's hard on your relationship.

So you couldn't talk to Sean?

Oh yeah, every minute, satellite phone!

And it must be a double slog, producing music and movies at the same time.

When you're inspired, you do it, you know? I've been inspired. Maybe I'll slow down if something happens, like making babies!

Ooh! Feeling broody?

I'd like to have a family one day. Not right away. No wedding right now. No, nothing like that.

And how many children do you want 'one day'?

One healthy one would be enough. I'll get married before I decide to have kids. My parents would kill me!

Go on then, when will that be?

[Laughs.] I think I'll just let it happen naturally.

OK, so what was your own childhood like?

It was good. I had a Catholic upbringing. It was healthy. We had a loving family and my extended family - aunts, uncles, grandparents - all lived in the same area.

You're the middle sister. Did you all put on shows for your parents?

Yeah, all the time. The neighbourhood kids would call us *Charlie's Angels*, because there were three of us. I had kind of blondish hair so I insisted on being Farah (Fawcett). We all had Angel haircuts and were very stylish, too. ▶



'THAT I INSURED MY BODY FOR A BILLION DOLLARS WAS FUNNY. IN FACT THAT WAS HYSTERICAL

And how do you cope with that stuff?

You know, I can't control that kind of thing, so I don't focus on it. I'll just drive myself crazy. I let them write what they're going to write. Press is a part of my life in this business. I don't pay any attention to it.

Do you care what your parents think?

Of course, if anything happens they are all I have.

What happens when they read rumours about you?

Oh, it's horrible for them. I've told them not to pay attention to that stuff. They know what's true and I've told them to call me if they're not sure. It does take a toll on my family. Like I'll go and visit my grandmother, who I hardly ever get to see, and she'll be like, 'You know so-and-so came over and said this about you.' And I'll be like, 'It's not true. Don't worry. Everything's OK.' It's really sad, because it's affected someone I love, but what can you do?

You hit the big 30 last year, how did you celebrate?

Sean threw me a huge surprise party with, like, a full house, you know? We also went shopping that day, too.

Were you bothered about leaving your 20s?

I kind of breezed past them and didn't notice.

And do you like to party?

No. Some people can go out every night, I don't even go out on the weekends. I like staying home. I'm really a homebody.

But without the old slippers and party pack of Dorritos, presumably. mw

◀ So when the money began to roll in, did you buy a big house for your family?

They all have nice places to live. You know, you give them the cars and the houses and make sure they're OK. I bought my first house last November in LA and it's still empty. I haven't had time to enjoy it yet.

How do you have any kind of a private life when you're this famous?

Nobody ever sees me, because I'm always working! [Laughs.] That's why they make up so many things about me.

Such as?

That I insured my body for a billion dollars was pretty funny. In fact, that was hysterical! I happened to be in New York at the time it hit the cover of the newspaper. I saved it! Apparently it started in London somewhere. I read somewhere that you have a manicurist on the payroll...

No! I mean, look at my nails. Do I look like I have a manicurist on call?

Um, yes actually. What do your friends think of all the gossipy stuff they read about you?

Oh, they love it. They like the negative stuff too, which they know is not true. They go, like, [yells] 'Look what they wrote!'

HOW DID SHE SCORE?

So how did the divine Ms Lopez do?

For	Against
She has proper, womanly curves...	...but they're in all the right places
She wasn't bothered about turning 30...	...but then, her multi-millionaire boyfriend took her shopping to keep her mind off it.
She didn't actually insure her body for a billion...	...it looks worth it to us, though.
She likes to visit her grandma...	...but even her granny's beautiful.

Sexy, happy, successful, fantastically glamorous but not stick thin. That's the full four stars in our book. • *A Passionate Journey (Epic)* is on sale from 30th January.

Photography Wayne Maserati/ASC Anthology

Close