

JANIE

PREMIERE ISSUE

Ten Steps
to a Beautiful
Life, by

drew

**Sex to
Write
Home
About**

**"I Want
Her Hair!"**
Get It Inside

**Style
Goddess**
For Under \$50

Brendan Fraser
Our Token Sex Symbol

**No Women
Allowed**
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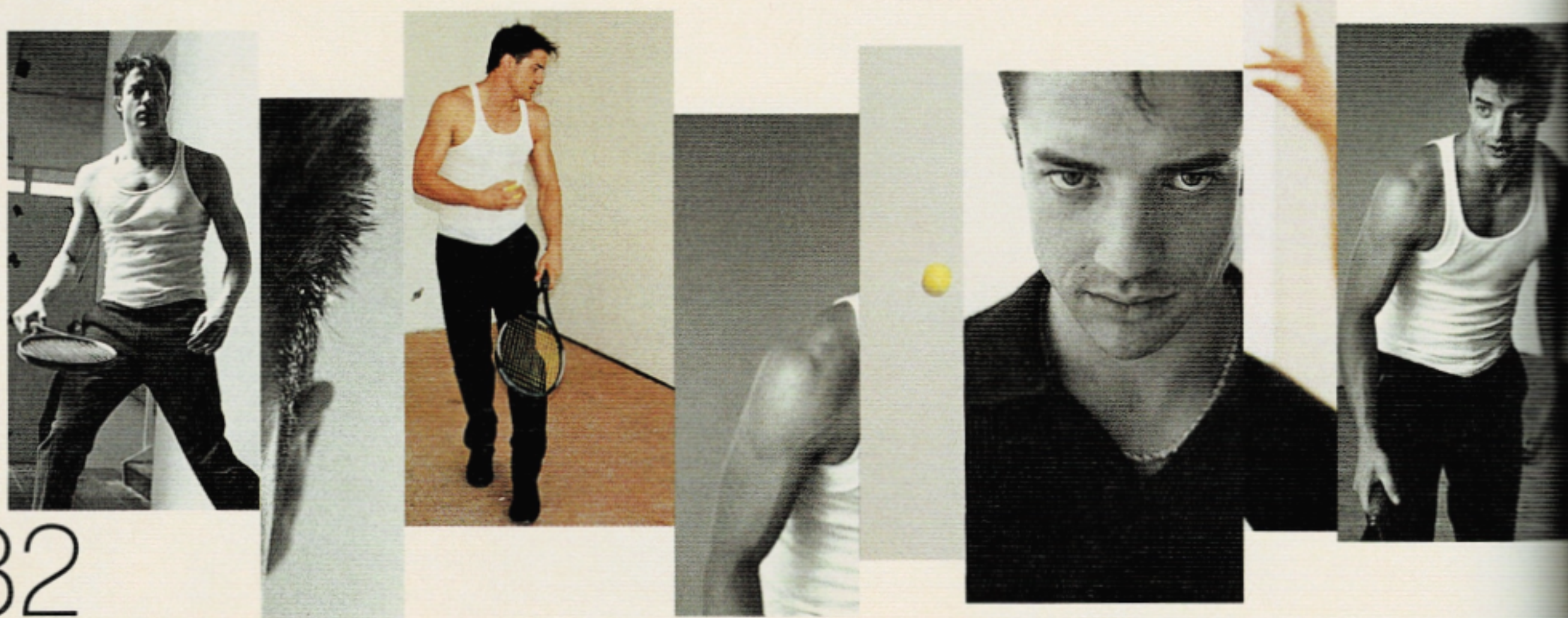
Cleopatra clone: Tank by Ralph Lauren Intimates; pants by John Galiano; necklace by Francesca Scarcini Design, Inc.; belt (around neck) by Whiting & Davis; ring from Fred Leighton.



Brendan Fraser, interviewed by Christina Kelly

To be honest, I wasn't that excited about interviewing Brendan Fraser. I wasn't sure what we'd talk about. I mean, I liked Brendan's portrayal of a Jewish prep-school student in *School Ties*, and I was the only one in the theater on the opening day of *With Honors*, in which Brendan played a Harvard University student who befriends a homeless man. But after I rented the already-dated metalhead movie *Airheads* at the recommendation of our deranged assistant editor Tony ("I watch it every time it comes on Comedy Central, I love it so," he sighed), I was like, "Who is this cheeseball?" Tony also liked *Encino Man*, where Brendan plays a man from the Ice Age who befriends valley boy Pauley Shore, so there's no accounting for taste. In the end, Jane thought we needed another cute actor in the issue, and Brendan was available. We met in The Four Seasons hotel in New York. Brendan turned out to be appealingly introspective and a touch weird—obsessed with mythology and such. And he had endearingly bad posture, slumping over his mineral water in his black shirt.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Dewey Nicks - STYLING: Agnes Baddoo - GROOMING: Judy Crown



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That was some layout you did in *Premiere*, where you posed as all the mythological characters and wore that gold leaf on your action.

Ah, the nude review [laughs]. It was a bit chilly. I'm a patient guy, but there was a lot of Vaseline and gold-leaf application going on.

You're not as frighteningly large as you were in *George of the Jungle*.

I wasn't that large in *George* in real life anyway. I was pretty much the same. But you pump up before every take, make sure that the seams aren't showing on the anatomically correct rubber suit and drink a lot of creatine monohydrate.

What's that?

It's a compound that engorges cells and makes them retain water.

You drank that? Really?

You can get it in any health food store. It's not that unusual.

What made you decide to take on *George of the Jungle*?

I really liked the cartoon version—it was way ahead of its time. Jay Ward, the creator, was really sharp. He put a lot of the same stinging social satire and political commentary into a kids' movie.

And I thought it would be fun to swing around on vines all day—which is what it was, by the way [laughs].

When you're working on a film, do you act like your character in your daily life?

Of course. I don't know who I am today. I'm the guy who talks about himself today.

Who are you in your next film, *Still Breathing*?

Let's see . . . Fletcher McBracken is a street performer who has all the best parts of an artist but isn't really an artist. It's a given that in his family, the men envision their true love, so he diligently sets out to find her. That's when the story starts inhabiting the realm of magical realism.

Wow. So what were you like in high school?

I tried really hard to get good grades, because that's what the school was about. My grade point average was maybe a few bumps below room temperature, but my IQ certainly wasn't. I went to Upper Canada College, in Toronto, so that meant that I needed to find some way to feel like I was alive. I found that working in the little theater they had there—I mean they were innocent plays and revues, but they really whet my appetite and gave me a strong sense of community. For the first time, I felt

like I could stand on my own two feet and declare who I am—even though it's vicariously, through some sort of other literary manifestation. And it gave me a strong sense of accomplishment. . . . Was that the question you asked me?

Oh, sure.

I'm not sure if I was grinding an ax or burying it when I did *School Ties*. The strange thing was, when I went to do publicity for the movie, the Canadian press were all frothing for some sort of searing remark toward the school. And I was really nervous, almost to the point of being physically ill before doing these interviews. The night before, I'd been called by the headmaster, and he was very friendly and invited me to the assembly that morning to address the school. It was a really good feeling. I never really got that sense of accomplishment from the school. I left a year early, actually. But the headmaster said something very cryptic to me:

Which is your favorite film of all the ones you've done?

I guess, as far as content goes, I'd have to say *School Ties*. I think it was socially relevant for its time. But there was a message of tolerance that needs to be listened to. Ironically, it was Rodney King who was pleading for the same thing—"Let's get along." I think in 20 years or so, it'll still be pertinent. That's the cool thing about making movies, they stick around.

You've worked with Joe Pesci, Chris O' Donnell, Rosie O'Donnell—have you kept in touch with any of your co-stars?

It's sort of like a quasi family that happens when you make a movie, and then it disbands. I don't like to say goodbye. I like to say "farewell," because I'll see everybody sooner or later anyway.

So tell me about *Twilight of the Golds*.

It was originally written for the stage, then it was made as an



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"Remember, Brendan, we know who you are." I always wondered what that meant; something in the tone of his voice told me to beware.

What do you do when you're not working?

Try and find a job. I'm funny that way. Um, I hack around on a computer—I guess it's a way to sort of take off in another world and still stay at home at the same time. I found this site where you can punch in any Greek mythological character and they give you all this information on it! I'm really a homebody, to tell you the truth.

Yeah, you're not exactly one of those people who's always in *Faces and Places in Us*.

[Laughs.] I like the couch, you know? I like finding the perfect sushi joint, that kind of thing. I guess I need to get out of the house more often.

Is there anything you like about being famous?

I think I'm sort of slowly letting it seep into me that that's what I am. Kids are really turned on by films that I've made, and I'd like to think I've stirred the pot a bit with other, more intellectual, ones. But sometimes not . . . I believe in high- and low-brow material.

HBO movie, and now it's being released in theaters in New York and L.A. The *Golds* are celebrating their daughter's pregnancy, and she finds out through genetic testing that her unborn baby is gay. I play her brother, who's a gay opera director. He learns that his own parents would have killed him before he was born had they known that he would be gay, and it divides the family. Um . . . I just gave away the whole plot.

Yes, as a matter of fact you did. Is this the first time you've played a gay character?

The second. I did a short piece that Steven Soderbergh directed called *The Professional Men*. It was sort of a standard pulp story. I was playing a switchblade murderer for the gay Mafia who answers to the big boss. And in the end, the big boss has me killed.

Thanks for giving away the end this time. Did you do any special preparation to play a gay character?

No, I'm a pretty perceptive fellow. I'm not gay, by the way, if anyone's wondering. But I'm flattered that I may be thought to be so. Immensely intelligent, creative and sensitive people. All attributes I would hope that I could ascribe to myself.

Why do you think people think you're gay?

I know they do. I read it on the Internet. ■