

# VANITY FAIR



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**MALE  
MENOPAUSE**  
The Unspeakable  
Passage  
by Gail Sheehy

**DU PONT V. DU PONT**  
Blueblood  
Warriors  
by Maureen Orth

**COUTURE CLASH**  
Saint Laurent's  
Sale of a Lifetime  
by Bryan Burrough

**AGENT PROVOCATEUR**  
A Maverick Investigator  
Stalks a Serial Killer  
by Ron Rosenbaum

**EXCLUSIVE**  
Excerpt from Dominick Dunne's  
New Novel, *A Season in Purgatory*

## Wild Thing!

Sharon Stone's Other Instincts  
by Kevin Sessums

## Angie goes *Palm* loco; Idle pursuits; Black 47, bar band to the stars; Hwang's world

Whatever its other merits, *Wild Palms* offers this comforting prediction: they'll still be Rollerblading in Los Angeles in 2007. Indeed, some of the best fun in the strange, dark mini-series, airing this month on ABC, lies in seeing what bits of today's culture will (supposedly) endure. "Did you notice the 'Daryl F. Gates Elementary School?'" asks BRUCE WAGNER, *Wild Palms'* creator. (Oliver Stone produced; Peter Hewitt, Keith Gordon, Kathryn Bigelow, and Phil Joanou directed episodes; and James Belushi, Dana Delany, Robert Loggia, Kim Cattrall, Ernie Hudson, and Angie Dickinson are in the cast.)

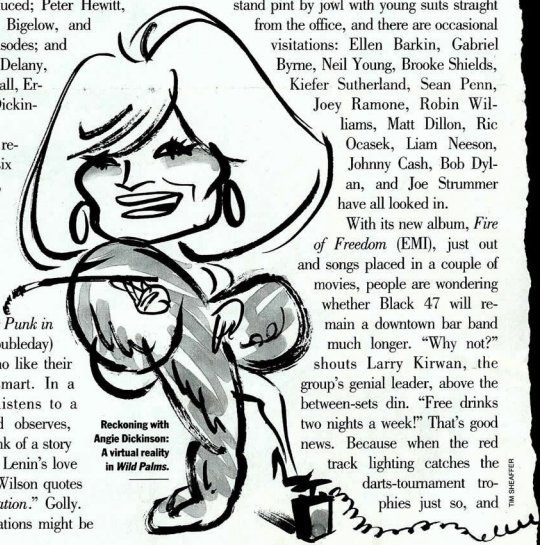
"Our mandate was to resolve the show within six hours," says Wagner, fending off the inevitable comparison, "so it's more like *Dynasty* than it is like *Twin Peaks*."

Greil Marcus's *Ranters & Crowd Pleasers: Punk in Pop Music, 1977-92* (Doubleday) is definitely for those who like their rock-music criticism smart. In a 1979 essay, Marcus listens to a Springsteen bootleg and observes, "The songs made me think of a story Maxim Gorky told about Lenin's love of Beethoven. Edmund Wilson quotes it in *To the Finland Station*." Golly. Who knows what associations might be

unleashed were Marcus to squeeze into Paddy Reilly's, in Manhattan, on a Wednesday or Saturday night when BLACK 47 is performing. The pub looks as if it were designed to hold a handful of placid, long-term bartenders (and their imaginary friends), but on those nights when the exuberant Celtic rockers pull their guitars, uilleann pipes, tin whistles, bodhran drum, trombone, and sax onto the makeshift stage, the crush spills onto Second Avenue. Irish expatriates down from the Bronx stand pint by jowl with young suits straight

from the office, and there are occasional visitations: Ellen Barkin, Gabriel Byrne, Neil Young, Brooke Shields, Kiefer Sutherland, Sean Penn, Joey Ramone, Robin Williams, Matt Dillon, Ric Ocasek, Liam Neeson, Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, and Joe Strummer have all looked in.

With its new album, *Fire of Freedom* (EMI), just out and songs placed in a couple of movies, people are wondering whether Black 47 will remain a downtown bar band much longer. "Why not?" shouts Larry Kirwan, the group's genial leader, above the between-sets din. "Free drinks two nights a week!" That's good news. Because when the red track lighting catches the darts-tournament trophies just so, and



Reckoning with Angie Dickinson: A virtual reality in *Wild Palms*.

## Briefly, Shonen Knife



**Shonen Knife Is:** A cross between the Ramones and Josie & the Pussycats. The Japanese trio (Naoko Yamano, vocals and guitar; Michie Nakatani, bass and vocals; Atsuko Yamano, drums) has just released its first English-language album, *Let's Knife*.

**The Basic Product:** Irresistible, guileless, pop-culture-obsessed retro-rock.

**The Game Plan:** To promote them as purveyors of irresistible, guileless, pop-culture-obsessed retro-rock—and not correct their English.

**Example?** Label disseminates vital information on intra-band dynamics ("Atsuko's role in Shonen Knife is often underestimated"), favorite foods and hobbies, and the stories behind the songs themselves ("Insect Collector." When I was in high school, I had a homework that was collecting insects. Then, my friend who knows a lot about insects and I went to a hill. I don't like bushes and insects, but my friend never minded about them. I respected her very much. [Naoko!]).

**A Few More Song Titles:** "Flying Jelly Attack," "I Am a Cat," "Tortoise Brand Pot Scrubbing Cleaner's Theme (Sea Turtle)," "Cycling Is Fun," "Bear Up Bison."

**Typical Lyric:** "She's glamorous / She's welcomed by boys / Ooh...ahh...ahh... / ... Bang, bang, bang, Twist Barbie / Oh, sexy girl!"

**Major Influences Claimed:** The Beatles, XTC, Elvis Costello, Jonathan Richman.

**Serious Cult Figures?** You bet. There's already been a tribute album devoted to them, called *Every Band Has a Shonen Knife Who Loves Them*.

**Whom They—or at Least Michie—Would Most Like to Meet:** "Young Mick Jagger."

—G.K.

JEFFREY BENDER

the bushwhacking waitresses start to sing along, you get the feeling that in some ways this is as good as it gets for a band like Black 47. You are reminded, in fact, of a story James Joyce once told about Sid Vicious's love of Dvořák. Edmund Wilson quotes it in *To the Finland Station*.

Comedy is by definition politically incorrect," says ERIC IDLE. "It deals only in stereotypes and things that shouldn't really be said. I wish Python was going, because it's a wonderful subject, 'politically incorrect,' isn't it? It would make a great film." And so, Idle hopes, will the story of an inheritance squabble resulting from switched babies called *Splitting Heirs*—which he wrote, produced, and stars in. "It's a low comedy," he says with evident pride. Also featured are Rick Moranis, Barbara Hershey, Catherine Zeta Jones, Sadie Frost... and John Cleese. "Yeah," says Idle, "he just wandered in for five days to collect a large fee." (Another former Python, MICHAEL PALIN, will soon release *American Friends*. No pratfalls here; rather, a few droll lines and some very pretty scenery. It's a genteel love triangle involving an Oxford don, based on Palin's great-grandfather's experiences.)

Finally, with David Henry Hwang's *Face Value*, Hollywood producer SCOTT RUDIN returns to his theatrical roots (and also to theatrical producer STUART OSTROW, who years ago employed a teenage Rudin in a road-company *Pippin*). The two producers, tracked down during the show's pre-Broadway run, said it was going great. "I see none of the Hollywood junk, 'cause Scott's still someone who was trained in the theater," said Ostrow from his Boston hotel room. "This was the team to play on," said avowed non-team player Rudin, from his car.

—GEORGE  
KALOGERAKIS

