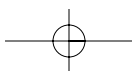
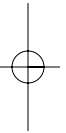
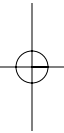




IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

PART I

Where Marlon and Ryan and Melissa and Brian
(among others) procreate and have children.
Nannies are hired. Children go to school.



1

HOLLYWOOD FAMILY VALUES FAMILY VALUES

A NEW WEIRD ORDER

Leggo My Ego!

Why do Hollywood stars, the most attractive, admired, and highly compensated citizens of the world, have families more screwed up than even the notoriety-driven mongrels loitering around the green room at the Jerry Springer show?

The short answer is *ego*. Insatiable ego. Constantly massaged ego. 24-hour-a-day concierge ego. 400-thread-count linen at the five-star luxury dog kennel ego. Trading in your prefame spouse for a world-class model ego.

Ego. Ego. Ego.

For every celebrity, by design and necessity, is a narcissist. The desire to become a star requires an incredible appetite for attention and approval. To achieve fame and its accoutrements takes laser-like focus, and a nearly commendable ability to stay self-centered in the

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service of the dream. Maintaining celebrity is a 24-hour-a-day process requiring a full-time staff to solidify the star's place at the top of the social pecking order. An impenetrable ring of "yes" creatures—including assistants, publicists, managers, agents, hair and make-up artists, stylists, lifestyle consultants, Pilates instructors, cooks, drivers, nannies, schedulers, and other assorted caretakers—work round-the-clock to feed the star's absurd sense of entitlement. Celebrities focus on the minutiae of self all the time—and they make sure that no distractions like airplane reservation snafus or colicky babies interrupt this singular focus. This often extremely lucrative self-obsession invariably becomes downright pathological.

That is why Los Angeles is a veritable triage center for psychiatry, and why the industry responds so well to Woody Allen's neurosis-driven films when the public at large barely registers his openings. It is also why psychiatry's arch-nemesis, Scientology, has made Hollywood central to its base of operations (more about the "church" of L. Ron Hubbard and its hold on Hollywood later!). The competition for the dollars of damaged celebrity souls is stiff—may the best man win, Freud or Hubbard.

Massive ego and narcissism may be the primary ingredients for achieving and maintaining Hollywood success, but they are also the number one cause of the grandiose foibles in their storied, disastrous personal lives. The full-time job of parenting requires absolute selflessness. In contrast, the full-time job of celebrity requires absolute selfishness. The two by definition do not naturally coexist. Yet, because of their fame, money, and social power, stars somehow think they can defy the odds and maintain a high level of professional success, and still raise healthy families in the process.

No wonder so much rotten fruit is hanging from the dysfunctional celebrity family tree.

Celebrity Bumfights

The exotic personal exploits of celebrities are fascinating to read about, and presumably to live through, but by all accounts Hollywood is not the proper environment to raise children. Divorce notwithstanding, Bruce Willis and Demi Moore (1987–2000) seemed to

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have their priorities straight when they moved to Hailey, Idaho, to raise their children.¹ Sissy Spacek raised her kids in Virginia² and has all but kissed the LA life goodbye. Sam Shepard and his life roommate Jessica Lange also opted for a simpler life for their family in Minnesota.³ Likewise, Michael J. Fox and actress wife Tracey Pollan share time at homes in rural Connecticut and Vermont.

“If we’re [in L.A.] all the time, our life is about me. Our life is about my job or the way people react to me. Everywhere we go, businesses this, dinners that, lunches that. I don’t want my family to be about me. I want it to be about us, and I can do that better here,” Fox told *USA Today Weekend* in 1997. “I know what it’s like to eat with the Queen of England. And it doesn’t mean as much as sitting on the floor today with my kids.”⁴

These examples represent a small but hopeful trend toward celebrities pursuing a sense of normality for their kids—despite the odds against their parents being able to weather the storm away from the logical epicenter of their egos’ home, Hollywood.

Sadly, a cottage industry has thrived in which the flotsam and jetsam of celebrity misbehavior, usually the offspring, air the family’s dirty laundry in the pursuit of achieving something they never had growing up—a sense of self-worth—because their parents larger-than-life accomplishments and minute-to-minute needs too often eclipsed their own.

Books like Christina Crawford’s *Mommy, Dearest* and the late Gary Crosby’s *Going My Own Way* offered sensational, firsthand accounts into the family lives of Joan Crawford and Bing Crosby, proving that even in the industry’s Golden Age, Hollywood idols did not make top-notch parents. Nor most likely do their own children, comfortable performing literary blindsides on their star parents in the pursuit of their own 15 minutes of fame. It’s a vicious cycle. These stories took time to come out, usually not until after Mommy or Daddy entered the ranks of the dearly departed, and as postmortem tell-alls did not allow their famous parents much opportunity to wage a defense.

In the current Hollywood scene, it’s not just the kids but also the parents publicly airing the secret family tittle-tattle, often in real time and for large sums of money. Celebrity reality television in the form of “The Osbournes” has expedited and streamlined the process

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by which celebrities share their innermost secrets and lay out their personal family turmoil. Waiting until the end of rehab to tell Stone Phillips about the road to hell and back is simply too late now.

While actor Jake Busey (“Shasta McNasty”) is trying to make a name for himself in his father’s erratic shadow, he must compete with dad’s on-screen reality antics in “I’m with Busey.” To sell the show, Comedy Central posits the born-again rehab alumnus as more unpredictable than Ozzy Osbourne. In an interview with *Maxim* magazine Gary Busey promotes the show by sharing his drugged-out low point: “I came home one day, took off my windbreaker and three bundles of cocaine fell to the floor. Well, my dog Chili, who has short hair, came in and lay on her back with her legs in the air and she rubbed all the cocaine on her back and side. So I got a straw and I started brushing back her hair and snorting where I saw the cocaine. Back, butt, side—not a spot was left. It took me 25 minutes to snort all the cocaine the dog had on her coat.”⁵

So transparent is the network suits’ desire to chronicle the domestic meltdowns of the rich and famous, VH1 slated princess of the damned Liza Minnelli, daughter of Hollywood’s most glamorous suicide, Judy Garland, along with her short-term wax show husband David Gest (2002–2003) to star in their own televised journey to hell. When Minnelli attempted to hijack “The Liza and David Show” and make it into an extended “Larry King Live Weekend,” replete with old timers like Steve and Edie belting out standards around the bizarre couple’s home piano, VH1 immediately dropped the idea. Dueling lawsuits between the parties ensued with personal details coming from both sides reminiscent of a divorce proceeding.⁶ If Minnelli couldn’t realize that her path to career rebirth was exposing herself and her bizarre husband of the moment to raw exploitation, that was her problem. Not Viacom’s.

The saddest aspect of E! Channel’s ratings bonanza “The Anna Nicole Show” is reluctant costar, Daniel, Anna Nicole Smith’s Nirvana T-shirt-wearing adolescent son. “He doesn’t like the cameras,” the plus-sized head case told “Good Morning America.” “He’s doing it for mama.”⁷

As if it isn’t hard enough going through the awkward teen years as the offspring of a demented single mother, Daniel is forced to

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withstand the public viewing of what mom calls her “rollercoaster” of a life.⁸

“Hold on,” Smith warns viewers, Daniel be damned.⁹

Alt.Family.Hollywood

Is it too late for Hollywood families who have already flamed out to tap into the burgeoning market for celebrity-driven reality TV? Stars can't live off the proceeds of “E! True Hollywood Stories,” you know.

Some past vignettes of the familial eruptions of the down and out and famous would surely whet the appetite of parasitic network suits today if they could only rewind time, and get a guarantee in writing that the stars have no intentions of pursuing their dignity anytime soon.

Marlon Brando heads a family so damaged its story line wouldn't make the cut on a Brazilian soap opera. Over the years he has helped to create a series of nine children with four different women.¹⁰ In 1990, son Christian killed Dag Drollet, the Tahitian lover of his half-sister Cheyenne, who later committed suicide by hanging herself in French Polynesia, where her father sent her to recover from chronic depression.¹¹ “I have come to despise my father for the way he ignored me when I was a child,” Cheyenne once publicly stated.¹²

After a few years in the brig, Christian then got involved in a paternity squabble with Bonny Lee Bakley, the future wife (and future murder victim, allegedly) of actor Robert Blake, who proved to be the father in question. We all know what happened next.¹³

Marlon Brando ballooned while holed up in his Hollywood Hills home, and local food deliverymen acclimated to the clandestine rituals of getting the icon his daily caloric bounty—including throwing McDonald's hamburgers over the gate.¹⁴ In a rare public appearance on “Larry King Live” in 1994, filmed at his home, Brando babbled incoherently and declared “Hollywood is run by Jews.”¹⁵ To top it off, Brando planted a slobbering on-screen kiss on King.

“This is a false world,” Brando once opined. “It's been a struggle to try to preserve my sanity and sense of reality taken away by success. I have to fight hard to preserve that sense of reality so as to bring up my children.”¹⁶

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We're thinking that Marlon lost this particular fight.

Oscar-nominated Ryan O'Neal (*Love Story*) and his Oscar-winning daughter Tatum (*Paper Moon*) have both flourished in the trade, yet both—along with Ryan's doomed son Griffin (*Attack of the Killer Bimbos*)—have withstood so many self-inflicted life traumas it's no small wonder they are still alive. Ryan's battles with the bulge and cancer,¹⁷ along with his stealing of Farrah Fawcett from his best pal Lee Majors,¹⁸ make for a compelling script, perhaps better than any the three O'Neal burnouts have read in the last two decades.

Tatum's career tanked as she couldn't stay off heroin long enough to keep custody of her kids spawned by temperamental tennis icon John McEnroe.¹⁹ Tatum repeated the cycle of her mother, Joanna Moore, who, according to Tatum, was more interested in getting high than caring for her own children.²⁰

Brother Griffin has said that the O'Neal children were “traded like dogs” between Ryan and his estranged wives,²¹ contributing to his inevitable drug and anger management problems. Griffin was tried for manslaughter in the death of Francis Ford Coppola's son, Gian-Carlo, who was decapitated in a drunken speed boating accident. He was found guilty of a lesser charge and admitted to drinking at the time of the accident.²² Subsequently, an ex-girlfriend took Griffin to court alleging he said he'd kill her for breaking up with him and proved he had attempted to do so when he rammed his Ford Bronco into her parked car as she sat inside fearing for her life. He was en route to her home when police later arrested him.²³ Griffin pleaded no contest and was sentenced to one year in a drug and alcohol treatment program.²⁴

Kids of Hollywood royalty seem much more susceptible to tragic downfalls than their peers in the general population:

- Paul Newman's son Scott died of a Valium and alcohol overdose in 1978.²⁵
- Mary Tyler Moore's 24-year-old son Richie accidentally shot and killed himself in 1980—the same year his mother starred in the wrenching *Ordinary People*.²⁶
- Carroll O'Connor's son Hugh killed himself in 1995 after a 16-year battle with drug addiction.²⁷
- Barbara Eden's son, Matthew Ansara, died of a heroin overdose in 2001.²⁸

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How many people do you know whose children have died of substance abuse or suicide? Add to the Hollywood death count the names of the Hollywood kids, like the O'Neal clan, who narrowly averted tragic endings after struggles with drugs, alcohol, and celebrity parents, including Charlie Sheen, actress Mackenzie Phillips ("One Day at a Time"), and Carol Burnett's late daughter Carrie Hamilton (who struggled with drugs and later died of cancer in 2002).²⁹ We'd list even more, but you get the point.

The female progeny of the Beach Boys' cosmically disturbed Brian Wilson hooked up with the daughter of infamous hedonist John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas to create Wilson Phillips. "I know that there is pain, but you hold on for one more day and break free the chains," the saccharine pop trio sang in the 1990s single *Hold On*, from their eponymous debut album that garnered four Grammy nominations.

The biggest casualty of the musical union was Carnie Wilson, a big-hearted soul with a magnificent voice. The group's career took off, but Carnie was surrounded by people obsessed with her Rubenesque figure, especially in contrast to her thin sister Wendy and super slender Chynna Phillips. The all-important music videos that pushed the band's success all but ignored her visage. It didn't help that hovering above her was the spirit of Mama Cass Elliott, who died in 1974 at the age of 32 from a massive heart attack brought upon by her excessive weight.

In an interview with Wilson, conducted by her "lifestyle consultant" and her psychologist before her stomach reduction and broadcast live on the Internet, she brought up the psychological factors that led to her morbid obesity, including bonding with her father over large bowls of Raisin Bran and half-and-half gobbled up in the middle of the night. "It was so damn good, it was so good."³⁰

Dad's all-encompassing, mostly LSD-induced insanity caused him to hand over "total therapeutic authority" to Dr. Eugene Landy, a controversial psychologist, who famously exerted total control over every aspect of his patient's life for years.³¹ Well, not total. Dr. Landy didn't take over as Carnie or Wendy's father.

Chynna's half-sister, Mackenzie Phillips, tells how dad, "Papa" John Phillips, instructed her in the art of joint rolling at 10 and injected her with liquid cocaine at 17. "To any normal, decent person

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reading this, that probably sounds horrific," Phillips said. "But dad didn't know any better. To him it was all part of being cool, being a 1960s dude. I paid the price for that. For years I felt bitter, but I forgave him on his deathbed."³²

Family friend Mick Jagger slept with Mackenzie when she was a mere 18 years old—with dad in the apartment at the time fully aware of what was happening. According to Mackenzie, Jagger told her, "I have been waiting for this since you were 10 years old."³³

Phillips was at one point Hollywood's most notorious recurring waste case—before Robert Downey Jr. broke all land speed records—and could not keep up with her maternal duties during her bouts with cocaine addiction. Now positioned as one of the town's clean-living spokespeople, the actress currently stars as the mom on the Disney Channel series, "So Weird." Indeed, it is. But not by Hollywood's standards.

"The Kennedys are the royal family of America. But if you want to talk about true glamour, scandal, and just a true collection of interesting and wild celebrities, that applies far more to my family," J. Paul Getty Sr. once bragged.³⁴

The oil-rich, commonsense-poor Gettys bestowed upon Los Angeles a world-renowned, heavily endowed art museum and a semitalented actor named Balthazar. The son of J. Paul Getty III (the one who was kidnapped, known to friends as Paul) and the grandson of J. Paul Getty Jr.—former heroin addicts alike, he also descended into a junkie's life not long after his *Lord of the Flies* success at the age of 17.³⁵

Balthazar spent much of his adolescence under the tutelage of his now ex-junkie, HIV-positive aunt, Aileen Getty, the former daughter-in-law of the Queen of Dysfunction, Elizabeth Taylor.³⁶ Balt, as his friends call him, is fond of letting his penis fall from his pants at inopportune moments, according to an LA-based journalist, causing his pals to urge him to "set some boundaries."³⁷

By age 16, dysfunctional wunderkind Drew Barrymore had written a tell-all book, *Little Girl Lost* (Pocket Books, 1991), in which she described the pain of growing up in a famous household. Grandfather John had drunk himself to death, and her father had a long history of drug abuse to go along with the family trademark drinking. "Until I was five years old my father and I were very close. When my parents separated I had a nervous breakdown," she admitted. "I was nine at

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the time. By the time I was eleven I was drunk. By the time I was fourteen I had my first joint. . . .”³⁸

Her first marriage to a bartender lasted 19 days. Now divorced for the second time from comedian Tom Green, Drew proves money and success can often obscure high-octane dysfunction.³⁹ Today she is one of Hollywood’s most bankable young actresses and has a production company that ably produces the bland *Charlie’s Angels* moneymakers.

Viva la dysfunction!

Alternative Family Ties

The twisted values of fame are born not only from nepotism or from up-and-coming stars lured into the fast lane acquiescing to Hollywood peer pressure. Some stars were born and reared as destiny’s children, conceived and raised by hippies, oddball nonconformists, and other Age of Aquarius rejects, many who now feel compelled to carry on their nutty lineage by altering society via their artistic gifts.

There is no shortage of celebrities raised in nontraditional, radical settings who have accumulated enough personal wealth and power to obscure the fact that they are not philosophically on the same page as the majority of us. Some of them were raised in communal settings, sent to alternative schools and mind-bending summer camps, and indoctrinated throughout life to see the suburban nuclear American family structure as somehow suspicious and corrupt. These people believe the rest of us are brainwashed (think: *The Matrix*) and only they possess the infinitely open minds that allow them to sense the entire scope of the human experience (think: *Hair*). It’s a distinction we couldn’t understand unless, of course, we opened our minds, accepted their orthodoxies, and joined the psychedelic circus.

Since *People* and *Us* magazines and other publicity venues in which celebrities share their backgrounds and promote their careers tend to have a nice working relationship with the industry, these unconventional back stories tend to be glossed over or put into the best possible light. A case in point is the late alleged future savior of mankind, River Phoenix (*Running on Empty*, *The Mosquito Coast*, *My Own Private Idaho*).

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“We believed we could use the mass media to help change the world and River would be our missionary,” eulogized Heart Phoenix, formerly Arlyn Sharon Dunetz from the Bronx, at her son’s funeral following his not-so-holistic overdose from cocaine, heroin, Valium, ephedrine, and marijuana on Halloween in 1993.⁴⁰

Any cursory examination of the life and death of River Phoenix exposes the crash-ridden intersection of Hollywood waywardness and the mostly sycophantic, loony, and enabling entertainment press. The institutional imperative to maintain unfettered star access helps to wave off red flags, while the so-called open-mindedness of the journalists serves to soft-pedal questionable alternative life choices. Some might call it a codependent relationship, with the media acting as the enabling, subservient partner.

River Phoenix represented a Baby Boomer media ideal—he was a young, talented, successful, sensitive, outspoken (yet nonthreatening) peacenik love child, cultural icon, and environmental activist. A spokesperson for the cause. A messenger.

And what of River’s drug problems?

“What problems? There weren’t any problems,” said brother Joaquin, two years after River’s death when queried by *USA Today*.⁴¹

The media also turned a blind eye to River’s drug problems because they loved what he represented. If River Phoenix was ever in peril during his meteoric rise, which he clearly was, the intrepid entertainment press was not predisposed to tell. Had they offered the straight dope, so to speak, and not doled out a predictable feel-good, soul-searching narrative, Child Protective Services would have probably possessed a compelling case to swoop in and take away Joaquin Rafael (a.k.a. Leaf), Libertad Mariposa (a.k.a. Liberty, Liberty Butterfly), Summer Joy, Rain Joan of Arc (a.k.a. Rainbow), and River Jude from hippie hell parents John and Heart Phoenix.

“We never treated them like children but like extra added friends,” Heart reportedly said. “And they have always held up their part of the deal. It was never like ‘We know better because we are the parents.’ It was more like ‘This is the first time we’ve ever done this too. What do you think?’ And the children were so wise. If we made a mistake, we made it together. But if you open yourself up, a way presents itself. You find the right path.”⁴²

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Please—don't try that at home!

John met Heart in 1968 at the commencement of the Summer of Love when the sometime gardener picked up the 23-year-old former secretary hitchhiking.⁴³ Heart was kicking off a "spiritual journey" soon after renouncing her background as a "clone" and divorcing some poor schlub back in New York. "We just knew we had similar desires," Heart recalled.⁴⁴

One of the paths Heart and John took on the back roads to enlightenment was jumping from commune to commune, Oregon to Colorado to Texas, mostly under the influence of intense drugs, and popping out kids under circumstances that have gotten impoverished, drug-addicted black women jailed. "I fell in love with LSD," Heart once said in a typical fawning press interview, written without any sense of moral outrage for an audience apparently too jaded to raise an eyebrow. "Grass was plentiful and cheap and together they were an essential part of our journey."⁴⁵

John and Heart soon became "missionaries" for the Children of God,⁴⁶ a cult founded by David Berg, who, according to sociologist David Van Zandt, encouraged sex among its underaged members.⁴⁷ Though not compensated for the work, John was given the lofty title Archbishop of Venezuela and the Caribbean. The family settled outside Caracas where five-year-old River and his three-year-old sister, Rain, distributed cult pamphlets while performing music on the streets for handouts.⁴⁸

River's memory painted a bleaker picture of the early years. "It was disgusting," he said of a "shack" he once called home. "It had no toilet and was rat-infested."⁴⁹

Mother Heart maintained her faith. "We had a vision that our kids could captivate the world," the Phoenix family matriarch remembered, repetitively conveying a messianic obsession to use her children to reach the Promised Land—Hollywood.⁵⁰

Bumming a free ride back to America on an ocean freighter in 1978, the destitute Phoenix family took refuge at Heart's mother's place in Florida, relegating Heart to leech off the middle-class teat she had renounced nearly a decade before.⁵¹ Soon thereafter, Heart Phoenix had yet another vision that predictably cast her children in the starring roles.

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After entering the kids in numerous talent contests around Florida, seeking to win favor of the clone-like judges, a Phoenix family friend sent a letter to actress Penny Marshall describing the Phoenix family's stage charms. Through an employee Marshall sent a perfunctory letter encouraging the Phoenix clan to stop by the set of "Laverne and Shirley" if they ever came out to Hollywood.⁵²

Like God speaking to Moses, Heart heeded the calling and again uprooted the family. Forty places in 20 years, she once boasted. With John's inability to work due to a recurring back problem and a dearth of archbishop work in the States, the Phoenixes of Caracas by way of Florida headed to Los Angeles.

"I figured I'd play guitar and sing with my sister, and we would be on television the next day," River said. "We were really naive."⁵³

Soon the kids soon found their way into one banal acting role after another: *Space Camp* for Leaf, "Growing Pains" for Summer, *Kate's Secret* for Liberty, *Maid to Order* for Rain. And glory be, Heart Phoenix, vegan activist, nomad without peer, and advanced human spirit, became her kids' manager—an earth stage mother, if you will. Nirvana is apparently found bypassing progressive child labor laws and creating a vegan gravy train for parents who think hard work is for the birds.

Hollywood is the one place, save Marin County, where the Phoenix clan blended right in. "We were in competition, at the same auditions," recovering heroin addict and River's *Stand By Me* costar Corey Feldman once said. "We got to know each other's families. He was a normal kid. We were both normal kids who were in the business."⁵⁴ If this quote were entered into the court record, the prosecuting attorney would then say, "Your honor, I rest my case."

Rob Reiner, who directed River in *Stand By Me*, noted without irony, "It's clear he's been loved by his parents, who are people who have been able to maintain what was good and pure about the 1960s—morality without the garbage."⁵⁵ And that morality translated into something that would raise the eyebrows of even the most open-minded flower child. When River, who claimed to have lost his virginity at the age of four(!), once set out as a teenager to have sex with a girlfriend, the Phoenix family hosted a pagan ritual, constructing a love tent for the occasion. "It was a beautiful experience," Heart later said.⁵⁶

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“I’m glad I did it when I was young,” River once said, perhaps trying to justify the unjustifiable. “But I didn’t want those young vaginas and different body parts [penises?] that were in my face to make me perverse when I was older, so I blocked it all out. I was completely celibate from 10 to 14. You’re just born into that reality, and you accept it.”⁵⁷

At 23, the much-ballyhooed great white hope River Phoenix reached a dead end on the wayward path his family had led him. Brother Joaquin, the Phoenix family’s latest commodity, who along with sister Rain was with River the night he died, placed the fateful call to 911. “I’m thinking he had Valium or something,” he told the dispatcher. He was only off by about four or five drugs.⁵⁸

Hollywood, for all its love of gritty reality and overwrought drama, has yet to produce the sexy and compelling tragedy of the family Phoenix. Unlike the Jerry Springer show freaks—who ostensibly teach us important life lessons about humanity—the River Phoenix cautionary tale hits too close to the bone for Hollywood to exploit.

Perhaps if Joaquin’s career starts hitting the skids, Heart Phoenix can reinvent herself again, option the sucker, and put her only living son in the starring role.

Prada-Wearing, Pharmaceutical-Happy Tepee Sisters of Love

“Turn on, tune in, drop out,” Dr. Timothy Leary, Winona Ryder nee Horowitz’s godfather, famously said.

Ryder, the convicted shoplifter of high-end designer fashion, was raised by hippie “intellectuals” in northern California who heeded the good psychedelic doctor’s advice and opted to live on society’s edges. Rejecting the allure of middle-class life, the family lived at times on an electricity-free commune in Mendocino, California, and traveled the land in a psychedelic bus named Veronica.⁵⁹

Dad runs Flashback Books in the tie-dyed community of Petaluma located 45 miles north of San Francisco, a specialty bookstore dealing exclusively in materials related to the drug experience. And mom is a “video artist”—whatever that is. Her folks together penned the scholarly work *Shaman Woman, Mainline Lady: Women’s Writings on*

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the Drug Experience. "It's great," Ryder told hometown cheerleader, the *San Francisco Examiner*. "It's about famous women writers like Louisa May Alcott and Edith Wharton who used opium or whatever while they were creating their masterpieces. It goes all the way up to Patti Smith."⁶⁰

Like the Phoenix family, Winona's brothers and sisters were also given F-U names: Sunyata, Jubal, and Yuri, who was named after a Russian cosmonaut.⁶¹ The family's rejection of consumer culture's creature comforts peaked when the family opted to become one with their oppressed spiritual kin, the native American Indian, by living in a tepee.⁶²

The Horowitz tribe?

"Whenever I've had choices to make," Ryder said, "I've known how to make them. I don't know if that comes from the 60s or if it comes from something else. But it's a wonderful thing to know."⁶³ Wonderful indeed. One imagines that master choice-maker Ryder, inspired by 1960s Yippie Abbie Hoffman's counterculture tome *Steal This Book*, will soon begin penning her own alternative life guide tentatively entitled *Steal This \$525 Black Leather Dolce and Gabbana Purse with Metal Eyelets and Leather Fringe*.

Perhaps not so strangely, Ryder befriended Courtney Love, her sister in the aristocracy of tabloid queens. Love also called a tepee home during her similarly nontraditional path to adulthood with parents as transparently nutty as Winona's.⁶⁴ To Love's credit, she paid lip service to rejecting her parents' ways, but created and marketed her own patented dysfunctional lifestyle that will likely traumatize parents for decades to come. Yet somehow no intrepid journalist has taken the time to investigate how Hollywood's royal screw-ups, products of households that rejected wealth on philosophical grounds, could become iconic fashion plates ready to wear the sashes of the New Materialism.

Desperately Seeking Insouciance

The acting Arquettes epitomize the anti-nuclear celebrity family that emerged from the Sixties: Father Lewis (J.D. Pickett on "The Waltons") smoked pot with the kids; the family lived for a time on a commune and spent a summer at a nudist colony.⁶⁵

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The result? David “Mr. Courtney Cox” Arquette is a recovering heroin junkie.⁶⁶ Brother Alexis flaunts his gender identity issues as “Eva Destruction” and “Amanda B. Reckonedwith” in drag shows around LA.⁶⁷ Sister Patricia prefers 16 hours of sleep daily, and says a nudity phobia causes her to bathe in the dark.⁶⁸ Courtesy of Camp Wannaseemytushee, presumably.

Sister Rosanna hit it big in *The Executioner's Song* opposite Tommy Lee Jones and *Desperately Seeking Susan* with Madonna. Dating Steve Porcaro from Toto made her name a truly bad early MTV-era rock music anthem.

In an October 1985 *Playboy* “20 Questions” Q&A, the actress activist labored about one of her causes, abortion—one of fertile Hollywood’s secret weapons of the trade—and at one point blurted out the following in response to the question of whether she had ever had an abortion: “Well, as a matter of fact, yes. And my mother went to have an abortion when she was pregnant with me. I mean, she was on her way, and then the nurse told her to go out through the back door because the place got raided and the doctor got arrested because it was illegal. This was during the Fifties, when women used to go to these old buildings and someone would do it with a knife and a newspaper. I mean, some butcher. I’ve had two abortions: one when I was much younger and one two years ago. I was deeply involved with a man the second time. We made the decision together that it wasn’t the right time for us to have a baby. It wasn’t a pleasant experience. We were going to get married but the moment just wasn’t right. The abortion ended up being OK, because I broke up with that person. So, you know, I wouldn’t want to have the marriage break up and have a two-year-old running around.”⁶⁹

Was Arquette completely oblivious to the fact that abortion’s illegality at the time saved her life, as she sang the praises of her two choices on purely selfish and not medical grounds? Or doesn’t she care?

Cognitive dissonance aside, had Arquette achieved greater success in her acting career—instead of being relegated to the position of pay cable male fantasy, repeatedly flashing her admirable breasts on screen—and continued to advocate for women’s issues as she did in *Playboy*, it is likely women would have eventually lost the right to vote. Arquette’s stunningly candid answer, representative of Hollywood’s

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utilitarian approach to the issue, exposes the rift not between pro-choice and pro-life camps, but between pro-abortion Hollywood and pro-choice America. The average person can see Hollywood's pro-abortion stance not as a philosophical abstraction born of altruism and a passion for women's rights, but as a necessary evil for actresses who must stay nubile to remain employable in a business not keen on putting pregnant or nursing women in nude scenes. Just ask "Melrose Place" evicted tenant, Hunter Tylo. The best way for actresses to assuage their guilt is to put on the hat of strident pro-choice activist claiming to be fighting for the civil rights of the masses, the very people they mock in their artistic work and treat with contempt in their daily lives.

Arts of Darkness

The airline industry has not declared war on the American family. Nor have the great steel companies in the Rust Belt produced any grand proclamations demanding fundamental changes to the institution. Professional sports leagues, from the NFL to the NBA to Major League Baseball, have remained tactfully silent on the subject as well. So have taxidermists, timber folk, and assorted pharmacists, dog groomers, and independent candy store operators. But somehow entertainers, people whose job description is to divert our attentions, feel compelled to traumatize us with their insane interpretation of family—both on screen and off.

Hollywood, run and inhabited by Baby Boomers and their Generation X progeny, is on a mission to obliterate the ideal of the nuclear family and to undermine traditional child-rearing practices. The entertainment landscape is littered with high-end product that demeans the family unit, and in their own lives, celebrities fail to set a good example. Shamefully, they are rewarded for rejecting middle-class American mores.

Entertainment executives may argue that they are giving the public what they want when they find new and nastier ways to expand trash TV into the familial realm, but the same cynical, exploitative, anti-family strain is also evident in critically praised films and pay cable series.

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On the big screen, *American Beauty* captured the imagination of the members of the Academy in 2000 when it received the Oscar for Best Picture. The Alan Ball-scripted film captures perfectly the elite point of view that Middle America is a wasteland inhabited by conspicuous consumers, twisted souls, and bad parents.

The only time Hollywood presents the family unit as sympathetic is when it seeks to normalize the abnormal through artistic propaganda. Case in point: HBO Films' *Normal*, starring acclaimed actors Jessica Lange and Tom Wilkinson, depicts a couple who after 25 years of marriage must deal with the husband's desire to have a sex change. Middle America is the setting in all its drab décor, as the story arc and message fall in line to present the family's acceptance of the father's untraditional desire. The prepubescent daughter in the film represents the unspoiled, open-mindedness Hollywood wishes were commonplace, as she loses no sleep over her father's out-of-nowhere desire to become a woman, while she is struggling with becoming one herself.

"To me, the essence of the piece really was the definition of love," Lange said while promoting the film. "Can you look beyond the external and actually see into the heart of another human being? What happens when you have the external suddenly going through this extraordinary and kind of unnatural transformation?"⁷⁰ Typical patronizing pedagogy on the art of sensitivity from artists who think they are the last defense from the rest of us going on a transgender hate-crime murder spree.

Aired in March of 2003, the film preceded the June report by gossip columnist Liz Smith that Larry Wachowski, one of two brothers behind *The Matrix* films, was rumored to be going through the same process with his wife, Thea Bloome.⁷¹ Bloome was apparently less forgiving, as divorce papers unearthed by "The Smoking Gun" web site showed. She noted that her husband "has been extremely dishonest with me in our personal life" and that the couple's separation was "based on very intimate circumstances concerning which I do not elaborate at this time for the reasons of his personal privacy."⁷² Perhaps actress/activist Jessica Lange can hold a private screening of *Normal* for Bloome to show her that her reaction was not so normal.

Television programmers' idea of a functional family—ignoring the ridiculous canned-laughter sitcoms and half-hearted "Little House on

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the Prairie” clones crafted to appease the Family Research Council’s G-rated guidelines—is best represented by Alan Ball’s other critically acclaimed creation, HBO’s “Six Feet Under.” The show chronicles the Fishers, a twisted family in the funeral business, each member mired in dysfunctional subplots—an abusive gay relationship, the revelation of the family matriarch’s infidelity to the now dead father, forays into group sex, etc. Ask anyone that watches it and they will swear by it. But an exemplar of the ideal family, it is not.

“Sex and the City,” a pox on Sarah Jessica Parker’s house, will have long-lasting deleterious effects on those women who bought into the hype, thinking that living as successful working women leading promiscuous sex lives well into their thirties will ensure a happy ending. These trash-talking metropolitan sluts get away with cultural murder saying and doing that which would have a male show with the same premise slapped with a misogyny label.

The truth is the show is in large part penned by liberated gay male writers who are putting their sexual politics into the mouths of babes—an X-rated version of what the *Look Who’s Talking* movies did by putting adult voices in the mouths of children. Will our families, let alone the sexes, ever recover from the horror?

Dan Quayle Was Right

“Hollywood thinks it’s cute to glamorize illegitimacy. Hollywood doesn’t get it,” Vice President Dan Quayle railed in 1992.⁷³ “It doesn’t help matters when prime time TV has Murphy Brown, a character who supposedly symbolizes today’s intelligent, highly paid professional woman, mocking the importance of fathers by bearing a child alone, and calling it just another lifestyle choice,” Quayle further complained.⁷⁴

Quayle’s comments ignited a firestorm from Hollywood, and the former vice president became the laughingstock of almost everyone, except those trying to raise children outside the nannybelt. “Murphy Brown” producer Diane English snidely responded on the evening Hollywood bestowed Emmys to the show, “As Murphy herself said, I couldn’t possibly do a worse job raising my kid alone than the Reagans did with theirs.”⁷⁵

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Anyone with a smidgeon of common sense knows that Quayle was, in essence, right. But the absolute power of the Hollywood PR machine was relentless in mocking Quayle and his message. Candace Bergen herself years later agreed when she told the *Los Angeles Times*: “My family has always come first—by a mile . . . I had a very difficult time playing Murphy the first year after the baby, as a distant second priority. It was very distressing to me, and I couldn’t get them to change it. Just hated it, and even [my daughter] hated it when she would watch certain episodes. I didn’t think it was a good message to be sending out.”⁷⁶

In post-Quayle real-life Hollywood the damage is done. The traditional family unit is regularly contorted and lambasted by sitcom creators. The one-two punch of having too much money and too little common sense instigates atypical life choices that trigger a predictable chain of media events. The life decision is 1) announced through the alternative lifestyle-friendly entertainment press, which 2) features kudos from their peers in the industry as a means to 3) downplay the raised eyebrows from the majority of common folk elsewhere whom they play for bigots.

It’s a proactive form of damage control that works because Middle America has traditionally had so few means to respond, other than through boycotts. Most people would have to live in a pop culture isolation ward if they were forced to respond to every star’s public life choices. Plus, most Americans could care less what entertainment industry folks do in their private lives; they just don’t like Hollywood’s agenda to undermine ideals they take seriously and are trying desperately to underscore at home.

So celebrities benefit from a virtual *détente* in which they get to publicly push the cultural envelope in a conspicuous way, and the rest of the world, for the most part, has to cross its fingers and hope the rot doesn’t spread.

Celebrity Adopto-Babies

Assuming a female’s child-bearing years are between the ages of 18 and 44, an actress, model, or singer is likely to be toiling in her demanding career as her biological clock ticks away oblivious to her Q

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rating. Instead of settling down with a long-term suitor, a starlet is usually juggling a buffet of hunks, or dames in the lesbian chic era, further pushing her away from the traditional motherhood route.

There is almost no incentive for the typical celebrity to lay down traditional roots, so Hollywood players not in committed relationships have taken it upon themselves to make their public adoption of children a high public relations priority. "I was adopted purely for publicity purposes," Christina Crawford recalled in an interview. "My entire childhood was made public. I was trained on how to smile for the camera, how to answer reporters' questions. I had special clothes worn only for photo sessions. And when the press left, (my siblings and I) became less valuable."⁷⁷

The more alternative a lifestyle, the more noise the celebrity adoption brings. Few know about the adopted children of Jamie Lee Curtis and her husband Christopher Guest (until she wrote her best-selling children's book on the subject, *Tell Me Again About the Night I Was Born*) or Steven Spielberg and Kate Capshaw, yet celebrities like Angelina Jolie and Paula Poundstone have made their accumulation of children a made-for-television lesson for society to behold. However, according to Dr. Laurel Bernau, a therapist in Santa Barbara, there are special issues endemic to the celebrity adoption. Dr. Bernau told *The Washington Times* of one famous client's high-profile adoption of a baby girl. "When the child grew older and her legs didn't look as shapely as her mother's, the narcissistic woman began telling all her friends, 'Of course she doesn't look like me—she's adopted.'"⁷⁸

In 1997, an unknown 30-something, unmarried woman named Calista Flockhart got her big break when David E. Kelley gave the stage actress the title role in the television series "Ally McBeal." No one put a gun to Flockhart's head when she opted for career over settling down and having children.

Flockhart's adoption of a baby boy in 2002 came as a surprise to the legion of middle-class fans who related to the show's morality tale about the sacrifices single working women make. Her Dachau chic physique had already telegraphed a distress call that the stress and 16-hour workdays of a successful TV star had taken their toll; her collapsing on the set from exhaustion confirmed it. What made her think she could carry the added burden of a child—sans partner?

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“Ally McBeal” costar Dyan Cannon told “Access Hollywood,” “She needs something to love when she gets home and on her days off.”⁷⁹ The obvious rejoinder, of course, lost on anyone within a 50-mile radius of Flockhart and Cannon’s moral code, is that a child needs someone to love them full time.

Lara Croft Womb Trader: Anatomy of a Celebrity Adoption

Actress Angelina Jolie showcased her most irresponsible life choice when she boasted on ABC’s “20/20” in July 2003 of her new role as an adoptive single mother to a Cambodian orphan. The twice-divorced, Oscar-winning actress—herself a product of celebrity family dysfunction (her father, actor Jon Voight, and her mother, French actress Marcheline Bertrand, divorced when she was 3)—discovered the boy during a stint as Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nation’s High Commission for Refugees. Considering the *Gia* star is a refugee from her own family, her new UN role seems tailor-made for her.

Voight revealed to the E! Channel in 2002 that he is estranged from his daughter since they starred with one another in *Lara Croft Tomb Raider* and claimed that his daughter has “serious emotional problems.” “She’s been staying away from me because she knows I’ve been trying to reach her to get help,” he said to an audience of millions.⁸⁰ Jolie later called his comments “unforgivable.”⁸¹

Jolie’s career has flourished despite (or perhaps because of) a public persona emphasizing the bizarre. She brags of blood rituals, a history of self-mutilation, and an obsession with the funeral sciences.⁸² Her marriage to four-time divorcee and fellow Oscar winner Billy Bob Thornton earned the couple the status as King and Queen of the Hollywood Goth Prom. Tales of Jolie’s unconventional upbringing—apparently her mother allowed for her to have a live-in boyfriend at age 14—paired with Thornton’s phobias and colorful past created a portrait of a modern Hollywood couple unwilling to conform to societal norms.⁸³

The media was agog with their madness and the lurid tales of bloodletting and wild physical interludes. Earlier, Jolie’s behavior at the 2000 Academy Awards exposed her to a flood of gossip when she

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passionately kissed her “date” after winning an Oscar for her role in *Girl, Interrupted*, offering the jaw-dropping line: “I am just so in love with my brother! He just held me and said he loved me . . . I have nothing without you. You are the strongest, most amazing man I’ve ever known, and I love you.”⁸⁴ Up until that point, all assumed her date was her boyfriend or her husband and not her brother. The odd sequence of events in front of a billion people watching on TV around the world forced a PR defensive that only served to expose her untraditional background to further scrutiny.

Cut to Cambodia. Jolie, in a role of her own making, seeks sanctuary through a child—a child she names Maddox Chivan Thornton Jolie, abandoning his given Cambodian name of Rath Vibol. “Maddox was the last child I saw,” Jolie confided to Barbara Walters during their “20/20” interview. “And he was asleep. And they put him in my arms and he stayed asleep. And then he opened his eyes and he smiled. He stared at me for two minutes, and then he smiled. And I cried and felt like this kid is okay being in my arms and he accepts me. He never cried. And . . . we just hung out and became friends.”⁸⁵

Maybe when he’s older, like say, four or five, the two can cut themselves and wear amulets around their necks filled with the other’s blood—a show of unconditional commitment to one another.

To acquire Maddox, Jolie says she and Billy Bob had to undergo a rigorous background check administered by the U.S. Immigration Service to see if the two would make fit adoptive parents. “As an actor, it’s always weird,” Jolie complained. “You’re being evaluated, and then you’ve got these crazy stories about you. And you’re being evaluated whether you can be a parent and they say that you’re nuts.”⁸⁶

The bumbling bureaucrats must have forgotten to ask Thornton if he had any intention of being a father to the kid. They also missed a *Rolling Stone* cover piece that described the couple as “America’s most dangerous marriage.” Additionally, they failed to translate one of Jolie’s tattoos—“*Quod Me Nutrit Me Destruit*,” which means “That Which Feeds Me Destroys Me”—and, in the end, signed off on the high-profile, high-risk adoption, anyway.⁸⁷

Lara Croft Womb Trader, like all dysfunctional starlets with a sudden urge for immediate unconditional love, was awarded legal

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custody of Maddox, who quickly became the catalyst for the demise of the storied alternative couple. "Billy and I just became very different people," Jolie lamented as scenes of a mohawk-sporting toddler played in the background. "I started focusing on traveling a lot, and really wanted to, and knew Cambodia, and really wanted to adopt a child. . . . and that was before Maddox even came home. And, by the time Maddox came home, we were kind of living apart."⁸⁸

"I never had the feeling that they were going to make it because of both of their serious problems, and they've both been very public about them, so I never really held out any hope," Voight said. He wasn't alone.⁸⁹

Jolie boasts of a master plan to raise Maddox on her own, splitting time between the United States and the mystical Cambodia to enable Maddox to stay in touch with his native heritage. Missing from Jolie's strategy, however, is a father for young Maddox, as she has ruled out getting married again or having a child with another man—or woman. "I think now having a child would mean that this person would become a father to my son, and that would have to be permanent, and I haven't had a good experience with that, and with my father, or with the men in my life, seeing long relationships. So, I don't want to have a temporary father for my son."⁹⁰

Why is there no concern whatsoever on placing a full-time male role model permanently in his life? Didn't Anthony Perkins's star turn as Norman Bates lay out the inevitable ending of that horror story line? Given her estranged relationship with her father and now Billy Bob Thornton, the one male in her life who looks to be front and center for the kid is Uncle James Haven. Maybe Jon Voight can utilize some of his reserve Hollywood cache to save the kid and cast him in a celebrity reality series entitled "Run, Maddox, Run." Only in celebrity sycophant Barbara Walters's hyperbolic chamber of inverted values and nonjudgmentalism could the expressions of a twisted sensibility escape without journalistic scrutiny.

And why is Maddox's ethnic background worthy of creating a sanctuary for him in a country noted for genocide within the last generation? Had the child been abandoned in a less PC and less exotic environment, like Appalachia, would Jolie be setting up a com-

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pound in the hills of West Virginia so Maddox could be close to his moonshine-distilling people?

It might be safer. "They've removed 48 unexploded land mines so far," Jolie divulged to *People* magazine. "I'm sure some people will question why I'm bringing my son into an area with land mines. When I looked around, I saw other families and thought, 'Why shouldn't I? I'm happy there.'"⁹¹ And, really, who wouldn't be happy waking up to a panoramic view of *The Killing Fields*? Hopefully, what remains of the Khmer Rouge has grown more open-minded to the role of the artist in society, and will leave the naive new neighbors in peace.

The "C" in Designer C-Section Stands for . . .

Liz Hurley sure knew how to start her son Damian's life off on a demonic note. First, she got impregnated by film producer Steven Bing (whose credits include, naturally, the film *Why Men Shouldn't Marry*), a man who didn't want to have a child with the actress in the first place (though he's subsequently offered child support).⁹² According to at least one British tabloid, even private dick to the stars Anthony Pellicano publicly questioned Hurley's claims of paternity on Bing's behalf. Bing, a close pal of Bill Clinton, appropriately, would have been more subtle yelling, "Slut!" in a crowded theater.⁹³

Second, Hurley had the controversial C-section. For some celebrities—it is unclear whether Hurley fits in this category—it's a fatuous vanity procedure having questionable medical benefits.⁹⁴ In the past, the surgical procedure was relegated to medical emergencies, yet it is now being scheduled a week or two in advance of more than a few self-absorbed stars' scheduled delivery as a means to avoid stretch marks and other post-natal aesthetic inconveniences. In the case of Hurley, Mike Myer's costar in the first *Austin Powers* flick, she reportedly had her incision made below her "bikini line."⁹⁵

Yeah, baby!

"She scheduled the tummy tuck right after the C-section," Knight-Ridder Newspapers reported, citing "inside sources." Hurley showed up less than two months after her delivery at a charity function

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wearing a show-stopping skintight gown, a coming-out ritual now customary for postpartum sex symbols showing they still have it.⁹⁶ Obsessed with her postnatal physique, Hurley told the British media, "I have killed myself to try and shed the pounds—all 53 of them."⁹⁷

The elective C-section, as it is clinically known, is clear evidence of the self-obsessed behavior exhibited by some celebrity mothers finding new ways to push the narcissistic envelope. Someone should deliver the heartbreaking news to these vain expectant mothers that most doctors agree by that time the damage is already done. "The abdomen is already stretched out by that time," Boston doctor Sharon Margulies said in an investigation into the trend by NBC's San Francisco affiliate KNTV. "It isn't safe to do an elective C-section. If you could avoid perhaps the last three months, that would make a difference, but obviously that wouldn't be safe for the baby."⁹⁸

Perhaps it's just a coincidence but Victoria "Posh Spice" Beckham, Zoe Ball, Melanie Blatt, and Catherine Zeta-Jones also had C-sections. Are they UK tarts on the vanguard of a transatlantic trend, or are they simply statistical anomalies who actually required the procedure?⁹⁹ Incidentally, while eight months pregnant with her second child, Mrs. Michael Douglas performed a strenuous song and dance number from the hit musical *Chicago* at the 2003 Oscars, as an ambulance waited outside in case her water broke during a particularly high note or difficult move.¹⁰⁰ Anglophile Madonna scheduled her C-section based upon her reading of the Kabbalistic calendar.¹⁰¹ Oy gevalt!

"Mother's love" is supposed to be the definitive example of selfless love, but celebrity women now bastardize that notion. In Hollywood, mother's love refers to the mother's love of herself, and their postpartum hard bodies, in particular. Thankfully, some are willing to criticize the idiotic behavior. "If they are willing to have children," one mother told NBC, "they should go the 40 weeks, or however long, without worrying about their image."¹⁰²

If only America had Fleet Street where Victoria Beckham's designer C-section was met bluntly with the scornful populist headline: "TOO POSH TO PUSH."

Sarah Jessica Parker, Cindy Crawford, and Hurley are cited as adherents of Pilates and yoga as a means to get their tummies back

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to award show—acceptable size. Parker was seen flaunting her washboard waistline and wearing a black corset top at the Golden Globes two months after giving birth to her first kid, James.¹⁰³ “The supermom syndrome has expanded from working and having kids, to working and having kids and having a body like this,” Dr. Jan Christilaw, a Vancouver-based OB-GYN and in charge of the specialized women’s health at British Columbia Women’s Hospital told the *National Post*. “It is not attainable in most women’s lives—nor should it be.”¹⁰⁴ But incredibly, influential female role models in Hollywood, with their priorities up their increasingly tighter derrieres, are sending out the message that it is.

My Kid’s Mom: Passing the Parental Buck

Cultural elites and the suburban mother are at war, and populist bullets fly daily on the Dr. Laura Schlesinger radio show. The show’s slogan, parroted by many female callers, “I’m my kid’s mom,” is an affirmation of stay-at-home motherhood, and a not-so-subtle attack on the feminist movement’s promotion of nannies and day care over primary mommy care.

In Hollywood, however, there is no debate. The nanny is not only a foregone conclusion, but a central parental status symbol, along with sending the kids to the right trendy school and creating “play dates” with the right trendy kids of other celebrities and industry moguls. Many celebrity parents employ multiple nannies to oversee the daily grind, often on a one-to-one basis, or one better. Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman (1990–2001) employed one nanny for each kid and a full-time nurse.

Demi Moore and Bruce Willis employed four nannies for their three children Rumer, Scout, and Tallulah. One, Kim Tannahill, took the couple to court claiming the couple “shamelessly exploited and abused (her), through fraud, deceit, oppression, intimidation, threats and force.”¹⁰⁵ Tannahill lost the case, but even if the charges weren’t true, for three years Moore and Willis entrusted the lives of their daughters to a woman who they claimed, in their own court filings, was “. . . a dishonest and disloyal employee who, among other things, misappropriated moneys . . . improperly billed personal expenses to plaintiffs’

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accounts, failed to follow instructions and, on occasion, improperly performed her duties in dealing with the children.”¹⁰⁶

Apparently mishandling the children as a celebrity nanny isn't sufficient grounds for firing, but woe to the Hollywood hired help who “work and tell,” violating nondisclosure clauses by revealing private details of their employers' twisted lives and value systems.

A Modest Proposal

It is a melancholy object to those who witness an industry filled with rich and famous people possessing no hint of common sense, and exhibiting pathological parenting behavior.

It may sound harsh, like no-smoking laws at bars, or requiring catalytic converters to cut down on vehicle emissions, or China's one child policy, but in time people will realize it is for the greater good: Celebrities should not be allowed to have children. Period.

Women entering Hollywood and getting the all-important Screen Actors Guild card should immediately have the controversial Norplant birth control device implanted in their upper arm. Men should be given vasectomies. Both procedures are reversible, and upon giving up their glamorous pursuits, for whatever reason, they should then be granted full reproductive options.

Nor should celebrities be allowed to adopt—whether through private attorneys, trips to Third World nations, or utilizing in vitro surrogate wombs for rent. The celebrity family tree should be contained until a generation of self-obsessed and self-indulgent overgrown toddlers learns to live within the liberal parameters of what constitutes an emotionally healthy life, and proves they can exhibit rational behavior for a prolonged period of time. We'll let the electorate decide when that time comes.

This is not just to protect kids from celebrities, and celebrities from themselves. This is about stopping the most prominent role models in the world from hastening the demise of Western civilization. Celebrities simply can't perform in the role of parenthood.

The law for those celebrities who now have children, like Madonna, will be grandfathered. Lourdes and Rocco are spared—for now. But child protective services should be on her and Guy Ritchie or whom-

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ever and they should be on an especially short leash, just like other suspect classes. Angelina and Maddox Jolie of Phnom Penh by way of Malibu may have to lay low in the Mekong Delta until the coast is clear.

We profess, in the sincerity of our heart, that we have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of our country.