

OUT ON THE TOWN WITH LIZ & SYDNEY

Hollywood, that great tinsel abyss of the American dream. Whether you love to hate it or hate to love it, around Oscar time you just can't escape it. Like a bad date from years past, it just won't leave you alone. Everywhere you turn, self-proclaimed "psychics" fill the airwaves hawking their Oscar predictions to anyone who will listen. To say that life imitates art would not be a lie, you think, as you overhear a clubbie practicing her acceptance speech in front of a bathroom mirror. Finally, you realize that club life is just the videotaped community-access version of the silver screen, whether they go home with a golden Oscar or a golden boy.

SYDNEY: You'll never eat lunch in this town again.

LIZ: Why? Did everyone get acting jobs at the same time?

Sydney: No. It's just an idle threat.

Liz: Gee, thanks. You know, **Julia Phillips** has actually lost restaurant tables over her book.¹

Sydney: I didn't think that most maitre d's took bad writing seriously enough not to seat people.

Liz: You're telling me. **Bret Easton Ellis** will never eat anything but Stouffer's Lean Cuisine until hell freezes over.

Sydney: What do Julia Phillips and Mr. Ellis have in common?

Liz: They both have egos the size of a Cecil B. DeMille production. They're both pencil-necked geeks. They're both self-loathing homosexuals. I don't know.

Sydney: Well, yes. But I was thinking more along the lines of sexist, racist, homophobic idiots than pencil-necked geeks.

Liz: Yeah, but at least Ms. Phillips has a humorous bone in her body.

Sydney: I was more fascinated by her obsession with **Goldie Hawn's** butt. I love the fact that every reviewer quotes her as saying that Goldie has "stringy hair," even

though she mentions Ms. Hawn's ass more than her hair.

Liz: I think she's "on the team," despite numerous mentions of her many attractive, post-adolescent boyfriends.

Sydney: My second-favorite part was when she salivated over **Corey Haim**. If we believe what she says, then it wasn't for lack of opportunity. Anything with a nervous system had the hots for her.

Liz: A legend in her own mind.

Sydney: These are drugs. This is the book your brain writes on drugs. Any questions?

Liz: Oh, the glamour of Hollywood. This hefty tome will probably keep more people out of Los Angeles than **Sandra Bernhard**.

Sydney: *Limelight* is writing a screenplay of its own.

Liz: That's a really weak transition. But go ahead.

Sydney: That item they planted in *Newsday* about two columnists spilling a drink on **Grace Jones'** bra and trying to run it through the wash before she noticed...

Liz: I don't think she's been to *Limelight* since they "reopened."

Sydney: They had a press dinner for, among others, the *Wall Street Journal* and had to hire clubbies to fill the room. Then they gave out a mushroom punch to make sure the "filler" would misbehave, i.e., be press-worthy.

Liz: Well, when they make *Limelight: the Movie*, I'm sure that's one story that won't make the cut, and the people who came up with that idea should be cut.

Sydney: For someone whose first featured role ended up on the cutting-room floor, **Kevin Costner²** did pretty well at the Oscars.

Liz: Quite.

Sydney: Maybe there is hope for this world after all.

Wasn't it a big victory for multi-culturalism—an African-American actress with dreads, an actress who doesn't look like a "traditional" starlet and an epic film about Native Americans all won.

Liz: Yeah, and then there was the triumph of pop culturalism—**Madonna's** homage to **Marilyn Monroe**.

Sydney: "Talk to me, **Norman Schwarzkopf**, tell me all about it!"

Liz: Well, at least she didn't try to play brain-dead and say, "I didn't even

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SYDNEY POKORNY

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notice I looked like Marilyn."

Sydney: It could have been worse. She could have done **Dead Marilyn**.³

Liz: Speaking of death, I'm sorry, but it's really hard for me to accept her new relationship with **Michael Jackson**.

Sydney: Didn't he "date" **Brooke Shields**?

Liz: Yeah, well, "date"'s a strong word...

Sydney: As comic **Frank Maya** said at the Queer Oscars⁴: "How do you know a celebrity is gay? Just look to see if they dated Brooke Shields."

Liz: You have to admit that those awards were a bit more reflective of the queer lives led in La-La land. For Best Actor—**Richard Gere** in *Dances With Gerbils*. Best Actress—**Jodie Foster** in *The Silence of Jodie Foster*.

Sydney: I was rooting for **Chastity Bono** in *Teenage Dyke Ninja Lesbians*.

Liz: I don't know. **Debbie Reynolds** in *Closetland* is pretty tough competition. She's had a long run in that role.

Sydney: And the nominations for the Best New Club...

Liz: That's easy, there's only one new club—all the rest are remakes.

Sydney: The Oscar goes to Parallel.

Liz: You can think of it like this—Friday night⁵ is an MGM musical, with showgirls, and Saturday⁶ looks like the entire cast of extras from *Spartacus* decided to go dancing in cut-off shorts.

Sydney: But I bet if you ask the bathroom attendants, they'll tell you that it's just one big drama.

Liz: I think that door-people as casting directors is just one step away from club promoters as "auteurs"—**Godard** running *Roxy*, maybe?

Sydney: Oh god, I'm scared that everyone would fall asleep. Now that reminds me of a story. A friend once told me that she saw **Julia Kristeva**⁷ at *Girl World*.

Liz: Didn't she win Best Cinematography?

FOOTNOTES: 1. *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again*, a book which has spurred numerous lawsuits and talk-show appearances.

2. Kevin Costner's first role was to play the dead man in *The Big Chill*, in flashback scenes. They were all shot and then edited out, thus launching Jeff Goldblum, Kevin Kline and William Hurt upon the world.

3. Jimmy James, a female impersonator, plays Marilyn upon return from her grave, hence "Dead Marilyn."

4. Benefit for the Community Health Project, held at the Pyramid on Oscar night.

5. *Satyricon*, a night of "debaucherous satire" featuring the former *BoyBar* beauties.

6. A large, Saint-like gay crowd.

7. French film and literary critic. A favorite of Sydney's.