

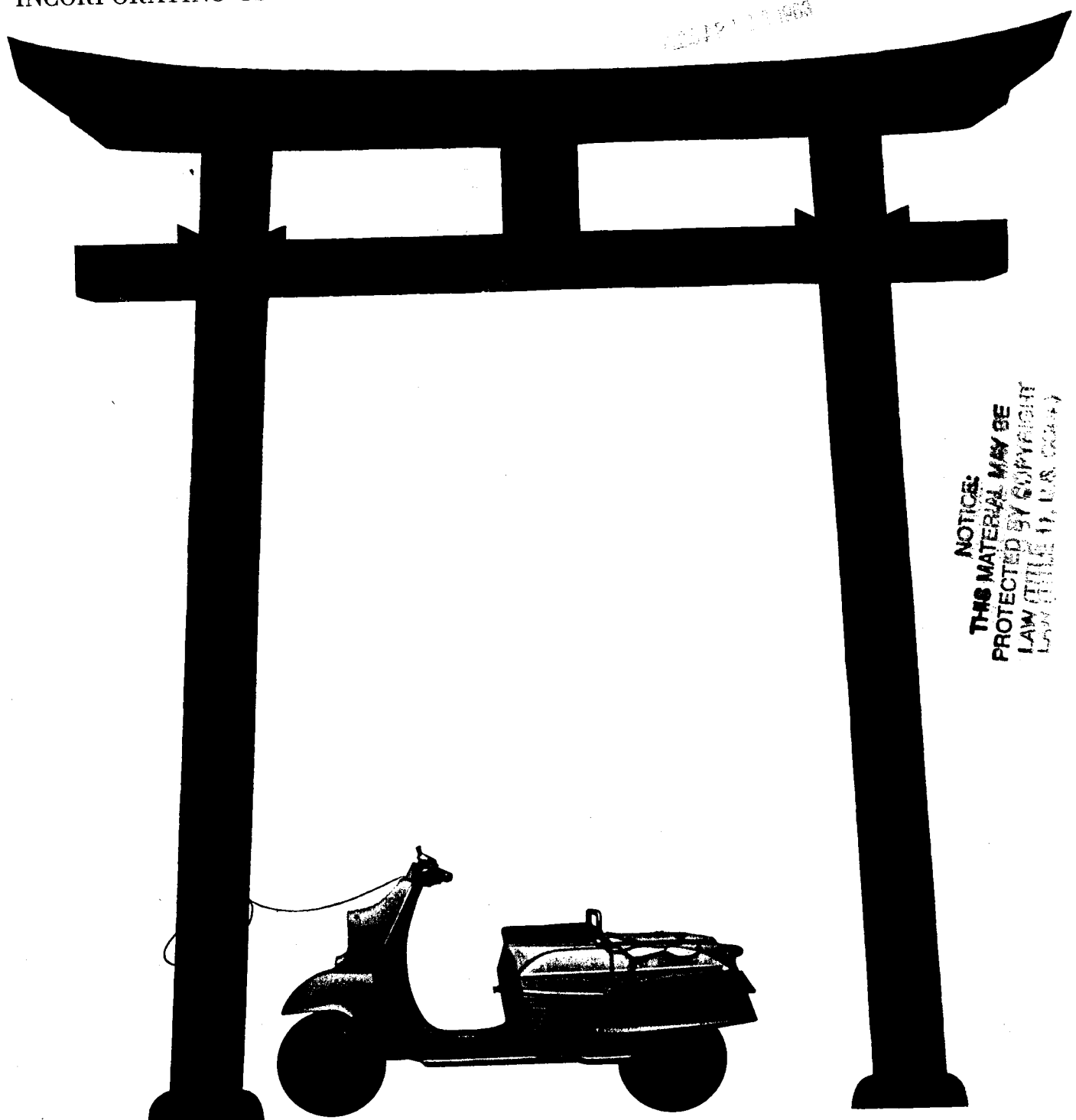
SHOW

THE
MAGAZINE
OF
THE
ARTS

75 CENTS
MAY 1963

INCORPORATING USA*1

MAY 1963



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JAPAN: THE NEW FAR WEST

A Bunny's Tale

SHOW's First Exposé
for Intelligent People

by Gloria Steinem

Earlier decades of this century had their Follies girls and their Wampus baby stars. The Sixties have Playboy Club Bunnies, called by their employers "the most envied girls in America."

What really goes on in their "glamorous and exciting world"? To find out, SHOW chose a writer who combines the hidden qualities of a Phi Beta Kappa, *magna cum laude* graduate of Smith College with the more obvious ones of an ex-dancer and beauty queen. A few weeks ago, she started her investigations armed with a large diary and this ad:

GIRLS:

DO PLAYBOY CLUB BUNNIES REALLY HAVE GLAMOROUS JOBS, MEET CELEBRITIES, AND MAKE TOP MONEY?

Yes, it's true! Attractive young girls can now earn \$200-\$300 a week at the fabulous New York Playboy Club, enjoy the glamorous and exciting aura of show business, and have the opportunity to travel to other Playboy Clubs throughout the world. Whether serving drinks, snapping pictures or greeting guests at the door, the Playboy Club is the stage — the Bunnies are the stars.

The charm and beauty of our Bunnies has been extolled in Time, Newsweek and Parade, and Ed Sullivan has called The Playboy Club "... the greatest new show biz gimmick." And the Playboy Club is now the busiest spot in New York.

If you are pretty and personable, between 21 and 24, married or single, you probably qualify. No experience necessary. Apply in person at SPECIAL INTERVIEWS being held Saturday and Sunday, January 26-27, 10 A.M. - 3 P.M. Please bring a swimsuit or leotards.

THE PLAYBOY CLUB
5 East 59th Street PL 2-3100

Thursday 24th

I've decided to call myself Marie Catherine Ochs. It is, may my ancestors forgive me, a family name. I have some claim to it and I'm well versed in its European origins. Besides, it sounds much too square to be phony.

Friday 25th

I've spent the entire afternoon making up a background for Marie. She shares my apartment, my phone and my measurements. Though younger than I by four years, Marie celebrates the same birthday and went to the same high school and college. But she wasn't a slave to academics—not Marie. After one year she left me plodding along the path to a B.A. and boarded a tourist flight to Europe. She had no money, but short periods as a waitress in London, a hostess-dancer in Paris and a secretary in Geneva were enough to sustain her between beachcombing and other escapades. Last year, she came back to New York and worked briefly as a secretary in a small educational foundation of which I am a director. I shall be happy to give her a good reference. Three mutual friends have agreed to give her strong personal recommendations. To know her is to love her.

Tomorrow is the day. Marie makes her first trip out of this notebook and into the world. I'm off to buy a leotard.

Gloria before



Who says a Smith girl...

Saturday 26th

Today I put on the most theatrical clothes I could find, packed my leotard in a hatbox and walked to the Playboy Club. It is impossible to miss. The discreet, six-story office building and art gallery that once stood there has been completely gutted and transformed into a shiny rectangle of plate glass. White canopies emblazoned with black Bunny symbols jut out over the sidewalk. Stairways lead to entrances on either side and are connected by an outdoor platform which is on a level with the orange-carpeted interior clearly visible through the glass. At dead center of that interior, a modern floating stairway spirals upward toward the second level. The total effect is cheerful and startling.

I crossed over to the Club, where a middle-aged man in a private guard's uniform grinned and beckoned. "Here bunny, bunny, bunny!" he said, and jerked his thumb toward the glass door on the left. "Interviews downstairs in the Playmate Bar."

The inside of the Club was so theatrically lit that it took a few seconds to realize it was closed and empty. I walked down a short flight of stairs and was greeted by Miss Shay, a thin, thirtyish woman, who sat at a desk in the darkened bar. "Bunny?" she asked briskly. "Sit over there, fill out this form and take off your coat." I could see that two of the tables were already occupied by girls hunched over pencils, and I looked at them curiously. I had come in the middle of the interviews, hoping to see as many applicants as I could, but there were only three. "Take off your coat," said Miss Shay again, and looked at me appraisingly while I did so. One of the girls got up and crossed to the desk, her high-heeled plastic sandals slapping smartly against her heels. "Look," she said, "you want these measurements with or without a bra?" "With," said Miss Shay. "But I'm bigger without," said the girl. "All right," said Miss Shay wearily, "without." Two more girls came down the steps looking fresh and innocent of cosmetics. "Bunny?" said Miss Shay. "Not really," said one, but the other took a card. Their long hair and loafers looked collegiate.

The application form was short: address, phone, measurements, age and last three employers. I finished it and began to stall for time by looking at an accompanying brochure entitled BE A PLAYBOY CLUB BUNNY! Most of it was devoted to photographs: a group picture showed Bunnies "chosen from all over the United States" surrounding "Playboy Club President and PLAYBOY Editor-Publisher Hugh M. Hefner"; there was a close-up of a Bunny serving Tony Curtis, "a Playboy Club devotee [who] will soon star in Hugh M. Hefner's film story titled, appropriately enough, *Playboy*"; in another, two Bunnies smiled with Hugh M. Hefner on "Playboy's nationally syndicated

television show"; Bunnies handed out copies of *Playboy* in a veterans' hospital as "just one of the many worthwhile community projects in which Bunnies participate"; a blonde Bunny stood before a matronly woman, the "Bunny Mother," who offered "friendly personal counseling"; and, on the last page, a bikini-clad girl crouched on a yacht flying a Bunny flag. "When you become a Bunny," said the text, "your world will be fun-filled, pleasant and always exciting..." It cited an average salary of \$200 a week.

Another girl came down the steps. She wore glasses with blue rims and a coat that looked as if she had outgrown it. I watched her as she nervously asked Miss Shay if the Club hired 18-year-olds. "Sure," said Miss Shay, "but they can't work the midnight shift." She gave the girl an application card, glanced down at her plump legs and did not ask her to take off her coat. Two more girls came in, one in bright pink stretch pants and the other in purple. "Man, this place is a gas," said pink. "You think this is wild, you should see Hefner's house in Chicago," said purple. Miss Shay looked at them with approval. "I don't have a phone," said blue glasses sadly. "Is it all right if I give you my uncle's phone? He lives in Brooklyn, too." "You do that," said Miss Shay, and called me over. She pointed to a spot three feet in front of her desk and told me to stand up straight. I stood. "I want to be a Bunny so much," said blue glasses. "I read about it in a magazine at school." Miss Shay asked me if I were really 24. "That's awfully old," she warned. I said I thought I might just get in under the wire. She nodded. "My uncle isn't home all day," the girl said, "but I'll go to his house and stay by the phone." "You do that, dear," said Miss Shay and, turning to me, "I've taken the liberty of making an appointment for you on Wednesday at 6:30. You will come to the service entrance, go to the sixth floor and ask for Miss Burgess, the Bunny Mother." I agreed, but then she added, "Are you sure you haven't applied before? Someone named Marie Ochs came in yesterday." I was startled: could Marie have escaped from my notebook? I had a 30-second fantasy based on Pygmalion. Or was there another Marie Ochs? Possible, but not likely. I decided to brave it out. "How strange," I murmured, "there must be some mistake." Miss Shay shrugged and suggested I bring "bathing suit or leotard" on Wednesday. "Could I call you?" said blue glasses. "Don't do that, dear," said Miss Shay, "we'll call you."

I left the Club worrying about the life expectancy of Marie Ochs. Would they find out? Or did they know already? When I got halfway up the block I saw the two college girls. They were leaning against a building, their arms wrapped around themselves in a spasm of giggles and,

suddenly, I felt better about everything. Everything, perhaps, except the thought of blue glasses sitting by her uncle's phone in Brooklyn.

Wednesday 30th

I arrived at the Club promptly at 6:30, and business appeared to be booming. Customers were lined up in the snow to get in, and several passers-by were standing on the outdoor platform, their faces pressed to the glass. The elevator boy, a Valentino-handsome Puerto Rican, cheerfully jammed me in his car with two uniformed Negro porters, five middle-aged male customers, two costumed Bunnies and a stout matron in a mink coat. We stopped at the sixth floor. "Is this where I get out?" said the matron. "Sure, darling," drawled the elevator boy, "if you want to be a Bunny." Laughter.

I looked around me. Dim lights and soft carpets had given way to unpainted cement block and hanging light bulbs. There was a door marked "-unnies," but I could see the outlines where the letter B had been. A sign, handwritten on a piece of torn cardboard, was taped underneath: "KNOCK!! Come on, guys. Please cooperate?!!" I walked through the door and into a bright, crowded hallway.

Two girls brushed past me. One was wearing nothing but bikini-style panties; the other had on long black tights of fine mesh and lavender satin high heels. They both rushed to a small wardrobe room on my right, yelled out their names, collected costumes and rushed back. I asked the wardrobe mistress for Miss Burgess. "Honey, we just gave her a going-away present." Four more girls bounced up to ask for costumes, collars, cuffs and tails. They had on tights and high heels but nothing from the waist up. One stopped to study a bulletin board list titled "Bunny of the Week."

I retreated to the other end of the tiny hall. It opened into a large dressing room filled with metal lockers and long rows of dressing tables. Personal notes were taped to the mirrors ("Anybody want to work B Level Saturday night?" and "I'm having a swingin' party Wednesday at Washington Square Village, all Bunnies welcome..."), cosmetics were strewn along the counters and three girls sat in a row applying false eyelashes with the concentration of yogis. It looked like a cartoon of a chorus girls' dressing room.

A girl with very red hair, very white skin and a black satin Bunny costume turned her back to me and waited. I understood that I was supposed to zip her up, a task that took several minutes of pulling and tugging. She was a big girl and looked a little tough, but her voice when she thanked me was a tiny, baby voice. Judy Holliday could not have done better. I asked about

...has to be dull?

Marie after



Miss Burgess. "Yeah, she's in that office," said baby voice, gesturing toward a wooden door with a glass peephole in it, "but Sheralee's the new Bunny Mother." Through the glass, I could see two girls, a blonde and a brunette. Both appeared to be in their early twenties and nothing like the matronly woman pictured in the brochure. Baby voice tugged and pulled some more. "This isn't my costume," she explained, "and I can't get the crotch up." She walked away, snapping her fingers and humming softly.

The brunette came out of the office and introduced herself to me as Bunny Mother Sheralee. I told her I had mistaken her for a Bunny. "I worked as a Bunny when the Club opened last month," she said, "but now I've replaced Miss Burgess." She nodded toward the blonde who was trying on a three-piece beige suit that I took to be her going-away present. "You'll have to wait a while, honey," said Sheralee. I sat down.

By 7:00, I had watched three girls tease their hair into cotton candy shapes and four more stuff their bosoms with Kleenex. By 7:15, I had talked to two other prospective Bunnies, one a dancer, the other a part-time model from Texas. At 7:30, I witnessed the major crisis of a Bunny who had sent her costume to the cleaners with her engagement ring pinned inside. At 7:40, Miss Shay went into the office and said, "There's no one left but Marie." By 8:00, I was sure that she was waiting for the manager of the Club to come tell me my real identity had been discovered. By 8:15, when I was finally called in, I was nervous beyond all proportion.

I waited while Sheralee looked over my application. "You don't look 24," she said. Well, that's that, I thought. "You look much younger." I smiled in disbelief. She took several Polaroid pictures of me. "For the record," she explained. I offered her the

personal history I had so painstakingly fabricated and typed, but she gave it back with hardly a glance. "We don't like our girls to have any background," she said firmly, "we just want you to fit the Bunny Image." She directed me to the costume room. Should I put on my leotard? "Don't bother with that," said Sheralee, "we just want to see that Bunny Image." The wardrobe mistress told me to take off my clothes and began to search for an old Bunny costume in my size. A girl rushed in with her costume in her hand, calling for the wardrobe mistress as a wounded soldier might yell, "Medic!" "I've broken my zipper," she wailed, "I sneezed!" "That's the third time this week," said the wardrobe mistress sternly. "It's a regular epidemic." The girl apologized, found another costume and left. Could a sneeze really break a costume? "Sure," she said. "Girls with colds usually have to be replaced."

She gave me a bright blue satin. It was so tight that the zipper caught my skin as she fastened the back. She told me to inhale as she zipped again, this time without mishap, and stood back to look at me critically. The bottom was cut up so high that it left my hip bones exposed as well as a good five inches of untanned derriere. The boning in the waist would have made Scarlett O'Hara blanch, and the entire construction tended to push all available flesh up to the bosom. I was sure it would be perilous to bend over. "Not too bad," said the wardrobe mistress, and began to stuff an entire plastic dry cleaning bag into the top of my costume. A blue satin band with matching Bunny ears attached was fitted around my head like an enlarged bicycle clip, and a grapefruit-sized hemisphere of white fluff was attached to hooks at the costume's rear-most point. "Okay, baby," she said, "put on your high heels and go show Sheralee." I looked in the

mirror. The Bunny Image looked back.

"Oh, you look *sweet*," said Sheralee. "Stand against the wall and smile pretty for the birdie." She took several more Polaroid shots. The baby-voiced redhead came in to say she still hadn't found a costume to fit. A tiny blonde in lavender satin took off her tail and perched on the desk. "Look," she said, "I don't mind the demerits, okay I got five demerits, but don't I get points for working overtime?" Sheralee looked harassed and turned to Miss Burgess. "The new kids think the girls from Chicago get special treatment and the old kids won't train the new ones." "I'll train the little buggers," said baby voice. "Just get me a costume."

I got dressed and waited. And listened:

"...he gave me 30 bucks and I only got him cigarettes."

"Bend over, honey, and get yourself into it."

"I don't know, he makes Milk of Magnesia or something."

"You know people commit *suicide* with these plastic bags?"

"Then this shmuck orders a Lace Curtain. Who ever heard of a Lace Curtain?"

"I told him our tails were asbestos, so he tried to burn it to find out."

"Last week I netted 30 bucks in tips. Big deal."

Sheralee called me back into the office. "So you want to be a Bunny," she said. Oh yes, very much, I said. "Well..." she paused significantly, "we want you to be!" I was startled. No more interviews? No investigation? "Come in tomorrow at three. We'll fit your costume and have you sign everything." I smiled and felt foolishly elated.

Down the stairs and up Fifth Avenue. Hippety-hop, I'm a Bunny!

Thursday 31st

I now have two Bunny costumes, one orange satin and one electric blue: the color choice and the quality of satin are about the same as those available in athletic-supply catalogues. Costume bodies, pre-cut to body and bra-cup size, are fitted while-you-wait. I waited, standing on the cement floor in bare feet and bikini pants. The wardrobe mistress gave me a small bathroom rug to stand on. "Can't have brand new Bunnies catching cold," she said. I asked if she could follow the line of the pants in fitting the bottom; the costume I had tried the day before was cut up higher than any I had seen in photographs, much higher than a bikini. She chuckled. "Listen, baby, you think that was high you should see *some*." The whole costume was darted and seamed until it was two inches smaller than any of my measurements everywhere except the bust. "You got to have room in there to stuff," she said. "Just about everybody stuffs.



And you keep your tips in there. 'The Vault' they call it."

A girl with jet black hair, chalky makeup and a green costume stopped at the door. "My tail droops," she said, pushing it into position with one finger, "those damn customers always yank it." The wardrobe mistress handed her a safety pin. "You better get a cleaner tail too, baby. You get demerits running around with a scruffy old tail like that." More girls began calling for their costumes, checking them out in a notebook chained to the counter. I learned that they were not allowed to take their costumes out of the building and that each girl was supposed to pay \$2.50 a day to cover the cost of her costume's upkeep and cleaning. Bunnies also paid \$5 a pair for their thin black nylon tights and could be given demerits if they wore tights with runs in them. The wardrobe mistress gave me swatches from my two costumes and told me to have shoes dyed to match. I asked if the Club allowed us any money for shoes. "You crazy or something, baby?" she said. "This place don't allow you no money for nothing. Make sure you get three-inch heels. You get demerits, you wear 'em any lower."

I dressed and went to the Bunny Mother's room. Sheralee was at the desk, her long hair pinned back and looking about 18. She gave me a large, shocking-pink form marked "Bunny Application" and a brown plastic briefcase with a miniature nude girl and "The Playboy Club" painted on it in orange. "This is your Bunny Bible," she said seriously, "and I want you to promise me you'll study it all weekend."

The application form was four pages long. I had already made up most of the answers for my biography, but some questions were new. Was I dating any Playboy Club keyholders and what were their names? None. Did I plan to date a particular keyholder? No. Did I have a police record? No. The space for a Social Security number I left blank.

Up one flight in the main office, I delivered the form to Miss Shay. The cement-floored room was checkered with desks, but, as Personnel Director, Miss Shay rated a corner position. She scanned the form and began taking more Polaroid pictures of me. "Be sure and bring your Social Security card tomorrow," she said, and I wondered what to do about the fact that Marie Ochs had none. A stout man in a blue suit, black shirt and white tie approached and gestured toward a chubby girl standing behind him. "Mr. Roma told me to bring her over, and I'd sure appreciate anything you can do for her," he said, and winked. "In cases of extreme personal recommendation," said Miss Shay coolly, "we do schedule a girl's interview right away." She signaled to Sheralee, who took the girl downstairs. The stout man looked relieved. A red-haired woman and

two men came over, but Miss Shay asked them to wait. The younger man tapped the redhead's chin with his fist and grinned. "You ain't got a thing to worry about, baby." She gave him a look of utter scorn and lit a cigarette.

I signed an income tax form, a meal ticket, a receipt for the meal ticket, an application form, an insurance form and a release of all photographs for any purpose—publicity, editorial or otherwise—deemed fit by Playboy Clubs International. A harried-looking young man in shirtsleeves came to tell Miss Shay that two men working in the basement were going to quit. They had expected to work six days for \$75 and were working only five days for \$60. They were upset about it because they had families to support. "I can't make changes," she said crisply, "I can only implement Mr. Roma's decisions."

Miss Shay stapled a set of Polaroid pictures to my employment form and gave me my schedule. "Tomorrow, you'll have make-up guidance at Larry Mathews', this weekend is Bunny Bible study and Monday I've made an appointment for you to see our doctor for a physical exam." She leaned forward confidentially. "A complete physical," she said. "Monday afternoon is the Bunny Mother Lecture and Bunny Father Lecture. Tuesday you'll have Bunny School, and Wednesday you'll train on the floor." I asked if I could go to my own doctor. "No," she said, "you must go to our doctor for a special physical. All Bunnies have to."

Miss Shay gave me one last form to sign, a request that Marie Ochs's birth record be sent to the Playboy Club. I signed it, hoping that the State of Michigan would take a while to discover that I did not exist. "In the meantime, I'll need your birth certificate," she said. "We can't let you work without it." I agreed to send a special delivery letter home for it.

Of course I won't be allowed to serve liquor or work late hours without proof of age. Why didn't I think of that?

Well, Marie's future may be short, but she can still try to make it through Bunny School.

Friday 1st

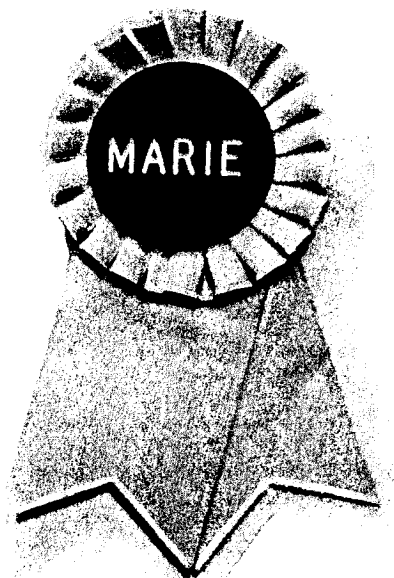
I was fitted for false eyelashes today at Larry Mathews', a 24-hour-a-day beauty salon in a West Side hotel. As she feathered the eyelashes with a manicure scissors, my makeup expert pointed out a girl who had just been fired from the Club "because she wouldn't go out with a Number One keyholder." But aren't we forbidden to go out with customers? "You can go out with them if they've got Number One keys," the beauty shop girl explained. "They're for Club management and reporters and big shots like that." But to be fired for *not* going out. ... "Well," she said (Continued on page 11)

PLAYBOY CLUB of N.Y., Inc.
5 East 59th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

MARIE OCHS				62
EMPLOYEE NAME				EMPLOYEE NUMBER
5'6½"	127	Brn.	Brn.	272-30-3663
HEIGHT	WEIGHT	COLOR EYES	COLOR HAIR	SOCIAL SECURITY NO.
Bunny	T. Roma			
DEPARTMENT	AUTHORIZED BY			

EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION CARD

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
PLAYBOY CLUB of N.Y., Inc.														
EMPLOYEE'S MEAL TICKET														
Marie Ochs														
EMPLOYEE NAME														
Bunny Shirley Tompkins														
DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZED BY														
NON - TRANSFERABLE														
JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC			



A BUNNY'S TALE

(Continued from page 93)

thoughtfully. "I guess it was the way she said it. She told him to go screw himself."

I paid the bill, \$8.14 for the eye-lashes and a cake of rouge even after the 25 percent Bunny Discount. I had refused to invest in darker lipstick, though "girls get fired for looking pale." I wondered how much the Bunny beauty concession was worth to Mr. Mathews. Had beauty salons sent in sealed bids for this lucrative business?

I am home now and have measured the lashes. Maybe I don't have to worry so much about being recognized in the Club. They are three quarters of an inch long at their shortest point.

Sunday 3rd

I've spent an informative Sunday with the Bunny Bible, or the PLAYBOY CLUB BUNNY MANUAL as it is officially called. From introduction ("You are holding the top job in the country for a young girl") to appendix ("Sidecar—Rim glass with lime and frost with sugar"), it is a model of clarity.

Some dozen supplements accompany the Bible. Altogether, they give a vivid picture of a Bunny's function. For instance:

"...You...are the only direct contact most of the readers will ever have with Playboy personnel...we depend on our Bunnies to express the personality of the magazine...."

"...Bunnies will be expected to contribute a fair share of personal appearances as part of their regular duties for the Club."

"...Bunnies are reminded that there are many pleasing means they can employ to stimulate the Club's liquor volume, thereby increasing their earnings significantly... The key to selling more drinks is *Customer Contact*...they will respond particularly to your efforts to be friendly... You should make it seem that [the customer's] opinions are very important..."

"The Incentive System is a method devised to reward those Table Bunnies who put forth an extra effort... The Bunny whose [drink] average per person is highest, will be the winner... prize money... will likewise be determined by over-all drink income."

There is a problem in being "friendly" and "pampering" the customer while refusing to go out with him or even give him your last name. The Manual makes it abundantly clear that Bunnies must never go out with anyone met in the Club, customer or employee, and adds that a detective agency called Willmark Service Systems, Inc., has been employed to make sure that they don't. ("Of course, you can never tell when you are being checked out by a Willmark Service representative.") The explanation written for the Bunnies is simple: "Men are very excited about being in the company of Elizabeth Taylor, but they know they can't paw or proposition her. The moment they felt they could become familiar with her, she would not have the aura of

glamor that now surrounds her. The same must be true of our Bunnies." In an accompanying letter from Hugh Hefner to Willmark, the explanation is still simpler: "Our licenses are laid on the line any time any of our employees in any way engages, aids, or abets traffic in prostitution..." Willmark is therefore instructed to "Use your most attractive and personable male representatives to proposition the Bunnies, and even offer... as high as \$200 on this, 'right now' for a promise of meeting you outside the Club later." Willmark representatives are told to ask a barman or other male employee "if any of the girls are available on a cash basis for a 'friendly evening'... Tell him you will pay the girls well or will pay him for the girls." If the employee does act "as a procurer," Willmark is to notify the Club immediately. "We naturally do not tolerate any merchandising of the Bunnies," writes Mr. Hefner, "and are most anxious to know if any such thing is occurring."

If the idea of being merchandised isn't enough to unnerve a prospective Bunny, there are other directives that may. Willmark representatives are to check girls for medium heels, runs in their hose, jewelry, underwear that shows, crooked or unmatched ears, dirty costumes, absence of name tags and "tails in good order." Further: "When a show is on, check to see if the Bunnies are reacting to the performers. When a comic is on, they are supposed to laugh." Big Brother Willmark.

In fact, Bunnies must *always* appear gay and cheerful ("...think about something happy or funny... your most important commodity is personality") in spite of all worries, including the Demerit System. Messy hair, bad nails and bad makeup cost five demerits each. So does calling the Room Director by his first name, failing to keep a makeup appointment or eating food in the Bunny Room. Chewing gum or eating while on duty is ten demerits for the first offense, 20 for the second and dismissal for the third. A three-time loser for "failure to report for work without replacement" is not only dismissed but blacklisted from all other Playboy Clubs. Showing up late for work or after a break costs a demerit a minute, failure to follow a Room Director's instructions costs 15. "The dollar value of demerits," notes the Bunny Bible, "shall be determined by the General Manager of each Club."

Once the system is mastered, there are still instructions for specific jobs. Door Bunnies greet customers and check their keys. Camera Bunnies must operate Polaroids, Cigarette Bunnies explain why a pack of cigarettes can't be bought without a Playboy lighter, Hat Check Bunnies learn the system, Gift Shop Bunnies sell Playboy products, Mobile Gift Shop Bunnies carry Playboy products around in baskets and Table Bunnies memorize 13 pages of drinks.

There's more to Bunnyhood than stuffing bosoms.

Note: Section 523 says: "Em-

ployees may enter and enjoy the facilities of the Club as bona fide guests of #1 Keyholders." Are these the big shots my Larry Mathews friend had in mind?

Morning, Monday 4th

At 11 A.M. I went to see the Playboy doctor ("Failure to keep doctor's appointment, 20 demerits") at his office in a nearby hotel. The nurse gave me a medical history form to fill out. "Do you know this includes an internal physical? I've been trying to get Miss Shay to warn the girls." I said I knew, but that I didn't understand why it was required. "It's for your own good," she said, and led me into a narrow examining room containing a medicine chest, a scales, and a gynecological table. I put on a hospital robe and waited. It seemed I had spent a good deal of time lately either taking off clothes, waiting, or both.

The nurse came back with the doctor, a stout, 60-ish man with the pink and white skin of a baby. "So you're going to be a Bunny," he said heartily. "Just came back from Miami myself. Beautiful Club down there. Beautiful Bunnies." I started to ask him if he had the coast-to-coast Bunny franchise, but he interrupted to ask how I liked Bunnyhood. Well, it's livelier than being a secretary, I said, and he told me to sit on the edge of the table. As he pounded my back and listened to me breathe, the thought crossed my mind that every Bunny in the New York Club had rested on the same spot. "This is the part all the girls hate," said the doctor, and took blood from my arm for a Wassermann test. I told him that testing for venereal disease seemed a little ominous. "Don't be silly," he said, "all the employees have to do it. You'll know everyone in the Club is clean." I said that their being clean didn't really affect me and that I objected to being put through these tests. Silence. He asked me to stand to "see if your legs are straight." Okay, I said, I have to have a Wassermann. But what about an internal examination? Is that required of waitresses in New York State? "What do you care?" he said. "It's free and it's for everybody's good." How? I asked. "Look," he said impatiently, "we usually find that girls who object to it strenuously have some reason..." He paused significantly. I paused, too. I could either go through with it, or I could march out in protest. But in protest of what?

Back in the reception room, the nurse gave me a note to show Miss Shay that I had, according to preliminary tests at least, passed. As I put on my coat, she phoned a laboratory to pick up "a blood sample and a smear." I asked why those tests and no urine sample? Wasn't that the most common laboratory test of all? "It's for your own protection," she said, firmly, "and anyway, the Club pays."

Down in the lobby, I stopped in a telephone booth to call the Board of Health. Was a Wassermann Test required of waitresses in New York City? "No." What kind of physical examination was required? "None

at all," they said.

Afternoon, Monday 4th

The Bunny Mother Lecture turned out to be a casual and much-interrupted talk with Sheralee in her small windowless office. There were seven other trainees, two of them already in costume. There was also a delicate blonde, the part-time model from Texas whom I had already met, a very big girl with very long hair who said she was a magician's assistant, a square-looking girl in a plaid suit and a pretty brunette who never took her coat off.

For the most part, Sheralee's talk repeated the Bunny Bible, but some points were new:

1. Because of the minimum wage in New York City, we must get a salary of \$50 a week. We get tips, but the Club takes 50 percent of the first \$30 worth of those that are charged, 25 percent of amounts up to \$60 and 5 percent after that. "That means half of everything," whispered a girl in costume. "Who gets more than \$30 a day?"
2. We may keep all tips that are given to us in cash, but if we indicate any preference for cash tips we will be fired.
3. "We don't even want you kids to know what 'Drink Average' means," said Sheralee, and explained that it meant the number of drinks per customer. "But if you give good service, you're bound to get more reorders, and you get merits for good service. A hundred merits equal \$25."
4. If we meet boyfriends or husbands after work, we must do it at least two blocks from the Club. Customers must never see us meeting other men.
5. We should never leave money in our lockers. Two girls have just been fired for stealing.
6. Because of "special problems in New York," we can't be charged money for demerits, so we may buy them back with merits. If a hundred merits are worth \$25, isn't it the same thing? "No," said Sheralee.
7. Number One Keyholders are given special treatment; i.e., we bring them telephone, pad and pen immediately. Playboy International then "absorbs" the amount of their bills. Number One Keys go to the executives of all the Clubs, important members of the press and a few other VIPs. We may also give them our names, accompany them in the Club and go out with them. The magician's assistant asked if we had to go out with them. Sheralee said, "Of course not." "But," she said, "one of the Room Directors got mad at me for not telling my last name to a Number One Keyholder. I explained that I was married, but he said I should give my last name anyway." Sheralee said she was sure the Room Director didn't mean it. "You never have to do anything you don't want," she said comfortingly.
8. The apartment of Vic Lownes is used for Playboy's promotional parties in New York just as Hugh Hefner's house is used in Chicago. ("Mr. Lownes used to run the Clubs," Sheralee explained, "but now he's associated mostly with the magazine.") When we go to such parties, we are not allowed to bring

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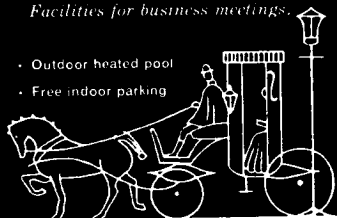
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men. "Not even husbands?" the magician's assistant asked. "Absolutely no men," said Sheralee. "But of course you don't have to go if you don't want to."

We all went down to the VIP Room for the Bunny Father Lecture, but not before a Bunny stopped at the door of Sheralee's office and called "Gloria!" I froze. After what seemed an eternity, the Bunny sitting next to me answered. It was her name, too. I have learned to answer to Marie. Now I must stop answering to Gloria.

There was no Bunny Father, but two slide shows with taped narration and jazz background were presented as his lecture. One was on Bunnies in general and offered nothing new except that when customers tried to "get familiar," we were to say, "Sir, you are not allowed to touch the Bunnies." The second half of the Bunny Father Lecture was called "The Cocktail Bunny" and showed how to set up trays, fill out checks and place drinks on tables. The narration didn't synchronize with the slides, the room was cold and I emerged with a splitting headache.

Sheralee said that Miss Shay wanted to see me. My heart sank.

The main office was the same fluorescent-lit chaos as before, but Miss Shay was an island of calm. I would need an identification card, she said, to get in and out of the building. I gave her the note from the doctor, and my real Social Security number. I explained that I had lost the card. She looked doubtful but took the number.

I wanted to ask about this morning's medical puzzle, but decided against it for the moment. By calling attention to myself, I might only jog her memory about the missing birth certificate. I told her that my file was complete except for a chest X ray, and I left. It's hard to believe that the efficient Miss Shay won't catch up with me soon, but I'll stay until discovered.

Tuesday 5th

At noon today, I waited in line for a free chest X ray at the Department of Health, muttering "Flamingo gets cherry, orange and lime circle, Mist gets lemon twist, cordials go in London Docks" under my breath. These bits of wisdom from my Drink Script and all the other documents in that brown plastic envelope were to be the subject of a written Bunny Quiz at 3:00.

I reported to Sheralee and she greeted me with a rush. "Oh sweetie, I'm absolutely desperate!" She needed an "over-21 girl," she said, to work the hat check concession from 7:30 that evening to four in the morning. Would I help her out? Of course I would, I said, if she thought I could handle it. "Oh sure, sweetie," said Sheralee, "it's terrifically simple." My matching shoes weren't ready yet, but never mind. I could wear black, she said. All I had to do was to be there in make-up by seven. I was surprised and elated. I would have at least one night "on the floor" after all. I would, that is, if I could successfully avoid Miss Shay.

The quiz turned out to be a list of 61 short-answer questions. Our class of eight scribbled seriously while Sheralee read the questions aloud. I could see the Texas model looking perplexed, her mouth slightly open, and the Bunny named Gloria was chewing on her knuckle. I decided it wouldn't pay to be too smart, and wrote down six wrong answers. We scored each others' papers and read out the results. I was top of the class with nine wrong, the magician's assistant had ten, and everyone else missed 14 or more, Texas nearly 30. When the Club says a Bunny is chosen for "1) Beauty, 2) Personality and 3) Ability," the order must be significant.

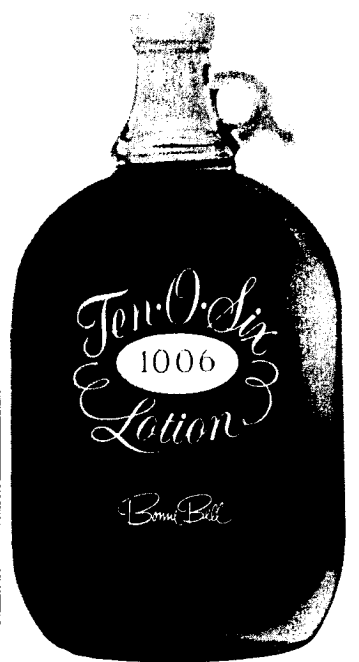
We went to the Penthouse, a large fourth-floor room with a back-lit plastic panel depicting roof tops. Sheralee seated us at a row of deserted tables and began to quiz us on drinks. What is Fleischmann's? "Gin." What is Cutty Sark? Two girls didn't know, but the third triumphantly said "Scotch." What is Vat 69? "I haven't studied these," said Texas. "Scotch," said the pretty brunette. What's Courvoisier? "Ooo, I know, I memorized that. It's . . . cognac!" said Gloria. What's Piper Heidsieck? The delicate blonde didn't know. "Haven't you ever had champagne?" asked Sheralee. No, said the blonde, she'd never seen it. "It looks just like ginger ale," said Sheralee, "only it costs lots and lots of money." After several rounds of quizzing, everyone except Texas had been able to answer a few. She hung her hennaed head and Sheralee lectured her severely.

A very tall, very pale Negro girl came over and introduced herself as our Training Bunny. She was thin and fragile as a high fashion model, and very pretty. "She's one of the oldest Bunnies here. Everybody just loves her," said Gloria. "They call colored girls Chocolate Bunnies," said another girl, and giggled.

We spent a hurried hour learning the Bunny Stance (a model's pose with one hip jutted out) and the Bunny Dip (a back-leaning way of placing drinks on low tables without falling out of our costumes). We learned the ritual serving sentences: "Good evening, sir, I am your Bunny Marie. May I see the member's key, please? Are you the keyholder or is this a borrowed key? Thank you, now I'll be happy to take your order." No deviation allowed. I wondered if the uniformity ever bored the customers. "Is there anything else I can get you, Mr. Jones?" "Thank you, Mr. Jones, come back and see us again." I was an IBM machine and I was being programed.

I'm at home now and about to retreat behind greasepaint and false eyelashes. The office will be closed when I get there: no Miss Shay to forbid me to work. My career as a Bunny may be short, but at least it will include one night of "Customer Contact."

Next month, in the second half of "A Bunny's Tale," Miss Steinem undergoes her initiation as a full-fledged Table Bunny, does a Bunny's duties for her allotted time and departs a wiser if not much older young lady.



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