

MANICAVE

P L A A B E S

MAR | APR 2020

Why
ATYPICAL
is the best
TV Show on
NETFLIX

Florida Keys
It's All About
Attitude

Playmate
of the
Month
**HEDY
WEAVER**

BLACK
'oxygen

A Deeper
Look Into Their
Latest Album
**"The Times of
Our Lives"**

I'm a good ole
southern boy by
**KENNESAW
TAYLOR**

The
**Stephanie
Landa**
Story by
*Mindy
Hall*

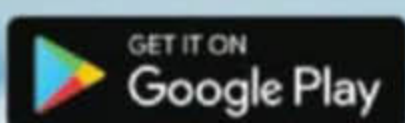




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Ainsley Rae

Photography by Gimmy Gaglio

MANCAVE BABES

- 06 Ekaterina Zueva
- 16 Argentina Vázquez
- 32 Corina Basso
- 42 Claire McGuffick
- 52 Emily Cole
- 58 Hedy Weaver
- 74 Jessie Fierce
- 86 Lindsey Byng
- 96 Sam Mathias
- 106 Kayla Prisco
- 122 Ciara Nicholas

ARTICLES

- 28 Black Oxygen
- 50 Florida Keys
- 72 Best TV Show
- 94 Shrimp and Grits
- 116 Stephanie Landa



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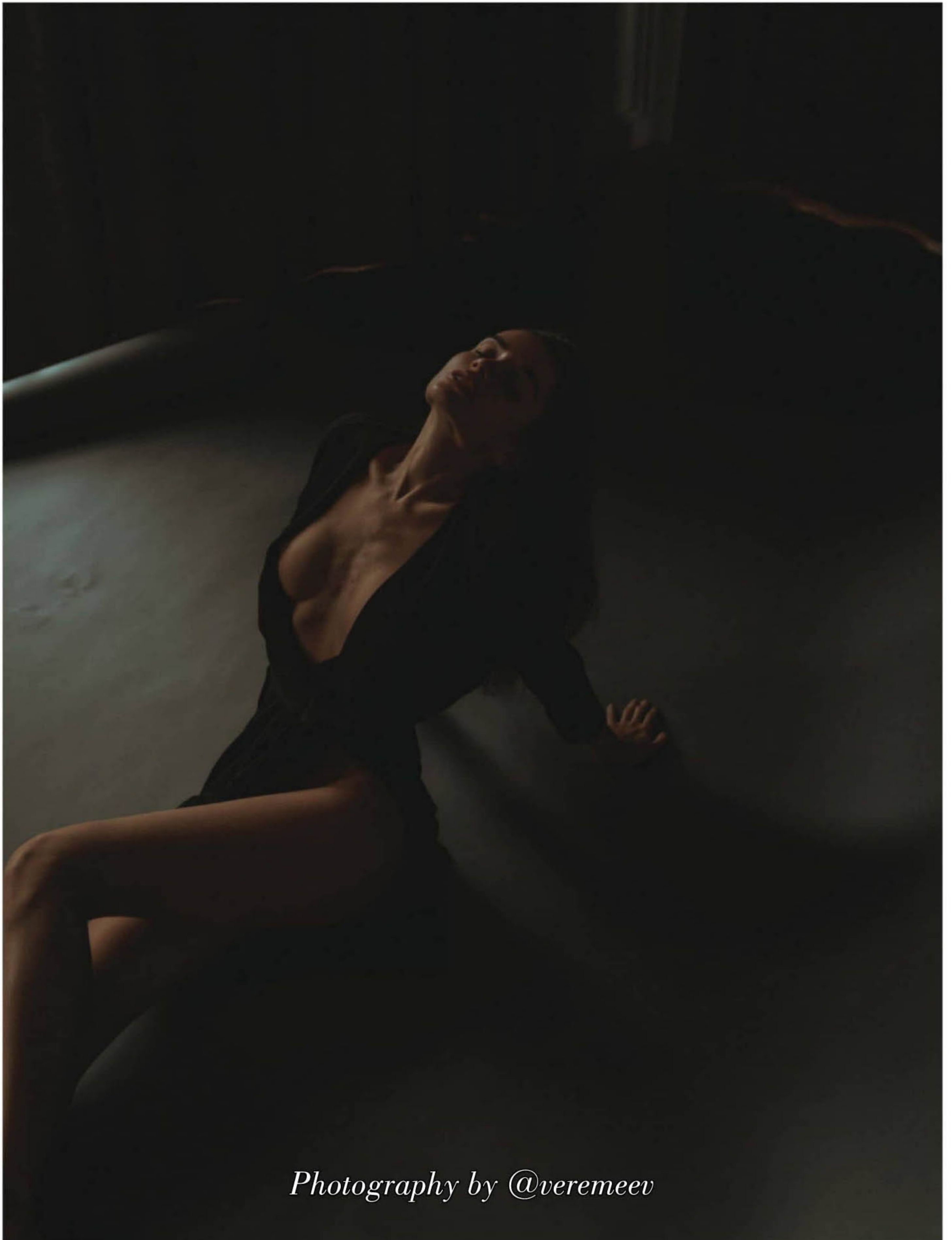
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Photography by Kevin Talley



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Photography by @veremeev



Photography by KELVIC



Photography by KELVIC





Photography by Dimitriy Lobonov



Interview

Do you prefer selfies or camera shots and why?

- I prefer camera shots just because I love the thing that all people see me different.

What do you think is wrong with the world?

- That most of the people care only about themselves

What's right in the world?

- Blue sky ☀☀

Should books be determined to be outdated and no longer functional?

- Of course not. I love books and lots of people do

Do you have a favorite number?

- I don't really care about numbers. But the first number came to my mind is my birthday day. 29

Do you care at all about Astrology?

- No. But sometimes it's funny

Thoughts on city life versus country life?

- I'm absolutely a city girl. I love when you have lots of places to visit and a lot of things to do.

Where will you be in exactly one year from this moment?

- Somewhere on the beach

Is it ever okay to cheat at anything, why or why not?

- Cheating is not a good idea. Everyone will get what they deserve

What would you wear on the perfect date?

- top and jeans

One thing you'd change, if you ruled the world?

- it's impossible to point out only one thing. Too much pain in the world. I wish all children, animals and old people won't suffer

If your life was made into a movie, who would play your part and which actor would you want to be your leading man?

- It won't be someone popular







Ekaterina Zueva

Photography by Dimitriy Lobonov



Argentina Vázquez

Photography by Fernando Cortes











“FASHION IS
VERY IMPORTANT.
IT IS LIFE -
ENHANCING AND,
LIKE EVERYTHING
THAT GIVES
PLEASURE, IT IS
WORTH DOING
WELL.”









Photography by Fernando Cortes

Argentina Vázquez



Black Oxygen







THE TIMES OF
OUR LIVES (COLLECTION) IS
A TRUE TESTAMENT TO WHAT
GREAT SONGWRITING AND
TRANSPARENCY IN YOUR
LYRICS CAN DO FOR A BAND.



ARTICLE BY: BARRETT CHAISE STEPHENS

BLACK OXYGEN – A DEEPER LOOK INTO THE ALBUM THAT FINALLY HELPED THE DUO BREAK #1 ON BILLBOARD!

Artist: Black Oxygen

Album: The Times of Our Lives (Deluxe Edition)

Label: Sony Orchard/Curtain Call Records

Since their humble beginnings in Kansas City, boundary-breaking rock duo Black Oxygen have been a testament to what hard work can do for a music career.

With the release of their latest album, *The Times of Our Lives (Collection)*, they not only have broken personal records but have set standards high for the rock community in general. For example, their latest single “Everything” has reached #1 on Billboard’s “Most Added” chart and continues to see mass levels of success.

While they ride the wave, they’ve toured Canada, were invited to Hugh Hefner’s final Halloween party at the Playboy Mansion a few years back (which inspired the album’s title track) and even collaborated with artists like Shifty Shellshock (CrazyTown) and KC’s own Tech N9ne!

They even had the chance to perform the latter of the two on Fox TV with Young Miller Tha Don. Let’s talk about their sound and how they manage to stay ahead of the curve, though. While they dabbled more in the pop/hip-hop realm with their latest EP,

City of Angels, this album displays just how much the pair have grown as songwriters, offering the best of both worlds.

Independent until their signing to Sony Orchard / Curtain Call Records, they found the right team to help them develop their vision.

Vocalist David Lyle strays out of his comfort zone and gets more vulnerable than ever on this album. Lyrically, this album is the most personal he’s ever been and displays the hardships of life in LA and what it takes to make it.

There are also references to drug use, partying and just a general ability to enjoy life as it comes. *The Times of Our Lives (Collection)*, while being labeled as such, is more than just a collection of songs.

These aren’t re-hashed ideas that have been done by the group time and time again.

There are no “updated versions,” this is 21 tracks of the best they have to offer and a glimpse of what they’re capable of, both as a band and as songwriters.

Vocalist David Lyle strays out of his comfort zone and gets more vulnerable than ever on this album. Lyrically, this album is the most personal he's ever been and displays the hardships of life in LA and what it takes to make it.

There are a lot of risks being taken on this album, in terms of blending of styles. For example, one of the most prominent of these is the hip-hop beat that leads into the more heavy, driven and emotional track that is "Forever," which features elements of EDM and explores a more eclectic style to their sound.

It's not hard to see why "Everything" reached #1. Beginning with a beautiful, acoustic arrangement, this track has an incredible build-up and "feel-good" vibe to it.

There are a few pace changes that really keep the listener guessing and the underlying keyboards in the chorus really give it an eerie feel, despite the positive nature of the track.

There are also some group chanted parts on this track that give it a pop-punk feel, at times.

I believe what really elevated this track to where it is, though, is that there is a heavy relation to the lyrics to many who will hear it. Coupled with a killer bridge, an explosive solo and an amazing break into the final chorus... this is a recipe for success if I've ever heard one.

"Superhero" is another track that really stands out to me. It reminds me heavily of Smashmouth, in how catchy and bouncy it is. The difference is that there are a lot of sample beats, coupled with drum beats that sound like "claps" and lend to the amusement.

This track speaks on the importance of having someone to look up to, famous or not and how faith in those individuals can help build your character. I hear this track being put on a video game, or promoted in some sort of sports event/advertisement... it just has the type of message that people can cling to.

The album ends with a series of acoustic versions of tracks, each lending to the artistry of the group. "As the Sun Goes Down," though is probably the best "album" closer I've heard from them so far.

It starts off soft, subtle and continues to build and get heavier toward the end. The transition from acoustic to electric guitar is flawlessly executed and lends to how much the track soars.

Just as quickly as it explodes, it levels out and ends with a beat that is reminiscent of some of the later 00s rock bands, once electronics and experimentation really began to take shape.

What makes this band so impressive, excluding their stats, is that they refuse to play by the books. You can truly tell that each and every song comes from the heart and is crafted, not to fit a mold, but to create a sound that they want to create.

There are no extra hands in the pot, this is two guys who truly love what they do, pushing themselves past the limits of their creativity and challenging themselves to be bet-

ter, stronger musicians with each note they write. The Times of Our Lives (Collection) is a true testament to what great songwriting and transparency in your lyrics can do for a band.

It doesn't follow trends, it doesn't play by the books but it does a great job conveying the pride that they have in their craft. Having written everything they've ever released, by themselves, they know their worth and remain humble to the end.

This album offers something for any facet of the rock genre but looks over different horizons, with a refusal to stick to one label. If you're still sleeping on Black Oxygen, do yourselves a favor and check out the album.

Pick up a copy, out now via Sony Orchard/Curtain Call Records, a deluxe edition entitled The Times of Our Lives (Deluxe Edition) was recently released.

It features 27 tracks with guest features from Tech N9ne, Shifty Shellshock of Crazy-Town, Kstylis, KuttKalhoun, Young Miller, T.R.O.Y. & Nave Monjo! Additionally, acoustic renditions of some of the most popular tracks from the collection have been included.

"THE TIMES OF OUR LIVES (DELUXE EDITION)" IS AVAILABLE IN ALL ONLINE STORE & STREAMING SERVICES WORLDWIDE! MERCHANDISE / TICKETS AVAILABLE AT <http://www.blackoxygenmusic.com> Follow Black Oxygen on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Subscribe to their YouTube channel!

PHOTOS BY: ADAM ARNALI

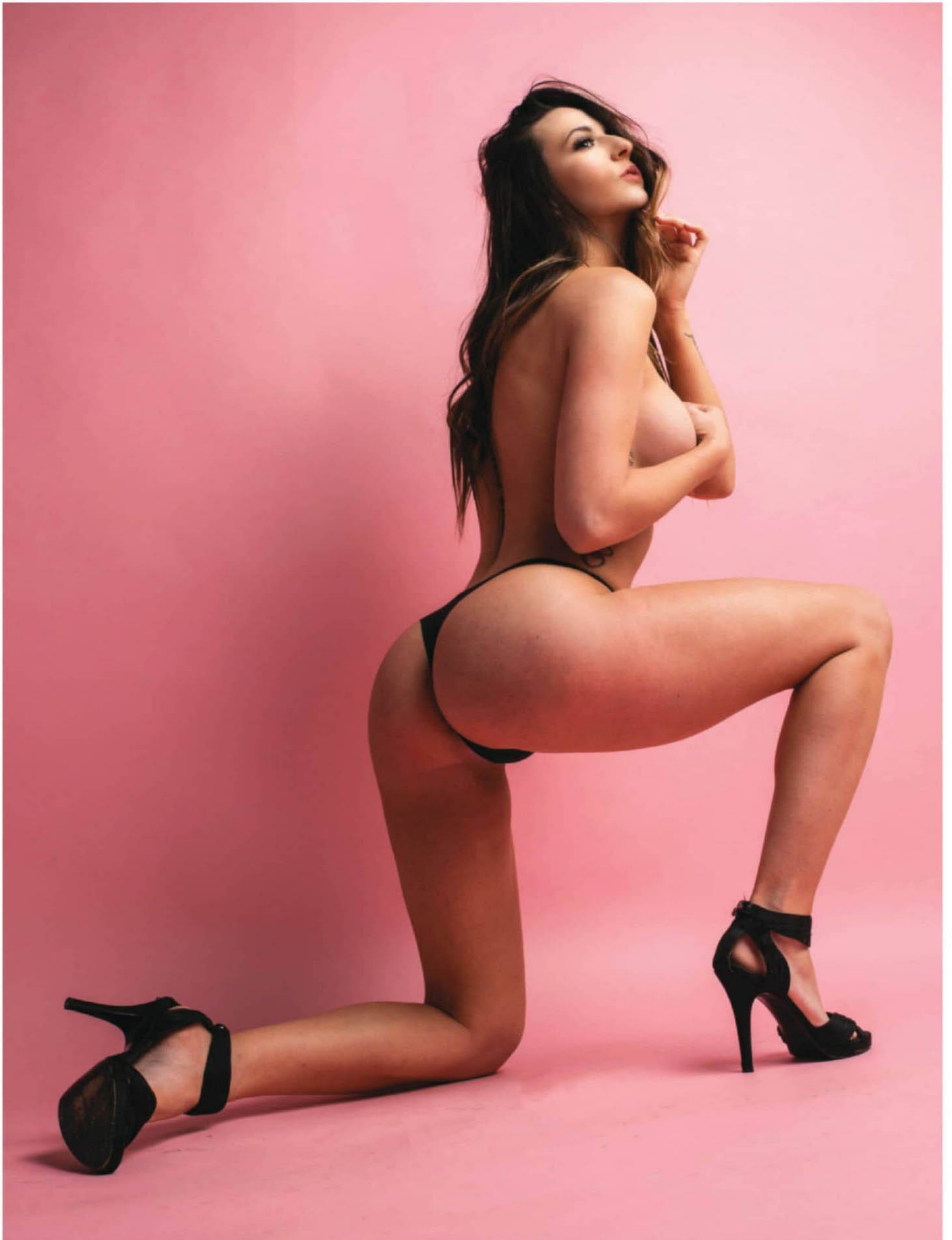


CORINA BASSO

Photography by Kevin Talley















Interview

Corina Basso

...

Who inspires you and why?

My mother. She's been drug through hell and back all while staying strong for my brother, myself, and keeping her sobriety.

Do you have a charitable cause you care about?

Yes, breast cancer charities.

Do you prefer selfies or camera shots and why?

Camera shots because being behind the camera gives me more confidence.

Who is your favorite role model and why?

Robert Downey Jr because his life turned into a wreck and was down a path most people wouldn't have made it out alive, but he did and is very successful.

Do you have a favorite number?

14, it's my birthday day

Do you care at all about Astrology?

I do in the sense; I love laying out on summer nights and starting off into the stars.

Where will you be in exactly one year from this moment?

In Knoxville, TN, hopefully as a RN.

Is it ever okay to cheat at anything, why or why not?

No, I believe in integrity and at the end of the day I have to look myself in the mirror and be proud of who I am.

What would you wear on the perfect date?

Something sexy-classy, form fitted, but not something that exposes a lot.

One thing you'd change, if you ruled the world.

I would change healthcare.

If your life was made into a movie, who would play your part and which actor would you want to be your leading man?

- Jana Kramer would play me and Channing Tatum would be the leading man.





CORINA BASSO
Photography by Kevin Talley





Claire McGuffick

Photography by Nigel Worrall









“

“I ALWAYS
FIND BEAUTY
IN THINGS THAT
ARE ODD AND
IMPERFECT, THEY
ARE MUCH MORE
INTERESTING.”





Claire McGuffick

Photography by Nigel Worrall

MANCAVE PLAYBABES EDITION 

© Kennesaw Taylor



RESTAURANT

"We Make Eating Fun"

FLORIDA KEYS

It's All About Attitude

By Kennesaw Taylor



Yes, the Florida Keys are nice to visit, and no one is more aware of how many people agree with this than locals who want to go down to fish or have dinner. The Keys are like a string of pearls dangling from the bottom of Florida City and stretching south westward out into the ocean. On one side is the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico is on the other.

While the entire area is beautiful, there is much more to the Keys than that, it's all about the attitude. There is something a little magical about living on or visiting an island. Most tourists will only catch a fleeting glimpse of this attitude, but the more you go down there, the more it permeates your thoughts and feelings.

The recipe for Key living includes, a dash of freedom, a dollop of pride, a pinch of disassociation of time, an immeasurable amount of inspiration, a teaspoon of smart ass, a pound of attitude and a full measure of naughtiness.

Most who visit the Keys are unaware of the attitude it takes to be a local, but by osmosis they receive just enough to fully enjoy their visit and along with many others, continue to come back year after year.

Think about some of the people who have made Key West their home, Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Robert Frost, Judy Blume and we mustn't forget Jimmy Buffett.

If you're thinking of doing the Keys, remember there is more to it than Key West. Key West should be and always is the destination, but like it is said, the journey is just as important as the destination. Can you do a day trip from Miami to Key West? Certainly, you can, but it is better accomplished in three days or more. One day down, stopping in all the places you have found on Google, and taking notes of other places and restaurants you see and hear about along the way.

“

There is something a little magical about living on or visiting an island. Most tourists will only catch a fleeting glimpse of this attitude, but the more you go down there, the more it permeates your thoughts and feelings.

No matter how many days you spend in Key West, it will never be enough, but I usually spend a day there. Then I spend the third day coming back trying to take as many pictures as I can. I live close enough to go back again, if you are visiting from anywhere else, this one visit might be the only one you get. If you are coming to the Keys, make it your destination and stay for an entire week, you'll not regret it.

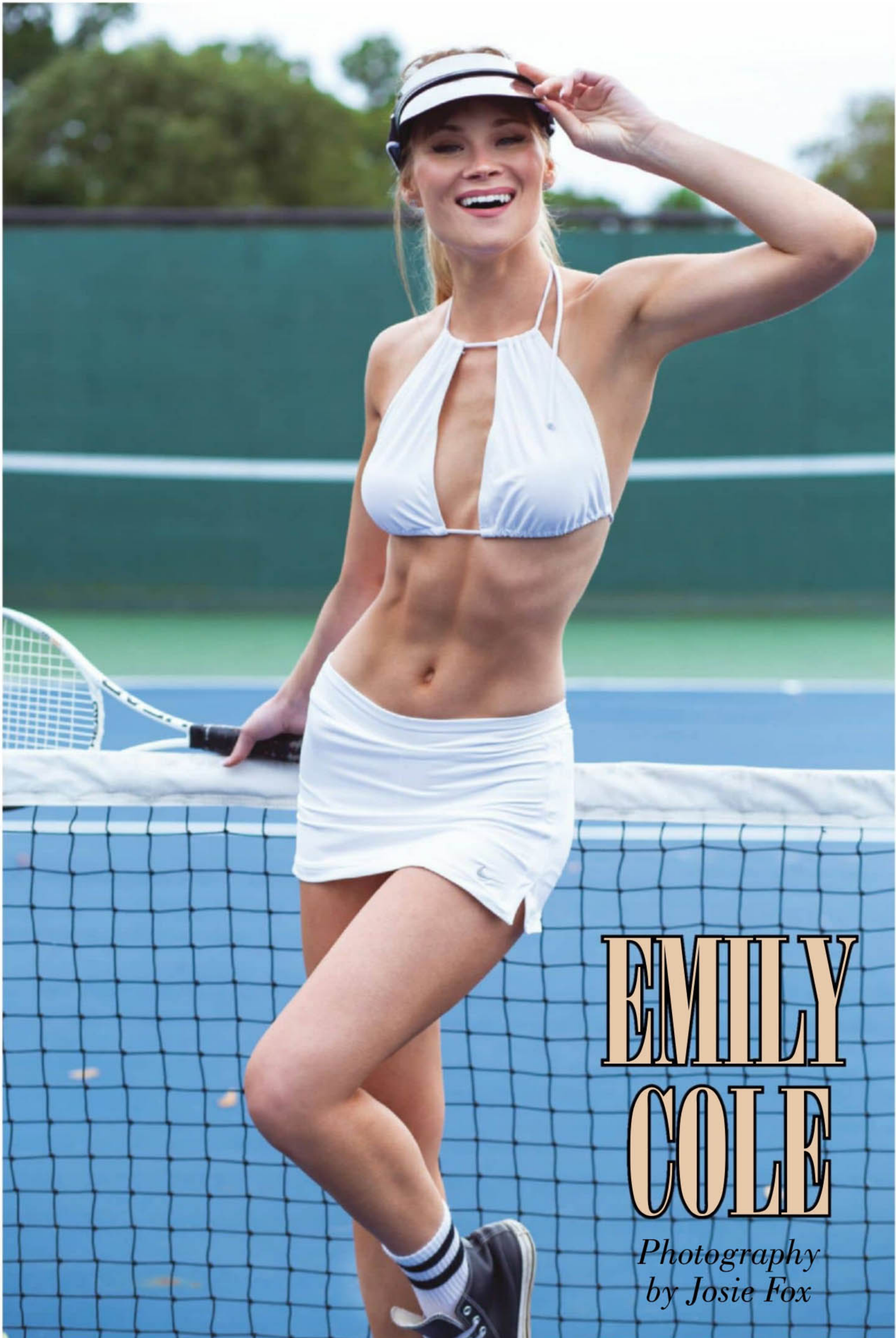
I am in the tourism business in South Florida and the last thing I want to do is look like a tourist, but its kind of impossible to do. So, there are things you must see in the Keys and Robbie's Marina is one of them.

Robbie's is located on Lower Matecumbe Key at mile marker 77.5. Yes, they have a good restaurant, yes, you can charter fishing and sightseeing boats and yes, you can rent boards and kayaks, but more importantly you can feed massive Tarpon for the cost of a few little fishes. There is an entrance fee, but it is negligible, and the experience is worth the price of admission.

While the Tarpon are churning the water and moving around the dock rapidly, aggressively and kind of menacingly, as they strip fish from your hands, we can't forget the waist high Pelicans who are attacking you from dock, sea and air.

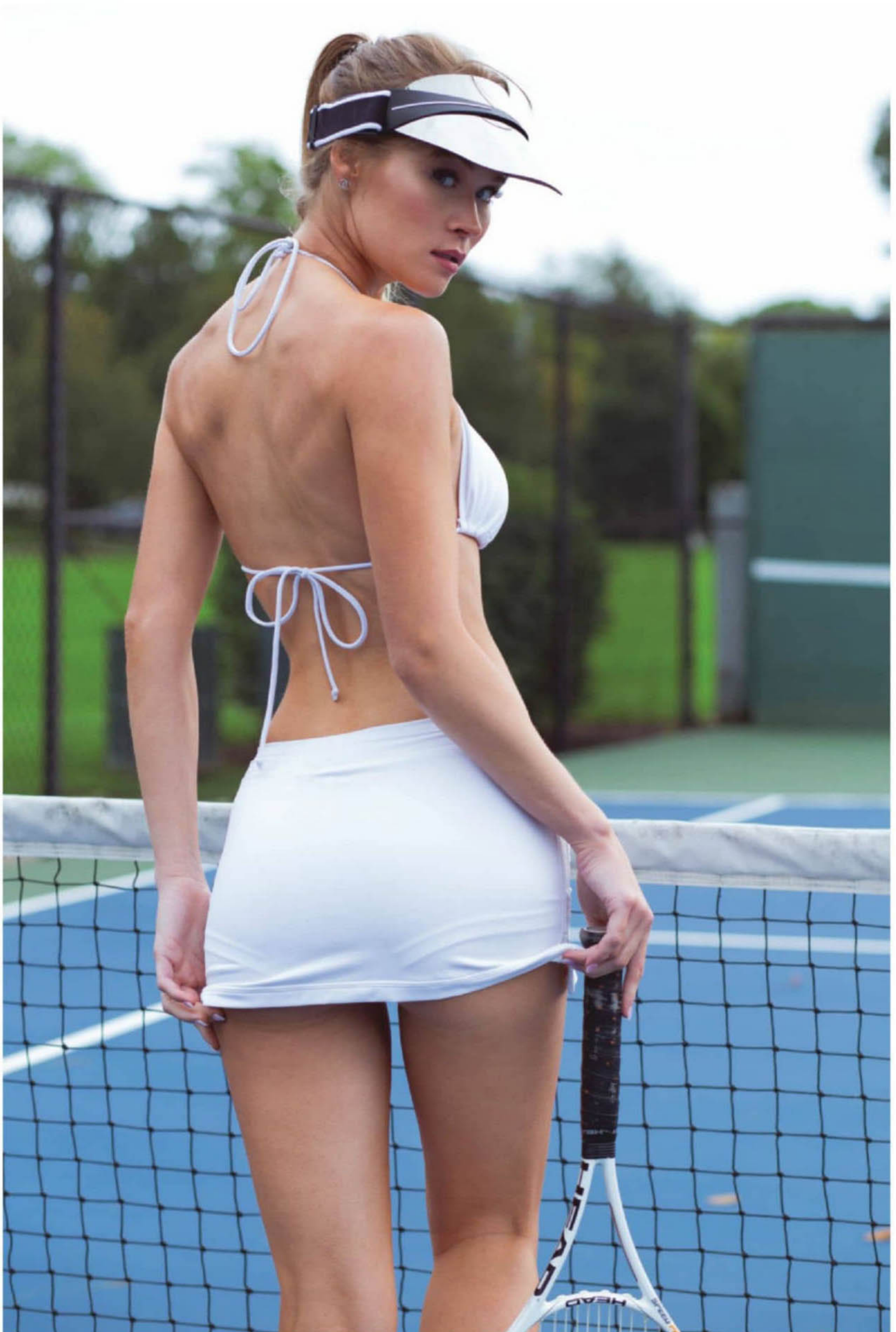
These two animals combine to make this experience quite exciting, but safe. As a photographer, I go there to catch shots of people with their entire arms inside the mouth of a one-hundred-pound fish.

It doesn't hurt, but you might get a few scratches. Don't worry, they have plenty of alcohol, the medicinal kind, to disinfect the scratches and plenty of the recreational kind so you can get you over the experience if it traumatized you. So, check out the photos, watch for a few more cool ass places to visit and start planning your own island-hopping vacation. If you have any questions just drop me a line.



EMILY COLE

*Photography
by Josie Fox*







A photograph of a person on a blue tennis court. The person is wearing white shorts and black sneakers with white socks. They are positioned on the right side of the frame, with their legs and feet visible. A black tennis net is in the foreground, partially obscuring the view. The background shows a green lawn and trees. The text "EMILY COLE" is overlaid in large, bold, black letters.

EMILY COLE

Photography by Josie Fox





*Playbabe
of The Month*

HEDY
Weaver
Photography by Kevin Talley













Interview

Hedy Weaver

...

Who inspires you and why?

My mother inspires me. She inspires me to never give up on anything in life. My mother has always taught me to always give it my all and nothing less. Life will give you lemons, if you squeeze them.

Do you have a charitable cause you care about?

I really care about cancer research because I believed that cancer had destroyed our population and honestly isn't fair to anyone. It's a disease that kills and had no answers to it. If i could help people with cancer, I would give them my life.

Do you prefer selfies or camera shots and why?

I prefer camera shots because I believe I look the best when I'm not giving my full attention to myself and what I look like. I am natural and show my true self during photography.

Who is your favorite role model and why?

My favorite role model is my mom because she is strongest person i know. My mother has gone through so much but always shines on top.

Do you have a favorite number?

My favorite number is 5 because my family is made up of 5.

Do you care at all about astrology?

Yes. I have always been interested in astrology. I read it every day and solely believe my sign, Scorpio, explains why I am the way I am.

Where will you be in exactly one year from this moment?

I believe in a year I will be working very hard every day in school to become a nurse. Once I have my mind on something, I won't give up until I succeed. I want to have the chance

to help people and give them the opportunity to live a better life.

Is it ever okay to cheat at anything, why or why not?

Cheating is never okay to do. The action of cheating only hurts yourself. Cheating makes someone weak and not able to reach the height of success.

What would you wear on the perfect date?

On the perfect date I would dress in a cute dress with a tie, open back, with a square neck and shiny heels. If cold, I will add a shiny cover up over my shoulders/arms.

One thing you'd change, if you ruled the world.

If I could change anything in the world, it would be fairness. I believe everyone in this world deserves the same thing, happiness and success. No one should receive anything less than the person next to them.

My story in less than 5 minutes...

My name is Hedy Weaver. I grew up on the East coast and truly believe in "the waves keep riding". I wake up every day giving nothing but 110%. I want to showcase everything I have to offer one day and was born to share my talent of happiness and love. I want to express myself through pictures to help others that don't believe they are worthy. I do anything to not benefit myself, but to help others smile.

If your life was made into a movie, who would play your part and which actor would you want to be your leading man?

If my life was a movie, I would want Jennifer Lopez to be my leading man and actor because i truly believe she is the women with the most impact. She is strong and won't let anything change herself. She strives to perform with no hesitation and worries. JLo only displays herself and nothing fake.

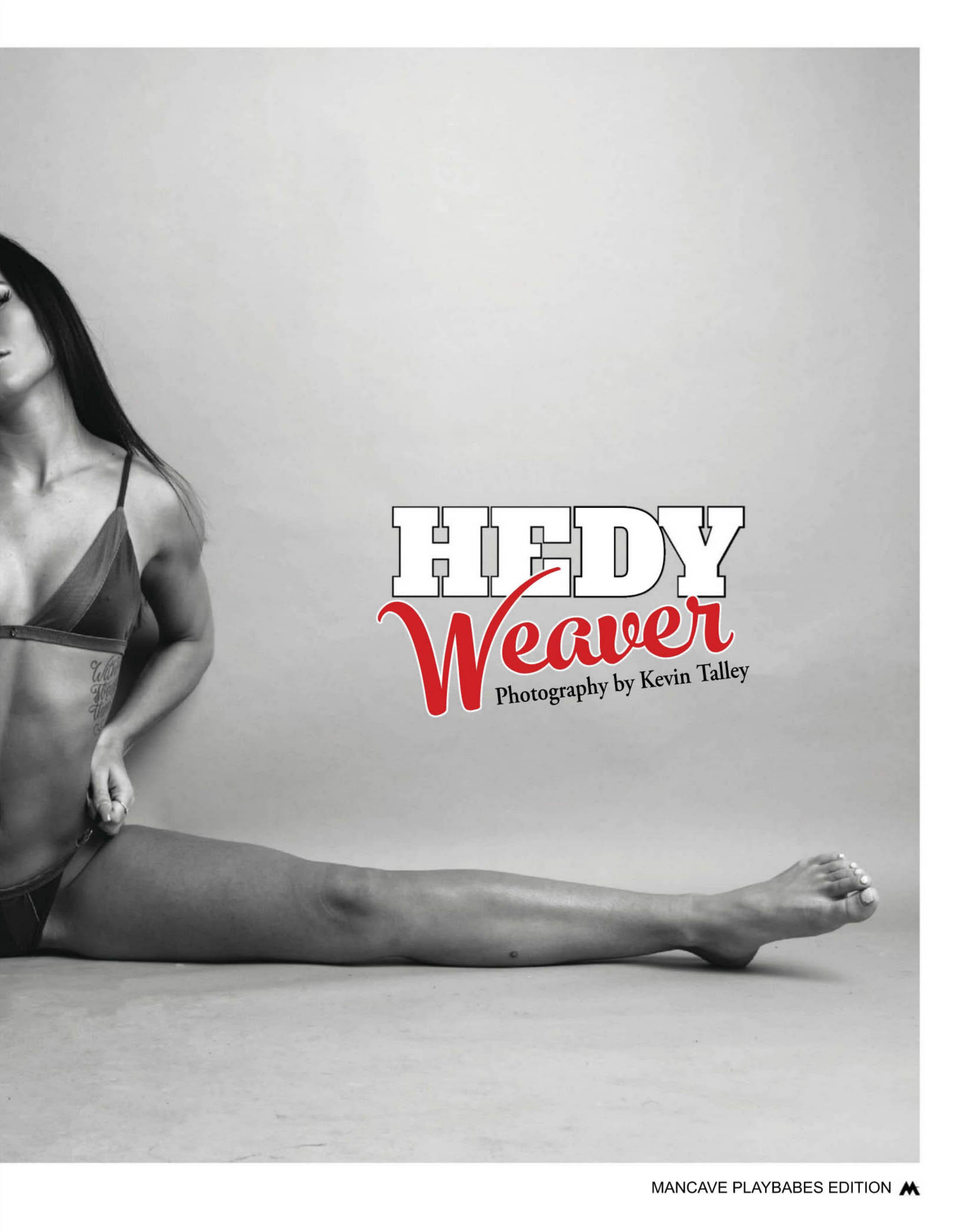












HEDY *Weaver*

Photography by Kevin Talley

WHY

A TYPICAL IS THE BEST TV SHOW ON NETFLIX

by Seb Jenkins



Let's be honest, we are all on the constant lookout for that next Netflix binge watch. While many people will recommend huge shows such as *Breaking Bad*, it can be nice to find joy within the smaller budget gems on the streaming platform. *Atypical* certainly falls into that category, featuring a small cast of incredible characters in a heart-warming coming of age story.

A typical is based around 18-year-old Sam Gardner, who is on the autism spectrum. The series revolves around Sam's trials and tribulations in the modern world, as he strives to

lead what he deems to be an ordinary life, involving girlfriends, going to college, and moving out. The first season was released back in 2017, but it has since gone on to air for an extra two seasons in 2018 and 2019 respectively. We have still yet to receive word over whether a season four will be coming to our screens in 2020, but the largely positive reviews would tend to hint that Netflix will pick it up for another go around.

Series one is set around Sam's pursuit to find a girlfriend, narrated by the character himself using a vast array of Antarctica-based



*THE WRITERS ON ATYPICAL
HAVE MANAGED TO CAPTURE
EXACTLY WHAT FAMILY LIFE IS
LIKE, FROM THE ARGUMENTS
AND SILLY JOKES, TO THE
DRAMA AND HEARTBREAK.*

metaphors. If you like heart-warming tales and facts about penguins, this series is definitely for you. Alongside Sam, we have his overprotective mother, Elsa Gardner, who is determined to keep her boy wrapped in cotton wool, even if it is against his own wishes.

Doug Gardner, who some may recognise from *Friends* and *Prison Break* (Michael Rapaport), is Sam's father, who takes a far more relaxed and laissez-faire approach to raising his autistic son.

While Elsa is determined to keep Sam within her mothering clutches forever, Doug is keen to watch him spread his wings, while also connecting with his son on a level he has never been able to reach up until now.

To round off the Gardner family, Brigitte Lundy-Paine plays the witty and angsty teen daughter, Casey Gardner. Despite being the younger sibling, Casey is extremely protective of her brother, even if she does tease him along the way. Amy Okuda can also be seen playing Sam's therapist, Julia Sasaki, who Sam has a huge crush on. Finally, Evan Chapin and Zahid Raja round off the main cast as Casey's love interest and Sam's best friend respectively. As the story runs into the

second season, Sam's attentions turn to applying and getting into a college, something he had never thought possible as a teenager on the spectrum.

Season three then depicts Sam's journey at college once he arrives. Meanwhile, we also get to watch Casey's relationship with Evan blossom, as well as her own dreams of becoming a track star. Finally, after cheating on her husband with a local bartender, Elsa fights to regain the trust and affection of her beloved Doug.

There are a number of reasons why *Atypical* is one of my favourite shows on Netflix, and on TV in general, at the moment. This is largely down to the relatability of it.

The writers on *Atypical* have managed to capture exactly what family life is like, from the arguments and silly jokes, to the drama and heartbreak.

The actors and actresses involved with the show suck you in from episode one, as their characters are full of just that, character. In such a short space of time, you begin rooting for Sam to find the girl of his dreams, while also booking his place in college. Mean-

while, you are left dying for Casey to get her track scholarship, while also rooting for her relationship with Evan. The show leaves you crying, laughing, and begging for more, but it also knows when to stop on a high. With just ten episodes each season, the content to running time ratio seems near perfect.

However, the most important aspect of the show itself is the main subject matter, autism. If, like me, you have not had much experience with the spectrum, the show is a real eye-opener to what living and dealing with autism can be like.

This also extends to what it is like for Sam's parents, sister, friends, and girlfriend to deal with. *Atypical* now has a number of writers and actors who are on the spectrum themselves, although none are in the above mentioned main cast. *Atypical* is simply a very raw and real look into what effects autism can have on the life of a young man and his family surrounding him. However, the show does this in such a way that you are allowed to laugh and smile along with the cast, as well as tearing up at the more emotional scenes. The tone is just perfect and I for one cannot wait for the inevitable season four announcement.





Jessie Fierce

Photography by Danny Steyn





















Jessie Fierce

Photography by Danny Steyn

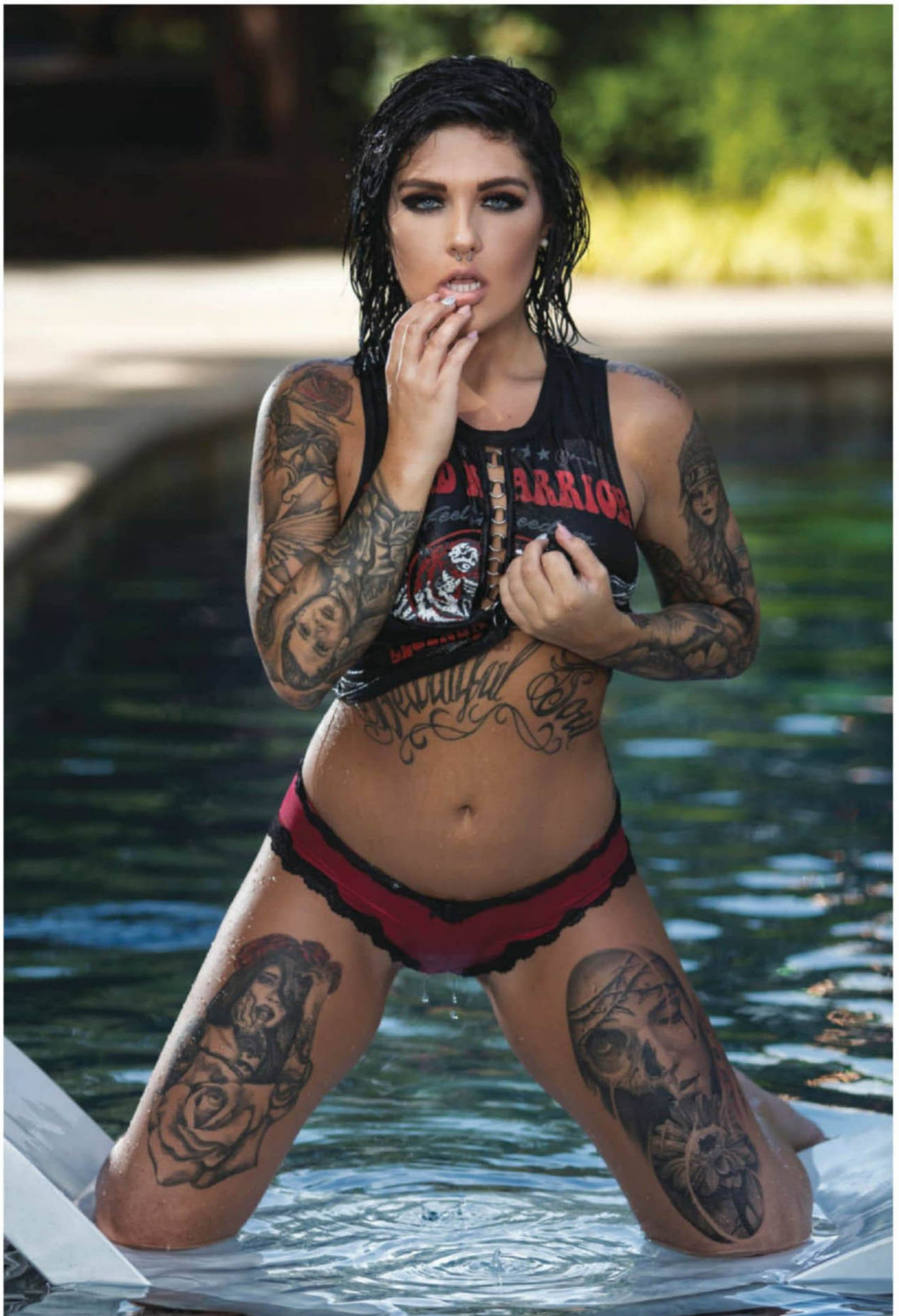












Lindsey Byng

Photography by Chuck Majors

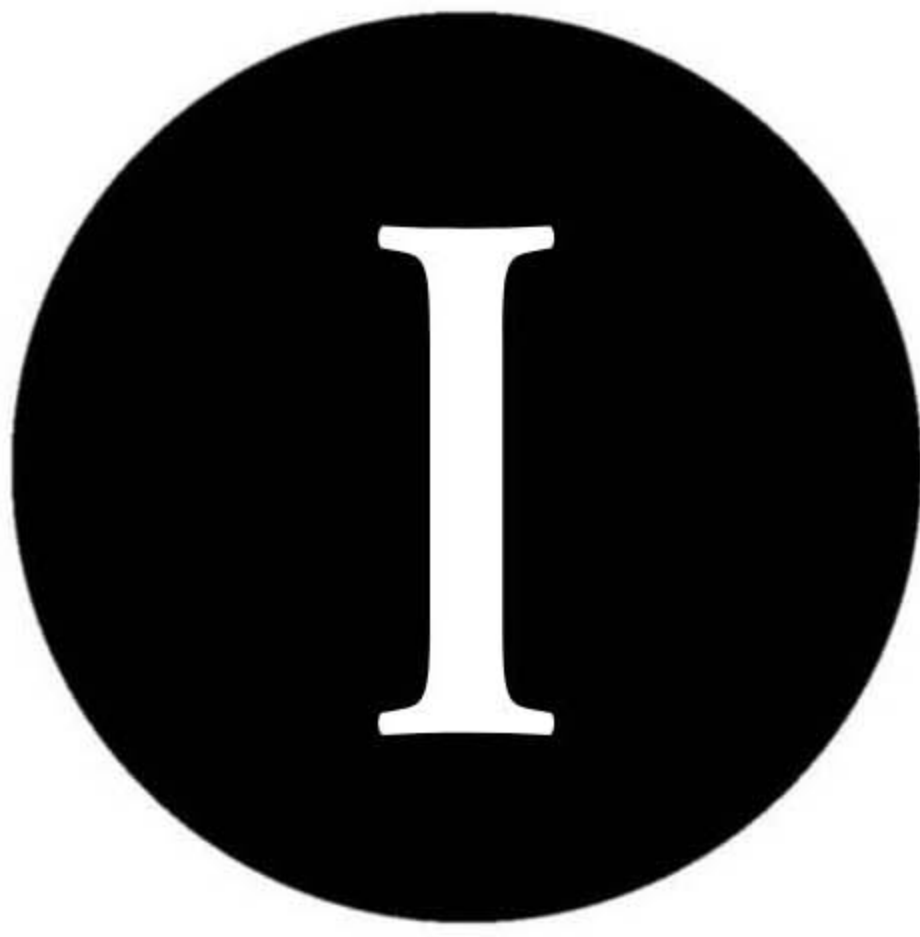






SHRIMP AND GRITS

by Kennesaw Taylor



I'm just a good ole southern boy, but apparently not that good an ole southern boy because I didn't have my first shrimp and grits until around two-thousand and ten.

My wife and I were invited to a fund raiser that took place in the Savannah Room located in the University of Georgia hotel. There was no menu, you could have anything you wanted as long as it was shrimp and grits.

As with anything I eat and like, I went home, did a little research and came up with my own version. This is it.

As far as I can tell, shrimp and grits started off as a breakfast for fishermen in the Carolinas. At some point in the eighties, Bill Neal, whom had been a chef in a French restaurant started working in a restaurant called Crook's Corner in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Deciding to create an upscale southern restaurant, he created what we now consider shrimp and grits as well as other delicious southern recipes that were all dressed up and ready to go to town.

Just so you know, my wife is from Peru and loves this recipe. She gets a hankering for it sometimes and I got to tell you that bacon doesn't make it long in my house, so we never have it just hangin' around.

I have substituted diced ham, bologna, diced sausage or hot dogs for the bacon. It works well, in fact if you cook the hot dogs or bologna right it makes this a different, but equally good recipe.

I told you from the start that some of my recipes would be good for you and some good to you. You can make this healthy, simply

take out the butter, cheese, salt, grits, bacon, shrimp and most of the flavor. Then you can enjoy your garlic and onions in lime juice.

You will need

- 4 cups water
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup grits
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese (I use sixteen ounces.)
- 1 pound shrimp, cleaned
- 1 pound bacon, chopped or crumbled
- 1 lime
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 1 large garlic clove, minced (I use two heapin', tablespoons of jarred minced garlic.)

I have done this recipe for breakfast many times but find it to be an excellent dinner idea. I am southern by birth, so I would never use instant grits, but you might, if you have a mind to. I do, however, cook mine



*FIRST, I LIKE MINE
THAT WAY AND
SECOND, THEY
WILL SET UP LIKE
CONCRETE IF YOU
DON'T USE THEM
RIGHT AWAY AND
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO
USE THEM RIGHT AWAY.
LEAVE THEM A LITTLE
WATER TO ABSORB
WHILE THE REST FOR A
FEW MINUTES.*

in the microwave. I try to cook them only three minutes at a time until they are still a little soupy.

First, I like mine that way and second, they will set up like concrete if you don't use them right away and you're not going to use them right away. Leave them a little water to absorb while the rest for a few minutes.

So, if you want to cook them the traditional way, you bring the water to a boil, add grits, salt and pepper, reduce the heat and let them simmer for around twenty minutes.

When they are done add butter and cheese and put aside. Butter is subjective when it comes to grits, I just plop a bunch into the pot. I said three tablespoons just so you would have a place to start.

In a skillet, electric or otherwise, cook the bacon. I use a pound, but watch out, my wife always tries to buy twelve-ounce packages because they are less expensive.

I have learned one thing in life, with bacon and explosives every ounce counts. If I don't watch her, she will bring home turkey bacon, which is a deportation worthy offence.

I like my bacon a little chewy, but if you cook it well done you will be able to crumble it much easier after it comes out of the pan. Remove from pan and set aside, crumble or chop when cool.

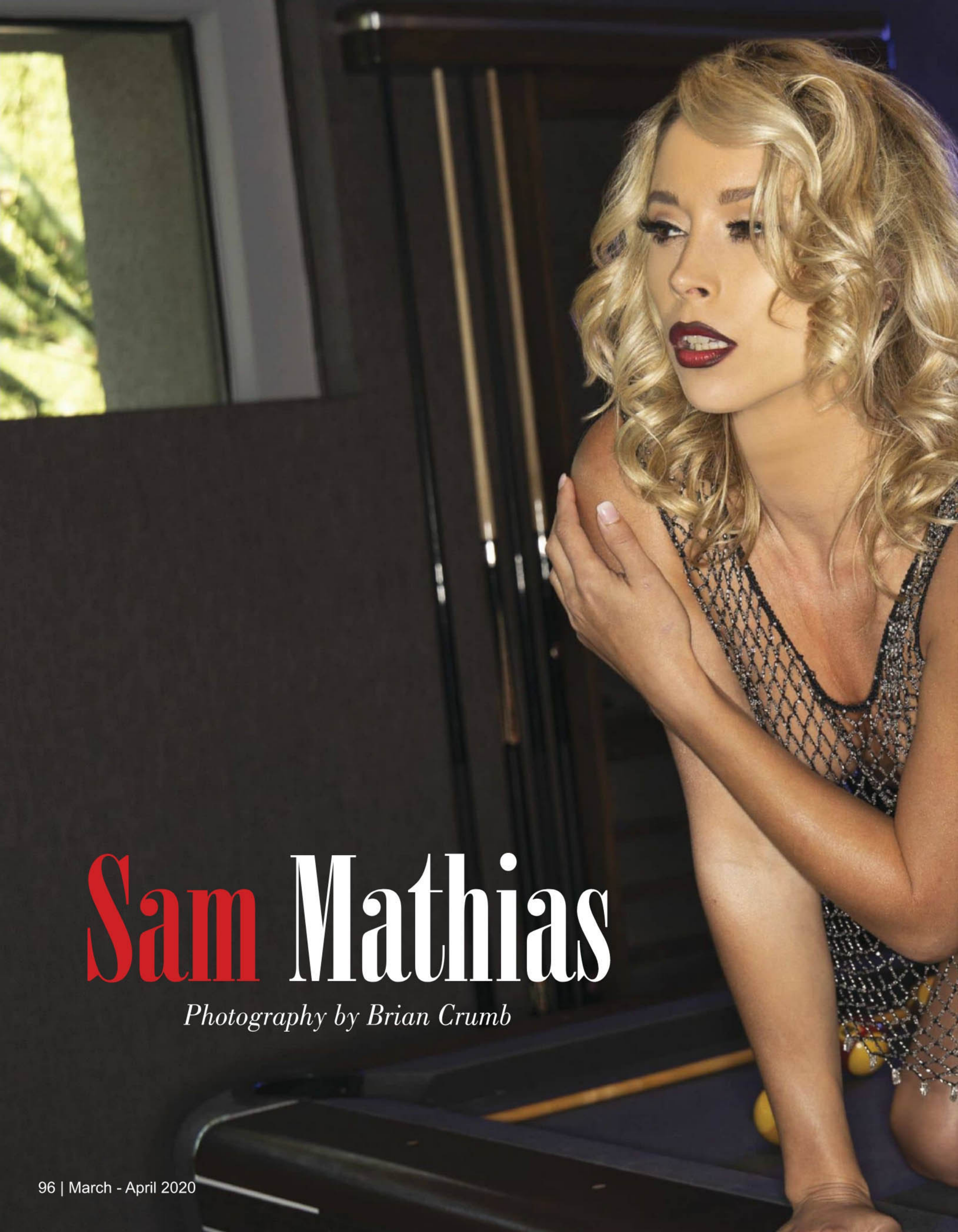
In bacon grease, cook shrimp and garlic. Add the Vidalia onion at this point too.

Once the onions are translucent and the shrimp are pink, I add the juice of an entire lime.

Then add the bacon back and you're done. The problem with this recipe is that most of it's ingredients are things there are never too much of. Things like cheese, garlic, butter, bacon, lime juice and even sweet onions can not be used incorrectly because there are never enough of them.

I place the grits on a plate and spoon the shrimp mixture on top of it, some people like to mix everything together.

Hope you enjoy it, it's a little complicated, but not too bad and you will impress your friends and family.



Sam Mathias

Photography by Brian Crumb













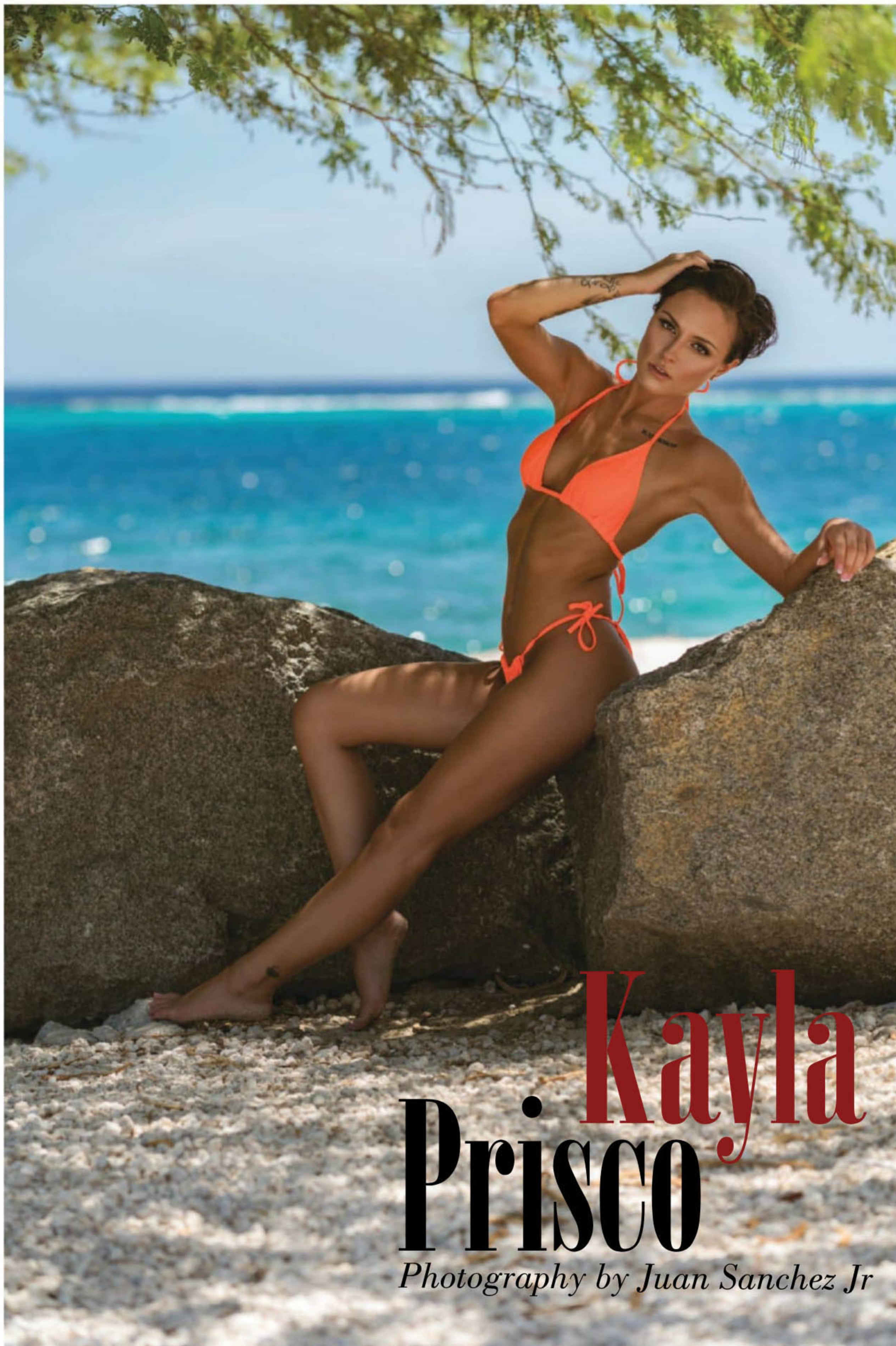




Sam Mathias

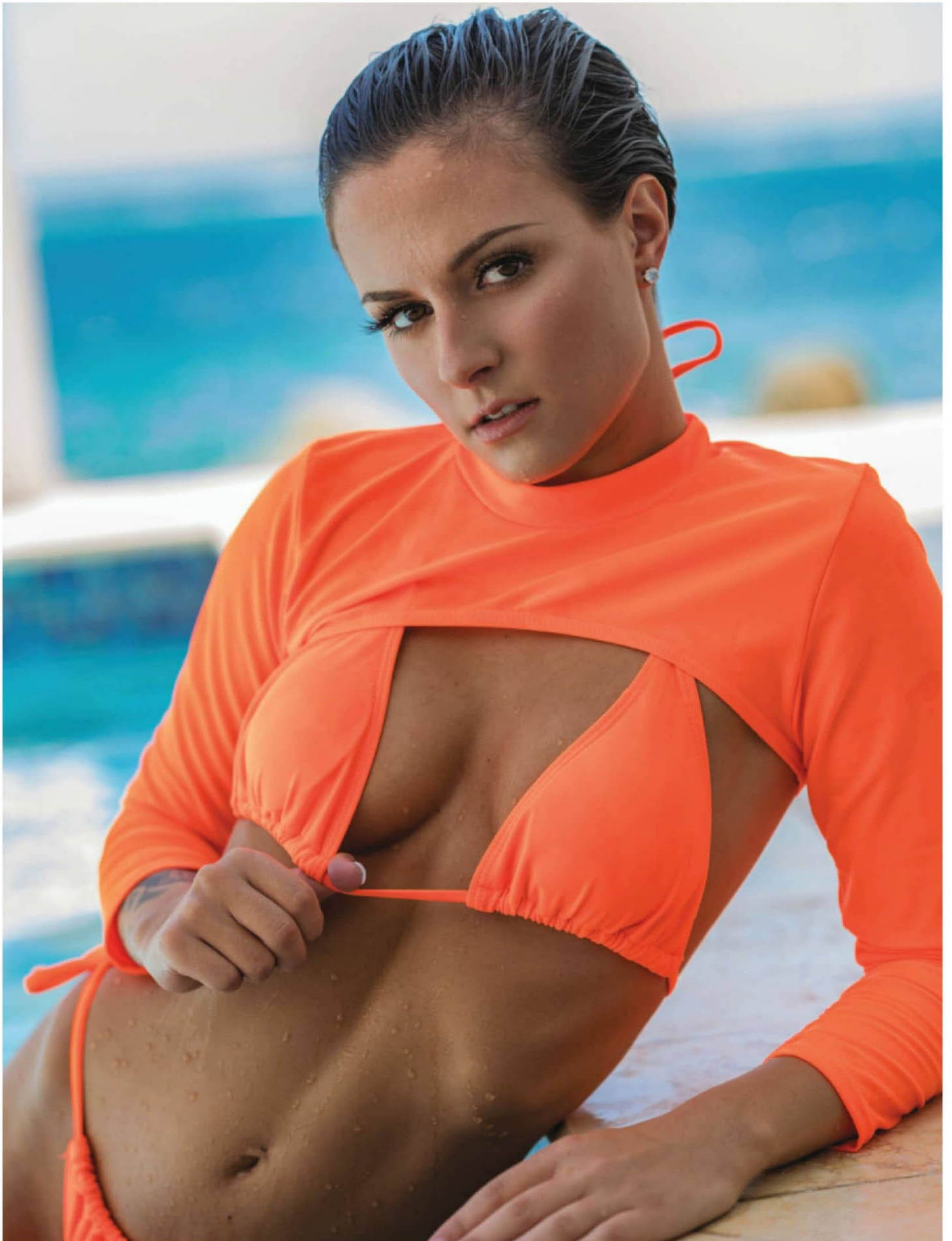
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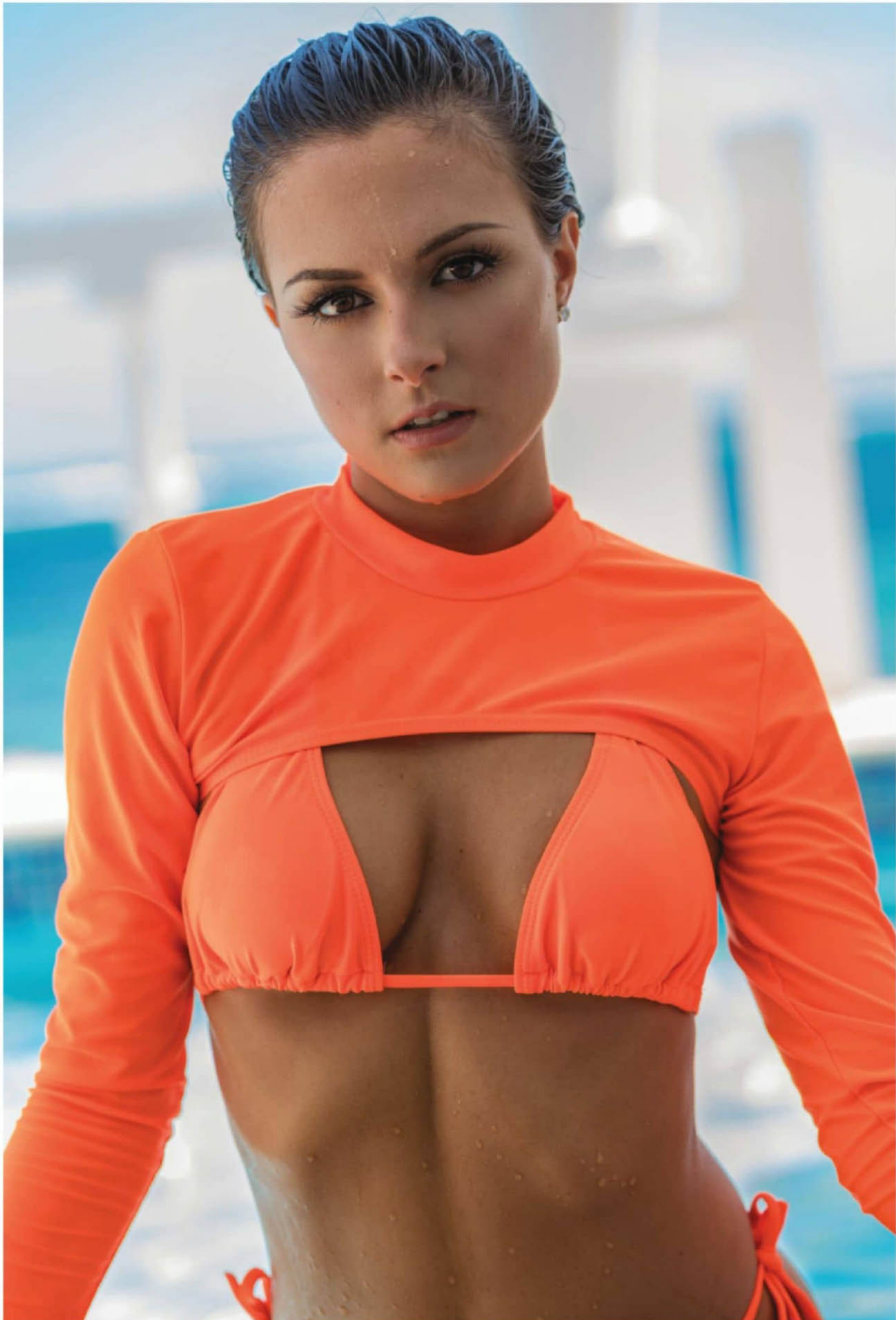


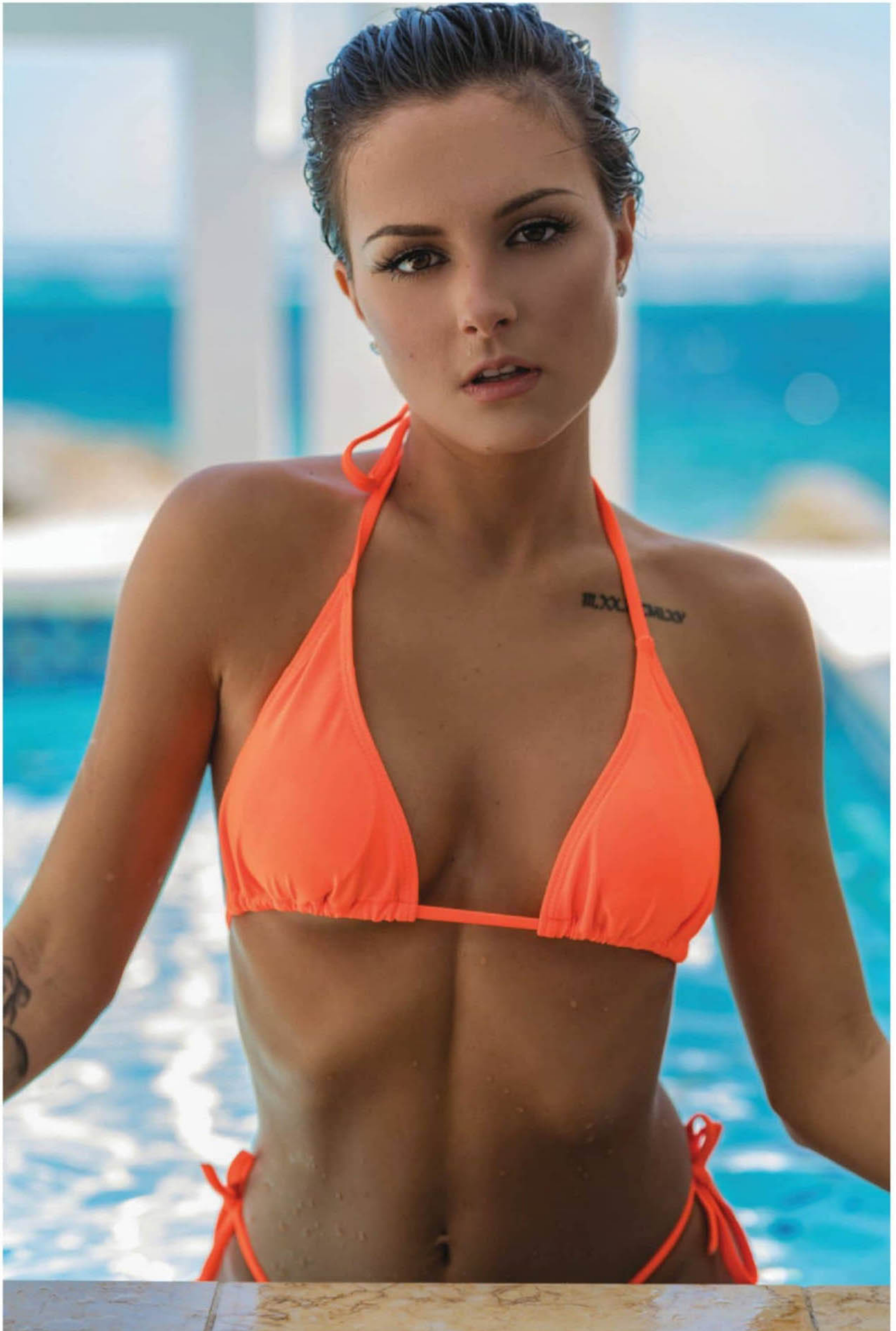




















Kayla Prisco

*Photography by
Juan Sanchez Jr*



STOP TAKING
PEOPLE TO JAIL
FOR WEED!

LET FREEDOM
GROW



THE

Stephanie linda

story

by Mindy Hall

Stephanie Landa, born June 7, 1946 in New York grew up amid a swiftly evolving moment in American history. Memories of the great depression dissipating, coupled with the recent end of WWII, left people full of optimistic hope. As promptly as women were thrust into the factories and the workforce, returning soldiers incite women to resume homemaking duties. Hence, entered the baby boom generation. Stephanie, born to a middle class stay at home mom, and WWII fighter pilot, was a stubborn and independent child. A product of the baby boom, little did her parents know they were raising a child who would grow up breaking all the rules by bending social norms regardless of how the world told her to act.

When asked about her childhood, Stephanie replies, "It was painful, physically and emotionally." For instance, young five-year-old Stephanie learned the harsh reality of antisemitism. Entering a predominantly Christian school as a Jewish student, result-

ed in Stephanie often returning home in tears. She was teased by the kids in school and couldn't fathom why. Consequently, her parents chose to remove her from the senseless cruelty. They relocated to a Jewish neighborhood in New Jersey, despite the inconvenient commute for her father, a Pan Am pilot.

Physically, as long as Stephanie recalls, she suffered as well. Her childhood was speckled with frequent, and at times lengthy, hospital visits for a stomach disorder caused by a shortened intestinal tract. Her stomach digested food within an hour instead of the standard seven. This illness would alter the course of her life in ways no one could predict.

Her younger years, although not easy, weren't totally troublesome. Summers spent at her parent's country club and holidays spent jetting off to destinations such as Miami and Puerto Rico provide happy memories. Her upper middle-class family affords \$10 flight

tickets with ease thanks to the perks of a pilot as a father. Financially, her childhood was comfortable.

In 1959 Stephanie, thirteen, looked the part of a grown woman. She sported long chestnut brown hair, green eyes and curves that grabbed people's attention. Her general nature, a desire for excitement, prompted the bored, middle-class teenager to shake things up. It was that summer that young Stephanie started exploring her sexuality, independence, and marijuana with vigor. As a girl of the 50's, Stephanie had little control over the life she had been given. Never satisfied in the passenger seat, she sought to end her status as a virgin, and succeeded. She became convinced women wielded the most power between the sheets.

Along the way she was also introduced to her future best friend, affectionately nicknamed, "Ms. Pot." "Marijuana was a mind-altering experience which turned me away from aim-



Mikki Norris, left, of Human Rights and the Drug War, joined Tom Kikuchi and Stephanie Landa of LPOP in their booth at the THC Exposé April 24. On right is former federal POW Amy Povah (Pofahl), who won clemency from President Clinton. Povah is founder of CanDoClemency.com, a campaign seeking the release of non-violent women who are incarcerated on long mandatory minimum sentences (MMS) for drug offenses. West Coast Leaf photo

less parties toward a more profound perception of the world around me.” Additionally, she realized marijuana relaxed her stomach, allowing proper digestion, relieving pain. From that moment on she became a secret “pothead.” Although taboo, she felt this plant allowed her to finally live a normal life.

By the 60s Stephanie was in high school and society was changing quickly. The world was exposed to rock and roll and the Beatles, the Kennedy assassination, and Vietnam. Stephanie’s peer group was comprised of college-age revolutionaries with whom she marched for civil rights, women’s rights, against the war, against nuclear power, or anything else they deemed unjust. Here she found an audience who loved marijuana as much as she did. Selling pot became a part-time profession and turned out to be much more entertaining than flipping burgers or a life of housewife duties. She realized that among those who also like to smoke she commanded a certain amount of power. “A young lady willing to supply something so exotic and rare in the 1960s was always welcome, mistakes forgiven, and eccentricities indulged as long as they didn’t forget to bring the pot.” Stephanie never really lived a normal teenage life.

Married and divorced 3 times by the mid-60s her personal life wasn’t typical however business was booming. Due to the rarity of a beautiful female pot dealer she found herself rubbing elbows with artist celebrities and the wealthy. She quickly realized her popularity was due to what she had to offer not about who she was. Her focus shifted back to the counterculture that introduced her to Mary Jane in the first place. She was drawn to the social awareness and non-judgmental philosophies attached to the hippies.

In 1966 Stephanie followed her family to California. It is in Malibu that she finds her home as a true hippie. Although the culture was nearer to her heart the quality of cannabis was appalling. Californians were smoking cheap imported weed from Mexico, “often full of stem and seed.” While other women her age were hosting Tupperware parties, Stephanie realized the business opportunity before her and began traveling to and from the east coast bringing higher quality Colombian with her. This life was much more appealing than the humdrum housewife life of her peers and she easily avoided law enforcement suspicion as a middle-class female. In 1966 it was the perfect cover.

She finds she’s even more popular in Califor-

nia than the east coast and easily moves in and out of all types of social circles.

By the end of the sixties Stephanie met an enchanting young surfer boy who taught her the basics of growing marijuana. One day he decided to head to Hawaii, so Stephanie threw caution to the wind and followed him. Her impulsive decision provided her the opportunity to learn more about cannabis by growing weed in the sugar cane fields. She was better at growing and selling marijuana than maintaining relationships and had enough cash to finance a move to Morocco. So, she left, which led to travel through many countries. She recounts numerous tales of smuggling cannabis past distracted border patrol agents with her beautiful green eyes and charm. Her travels afforded her men and crazy adventures. By 1969 she returned to the states just in time for a three-week adventure at Woodstock and soon after, riots in her new hometown, Isla Vista. History reports the riots culminated with the burning of the Bank of America building in 1970 at the hands of angry students protesting the war. However, her involvement in those stories is for another time.

Life after the riots in Isla Vista cemented Stephanie further in the hippie counterculture. She and other community members sought to create an urban paradise consisting of gardens brimming with vegetables, herbs, fruit trees and of course Ganja. A utopia, idealistic hippies of the early 70’s felt, would save the world. Eventually, Stephanie has to move on, “Grass doesn’t grow on a rolling stone!” Her memories remain fondly. “These were the good old days, the golden years of marijuana and of peace, love and happiness.” These were the years before the government issued its war on drugs.

By now, she learned quite a bit about the art of growing cannabis herself. She even discovered cloning female plants before it was common, improving the quality of the flower and eliminated those pesky seeds. However, at that time, the risks of growing were higher than smuggling. Consumer desire for quality weed, joined with her ability to travel cheaply, and her love of Mary Jane, made this a lucrative business venture. Regardless of the growing and distribution risks, wherever Stephanie roamed so too was her friend “Ms. Pot”.



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Consequently, almost inevitably, Stephanie was busted for the first time while entering the US from Asia in 1974. Luckily, as a first-time offender, she was sentenced to probation, five years. Free to continue about her life, she obstinately did so.

She nearly completed her sentence without a probation violation. However, her father's health scare and need for surgery, was enough for her to blow off the parole officer's denial of the flight request and be by her father's side regardless. Stephanie rolled the dice and lost. During her next check-in, "The federal agents were there to take me. I had to call my attorney to pick up my car that had 10 lbs of homegrown in it and my dog. He accepted the pot as payment for my case. Nevertheless, I went to federal prison for two years."

Prison, the first time around, was a far cry from what it's like today. The biggest difference being it was co-ed. Stephanie was able to use her charm and good looks to her advantage. In general, minimum security prison life wasn't half bad. "A fellow inmate and I started a vegetarian kitchen. Murderers, bank robbers, and other types of criminals are whom I preached vegetables, karma, and meditation. Our food was always eaten first. We grew a vegetable garden I was able to consume cannabis every day. We even tried to grow pot in between cornrows. The guards pulled out the small plants, but we kept trying. by the second year I tried to humanize the guards by using peaceful philosophy. It didn't work."

When Stephanie was finally released another decade was all but over and she is well into her 30's. The 80's saw the worldwide war against drugs in full swing. The Vietnam war was a fading memory (unless you were a returning Vet). Greed, cocaine and danger had taken a grip on the marijuana market, adding ammunition to government propaganda and the "Say No to Drugs" campaign.

With the heat of law enforcement ever-present, Stephanie had a few near misses over the next decade, yet managed to steer clear of trouble while maintaining financial security from her unconventional business ventures. As the years progressed, so also her gardening skills. Stephanie's dedication to her craft never wavered. Approaching 40, Stephanie pondered on her many lives and adventures. Something was missing. "I had forgotten to have a child, so I had one, Max. My love, green-eyed, red-haired boy."

As always, once Stephanie decided what she wanted, she went after it. Of all the boys Stephanie had loved, this boy would forever hold her heart. Today, Max is in his 30's and remains her pride and joy. "I have a novel's worth of adventures as the mom of Max."

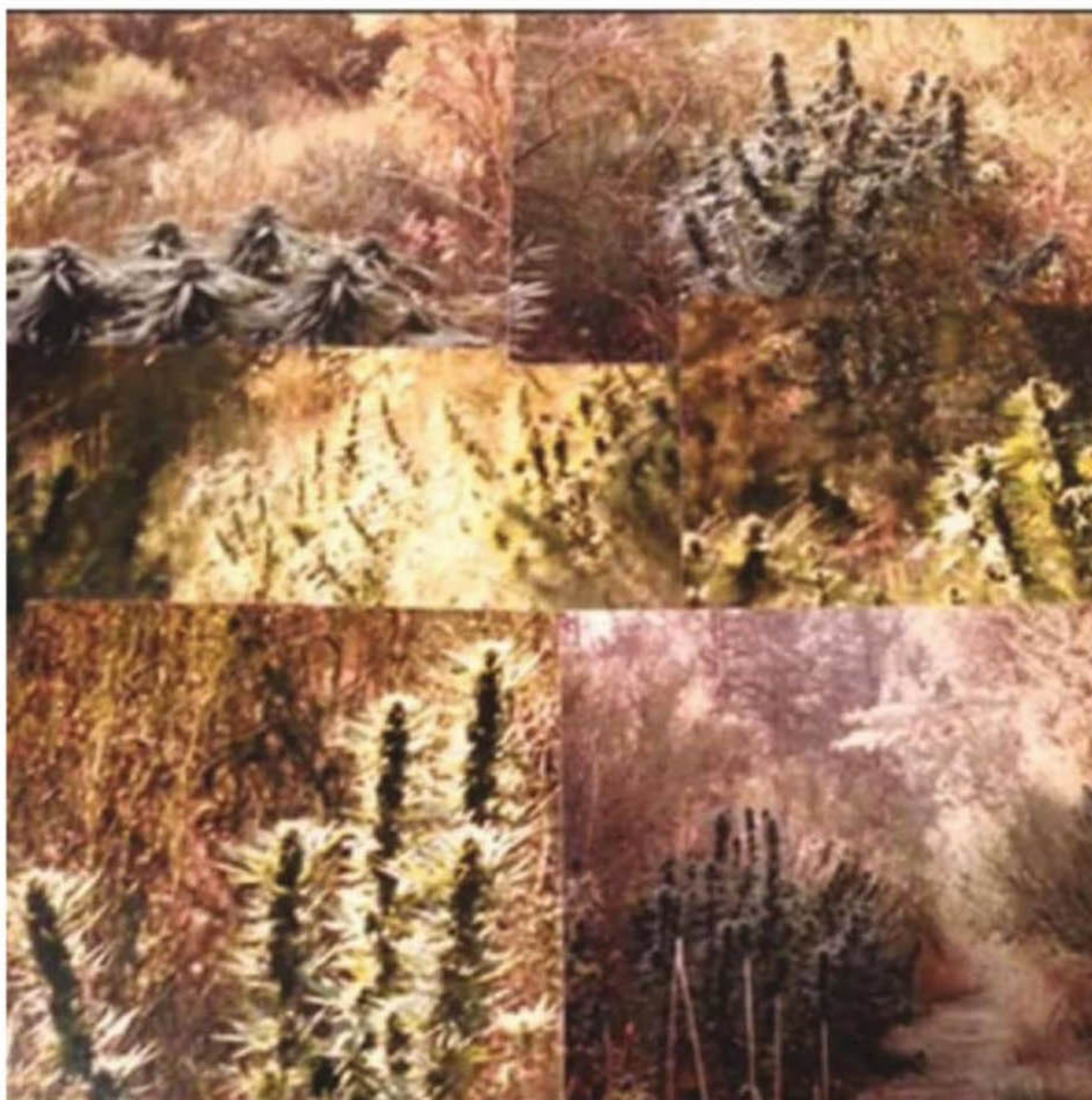
Although she clearly saw the advantage of being a black-market marijuana entrepreneur, Stephanie never forgot what started her relationship with "Ms. Pot", her excruciating childhood medical condition. She always felt that the government was lying. Cannabis heals. She is living proof. As a

mother, it was more important than ever for her to speak her truth. By 1996 medical marijuana laws were on the books in California. All her life the government pushed propaganda, causing public fear. Politics and public opinion were changing. Maybe the government was letting up?

To test that theory, Stephanie's first prescription for cannabis finally came when she was 52 years old out of a clinic in San Francisco. "I was thinking I was really alive now. Now that I have my prescription, I am thinking of coming out of the pot cloud. I'd say I am a nice person who smokes pot, I am a kid's mom who smokes pot. I am a volunteer who smokes pot. I would never harm anyone, and I follow the ten commandments and I smoke pot. I love and talked to my mom and dad daily and I smoke pot."

However, Stephanie would soon see legal isn't really legal and pot prejudice still prevailed. California was home base for the birth of the green rush. Stephanie had always been on the forefront of the industry. After a lifetime of growing and selling underground the San Francisco medical marijuana task force and the district attorney bestowed their blessings upon Stephanie and longtime friend and partner Tom Kikuchi. A government-sanctioned marijuana garden for the benefit of the sick and dying was a dream come true. In all the years Stephanie grew and sold this was the first time she felt compliant with laws enabling her to help those in need and legitimize her career. Be that as it may, the legal grey area was enough

My first major grow in 1969



for federal agents to swoop in and charge the two with manufacturing. Her previous arrest made her eligible for a life sentence. She was not able to use medical necessity as a defense. She felt her arms were tied, chose to take a plea deal, and sentenced to 41 months in federal prison.

Tom, who's sentence was slightly shorter, served his time first. The judge allowed for their sentences to be staggered in order to ease the disruption to Max's life.

In case you're wondering, even impending prison time did not convince Stephanie to conform to social standards. While Tom was in prison, she did what she always did, relied on "Ms Pot" to keep her company until it was her time to turn herself in.

Stephanie started her sentence in 2007, at the age of 60, surrendering herself to the government surrounded by dozens of supporters and well-wishers. This time prison wouldn't be anything like the first time.

For the first six months she waited in county jail for space in a federal institution. Once transferred she was confined to solitary for a month, not even afforded a bed. In a letter written from prison February 2007 Stephanie stated, "The system sucks. The judge wanted me incarcerated not tortured. My physical condition has been of no concern to anyone since I was taken from all my loved ones. If anything, they have been crueler to me when I complain. I only hope I can make it till my release. The camp kitchen has been closed for the past year due to black mold. The unit I will be going to has been condemned for black mold. But since it is cheaper to pay the fines than fix it that's what the federal government is doing." At this stage of life Stephanie wasn't just suffering from a childhood digestion condition or from the typical aches and pains of a 60-year-old woman. She had been hit by a car as a pedestrian and suffered irreparable damage to her shoulder. At home, cannabis aided her recovery. In prison, not only did the conditions inherently cause her more pain, there was no relief in sight. She was

treated as if she was the worst society has to offer, thrown away like trash. "I am on the floor in the hole(solitary)... Still no bed. My whole body aches. I am freezing cold. The hole is where they put people who are bad, and a problem, I am neither. My shoulder has frozen up. I don't understand this treatment."

Prison was meaner, colder, crueler, not coed, and unlike anything she had ever experienced. Yet, she persisted and survived. Finally released in January of 2010, she promptly returned to living life at its fullest even though her health was worse. This time she would not forget her brothers and sisters still serving or preparing to serve federal time for standing up for what is right, the choice to consume and grow a plant known to heal. A plant no worse than alcohol. Born from her pain and the pain of her fellow brothers and sisters was a prison outreach program LPOP, The Landa Prison Outreach Program. Over time the organization grew into what is known today as Freedom Grow.

Not long after her release from the mold ridden institution, Stephanie was diagnosed with cancer. Even cancer proved no match for a determined Stephanie. She and "Ms. Pot" survived that too. Today at the age of 73, and after all the years of pain, protests, parties, boys, and the BOP, little has changed. Stephanie is still stubborn and independent. She still does what she knows is right. She still loves cannabis. Her son Max still makes her heart sing. She loudly and proudly advocates for prisoners' rights and legalization at the federal level.

The mission of her award winning, non-profit organization Freedom Grow, is to bring light to a dark cell. Volunteers raise funds that are dispersed to non-violent cannabis prisoners so they can afford simple life necessities while incarcerated. For more information, please visit, <https://www.freedomgrow.org/>.

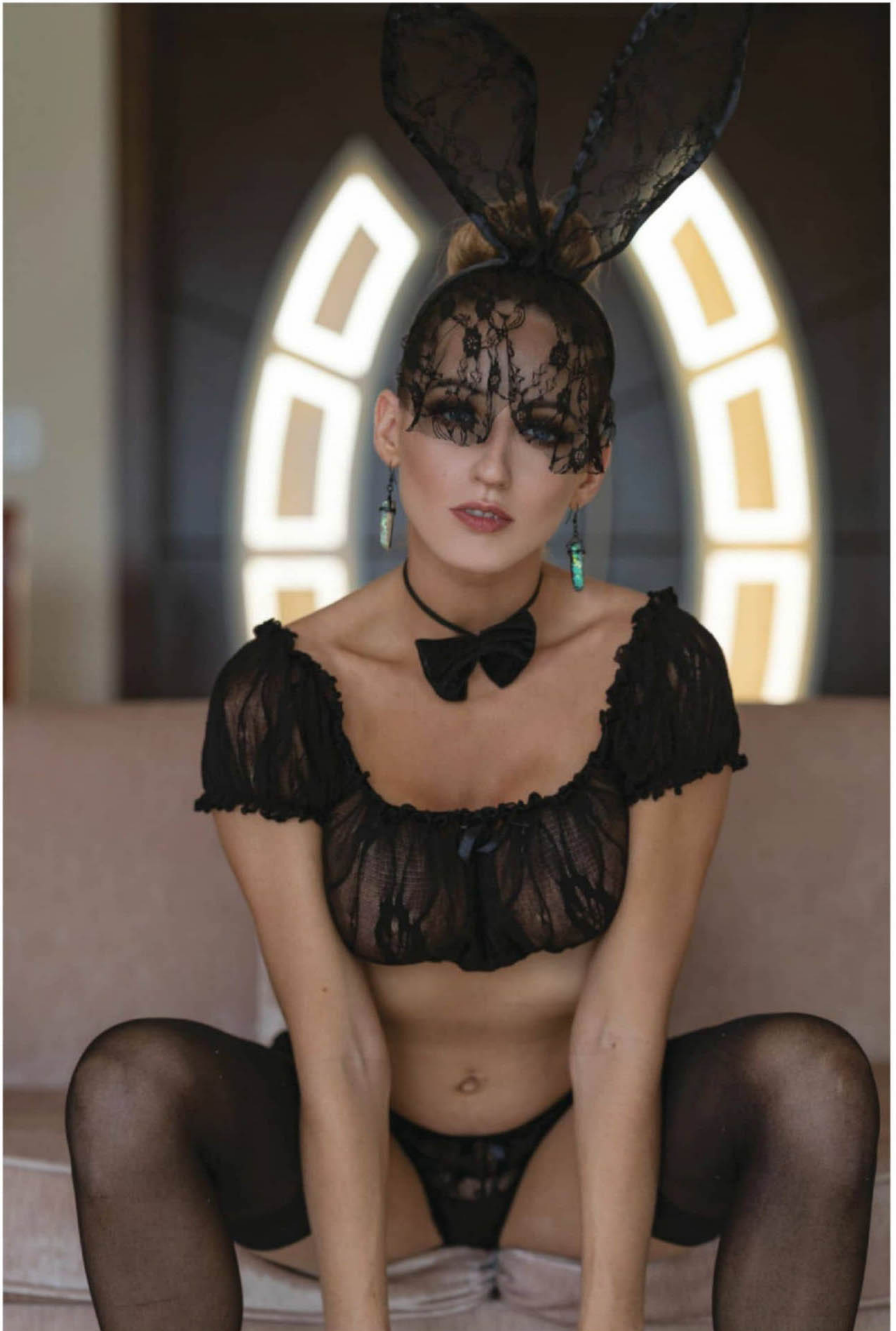
When asked if there is anything that would compel her to quit her lifelong relationship with marijuana she quickly responded, "Absolutely not!"

The only thing that might slow Stephanie down, "The release of every single human trapped in a cage for a plant that is making a lot of people a bunch of money and healing the sick."

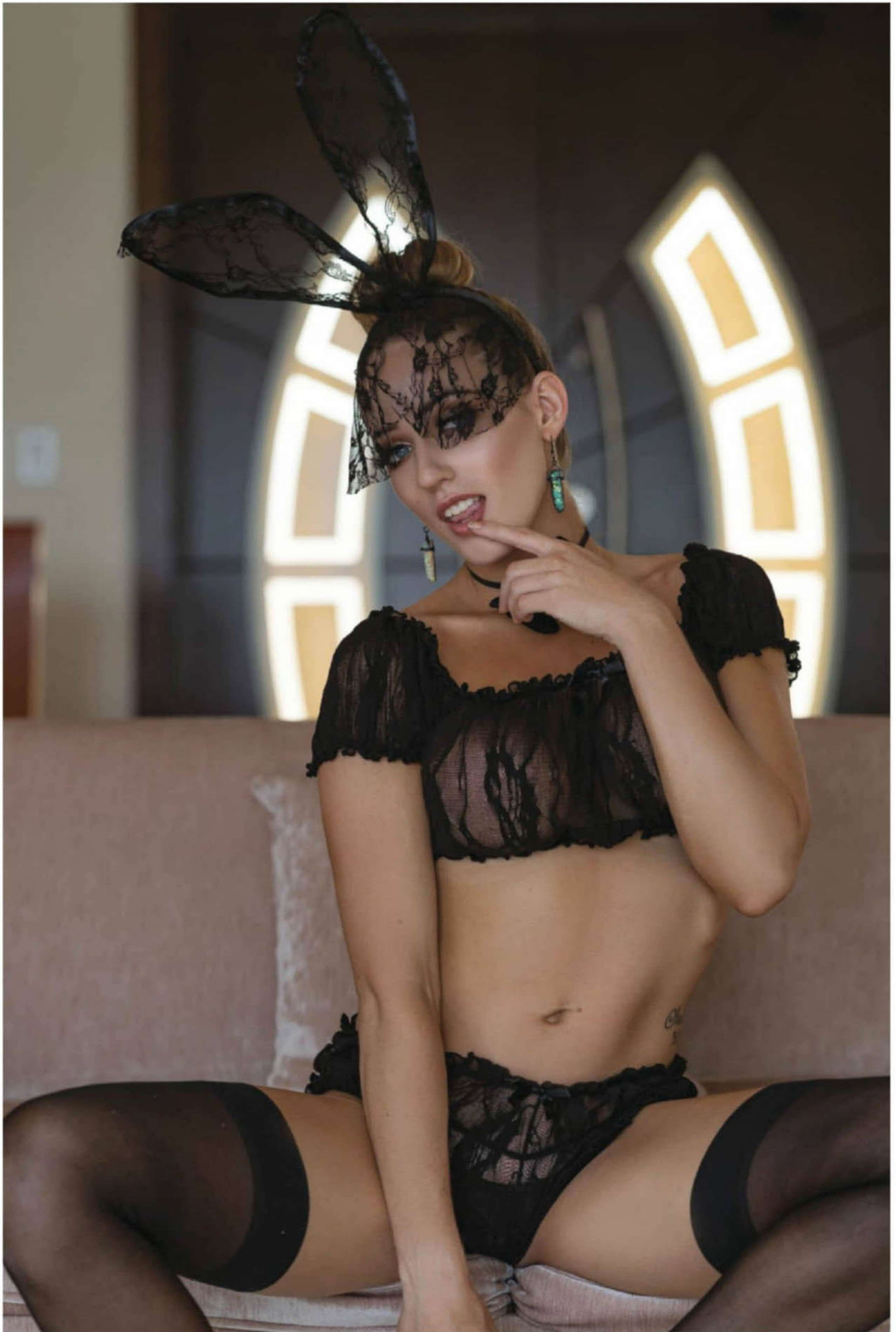


Ciara Nichols

Photography by Juan Sanchez Jr



















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