

OUT ON THE TOWN WITH LIZ & SYDNEY

Sometimes the life of a columnist has its benefits. When Liz and Sydney heard about the party for Amanda Donohoe's new film, *Dark Obsession*, directed by her boyfriend Nick Broomfield, they cleared their calendars and hoped to meet the woman who brought female sexual "flexibility" to unsuspecting households across America. That night, they went to Limelight expecting to say little more than "Gee, thanks for all you've done." Instead, Sydney and a barely coherent Liz found themselves sitting on a couch with Ms. Donohoe, asking her about her latest trek into TabooLand. We found Ms. Donohoe provocative and articulate about the problems and issues facing women today. Versed in their craft and sensitive to what happens in the world around them, the celebrities of the future should look very much like Ms. Donohoe.

Amanda Donohoe: Those are great hats you're wearing.

Sydney: Thank you. We're doing sort of a Maine fishing thing this season. (Pause.) We just wanted to start off by saying thank you for *LA Law*, as well as *The Rain-bow*³ and the support you've shown for the lesbian and gay community. There are some people who would try to distance themselves from roles like these.

AD: I have too many friends who are gay or lesbian to disrespect them by pushing a role [like this] away.

Liz: The movie you're in now, *Dark Obsession*, has just received an NC-17 rating from the MPAA Rating Board. Do you think that the rating is representative of a certain amount of conservatism, or a backlash regarding issues of sexuality?

AD: I think we are definitely feeling a backlash now. It's become so conservative that it's almost as if the '60s never happened. The NC-17 rating is so arbitrary, it's used only to suppress sexuality. Sex is regulated, while violence is not. Here you have the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* going around killing people, and the audience loves it.

In Hollywood, the whole attitude toward sexuality is so strange. Look at *Pretty Woman*—here is a movie that started as a dark, serious treatment of prostitution and, after it became Disneyfied, ended up as a happy film: You can be a prostitute and meet Mr. Right. Never mind the fact that you might contract AIDS or die.



AMANDA DONOHOE



By LIZ TRACEY &
SYDNEY POKORNY

Sydney: Do you think that the majority of parts offered to women in Hollywood are like that, and that actresses aren't taken very seriously?

AD: You wouldn't believe the shit that's out there...or maybe you would. I go into the office and say, "I would do this part if you make it worth my while." You know, make the character real, more than just an appendage to the male lead, to prove that he's virile. The agents say: "Who is this bitch? Get her out of here." I'm reading this book, *A Women's History of the World*, right now, and it is really incredible the way that women have been taught to have a negative perspective about themselves...As a woman, you live and know these things, but reading about it is so much more powerful.

Liz: You seem to have taken on roles which have been controversial, mostly because of the sexual openness. Is this something you think you've done consciously?

AD: I was in a religious school growing up, and I refused to kneel during prayers. I've always been the type of person to question things. I like being controversial, although I don't try to be controversial. I seem to always find controversy. I want to deal with the seamy side of sexuality. For me, sex is just another form of communication. There are people that want to pretend that it doesn't exist, yet we spend all our time talking about sex.

Sydney: I think you've definitely had a positive effect....You've made people think about larger issues and forced them to question their beliefs.

AD: I want people to question things. Why did I do this, if not to have them question...I would be on some sort of ego trip otherwise.

Liz: What projects are you working on for the future?

AD: I'm writing what I hope will be treatments for films. One is called *SM: Sex and Magic*. When I saw Robert Mapplethorpe's work, I found it very honest....I think his work is about relationships and their dynamics. That's what *Sex and Magic* would be about as well. Another one is called *Curiosity Killed the Cat*, about someone who believes their lover is cheating on them and hires a private detective to find out. It's about the distrust and jealousy that develops because of what they find out.

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