

taintedlove

The following is a transcript from a tape mailed to us from the **PETA Hospital for the Criminally Insane**. At first, we didn't know what to make of the tiny cassette wrapped in a hastily scribbled note which read: "It isn't my fault. I'd never had unnatural urges until I met him. I blame HIM. Please help me to get the word out. He's a danger to us all. The People must be warned!" Then we listened to the scratchy recording and our blood ran cold. Truth or some elaborately conceived hoax? You decide. What follows is the interview between an unnamed reporter who signed his note **A Damned Soul** and a high-pitched mystery voice referred to only as **Cupid**.

A Damned Soul Thank you for agreeing to this interview, **Mr. Cupid**.
Cupid Just Cupid.

DS Cupid, then. I have to admit that you're not exactly what I was expecting...

C Yeah, I know, I get that a lot. I retired the whole diaper and golden wings look a long time ago. These days I go for comfort and merchandising deals. What can I say, it's the 21st century...

DS I just never expected to find the god of love wearing a jacket with "Because I Hate You" emblazoned across the back.

C Yeah, it's a new line. Commercial cynicism for the new millennium. (pause) I know what you're thinking, but you can't have love without hate, right? So who better as a spokesperson?

DS I guess that makes a kind of warped sense... Even so, you have to admit it's not

nearly as... um... charming as one would expect from a boy god...

C Charming? Listen, I haven't been "boy" god since **Caligula** was in power. You think it's easy looking like a cherubic one-year-old with five o'clock shadow in this day and age? I'm the frickin' god of love, but you'd cry if you knew how many times I've gotten laid in the last two thousand years. Thank **Zeus** for NAMBLA.

DS Now, wait a minute, I'm not sure if that's the kind of behavior we want to promote here...

C Oh, I'm sorry, did I offend? Listen, it's easy to get politically correct when you're over two foot high and have muscle tone, but try attracting any kind of attention with baby fat and the raging hormones of a horny teenager. A prepubescent love god? You think someone upstairs isn't laughing his ass off right now?

DS Okay, okay, I didn't mean to upset you. I think we got off on the wrong foot. Let's try another tack. You mentioned someone upstairs, aren't your parents actually pretty well known?

C Not so much anymore. And my male parental unit hasn't ever been confirmed. The frontrunner has always been **Hermes**, but the guy's gayer than I am. And I absolutely refuse to accept that pretty boy **Adonis** as a contender. That would make me half mortal. (snorts) As if...

DS But your mother was **Aphrodite**, the goddess of love. That's pretty big, isn't it?
C Yeah, my mom was big in her day. The biggest. And this was way before porn was

discovered. In fact, she used to say that she invented porn, but I don't know. Personally I believe we have **Cleopatra** to thank for that. Mom just kind of paved the way for it, but y'gotta give credit where it's due.

DS Um. Okay. Well, let's talk about your career then. Early on you were the subject of sonnets, songs, love poems and given credit for some of the greatest love stories of all time...

C Mm hm. **Tristan & Isolde, Abelard & Heloise, Romeo & Juliet, Burton & Taylor, Siegfried & Roy**... They all had their trouble spots, but not a bad run if I do say so myself.

DS And yet, you've taken a few lumps over the last century or so. Nobody seems to fall in love much anymore. One night stands, weekend flings, affairs with the boss or the boss's wife, it seems that sex has become much more important than love. Domestic violence and divorce are at an all-time high. Some argue that love is actually in decline. What do you have to say about that development?

C Who are you, **Barbara Walters**? I thought this was going to be an interview, not an interrogation. Wait 'til I get my hands on my publicist...

DS I'm sorry, I just...

C Yeah, yeah, shut up and listen, Springer! Two thousand plus years I've been doing this. I have one bad century and people are ready to throw me to the wolves. I've been accused of shoddy workmanship, sure. More lately than ever before, but I

... "my male parental unit hasn't ever been confirmed. The frontrunner has always been **Hermes**, but the guy's gayer than I am."

can't take all the blame. I come from a simpler time, y'know? Back before there was television and automatic weapons and battery operated sex toys. Oh, and let's not forget women's rights, gay rights, animal rights... Zeus almighty! It was much easier getting couples together before labels and laws started getting in the way. Now people are so specific in their expectations it takes a computer genius to calculate the odds. Let me tell you something, you people are damned lucky I even try anymore. If I had my way, you'd all be on your own and then we'd see how wonderful life would be for you. Ingrates.

DS Well, if that's the way you really feel about it, why don't you just quit? Find a replacement.

C Didn't we just go through this? Where on **Gaia's** green earth are we going to find another prepubescent love god? Two thousand plus years of my life I've given to this lost cause and now you want to fire me?

DS No, no.. that's not what I meant... I just thought you might be in need of a vacation or a sabbatical or maybe an image overhaul.

C (growling) An image overhaul... Mortals... I'll think about it, okay? Listen, **Ricki**, don't you have any better questions written on those little note cards of yours?

DS Um... sure... (sound of shuffling papers) okay. How about this, then... We've already established that you've been around for over two millennia, so why then is February 14th designated as **St. Valentine's** day and not Cupid's Day?

C (long pause) Are you for real? The same reason that December 25th is called Christmas instead of Santa Claus Day, or the last Thursday in November is called Thanksgiving instead of Eat 'Til You Puke Day. Because you morally conflicted mortals can't leave well enough alone, that's why! You're always having to justify your gluttonous, greedy commercial urges by wrapping them in whatever candy-coated religious or socially acceptable behavior is all the rage at the time. Did you get your

journalism degree out of a Cracker Jack box? What kind of question is that?

DS I... I'm sorry... it's not every day that I get to interview a god. Especially one as important as you are...

C Yeah, well, it's a little late for you to start buttering me up, **Oprah**. Alright, enough of this already... let me ask you a question.

DS Um... sure, anything...

C How do you feel about goats?

DS Goats? Uh... I never really thought about it... Why?

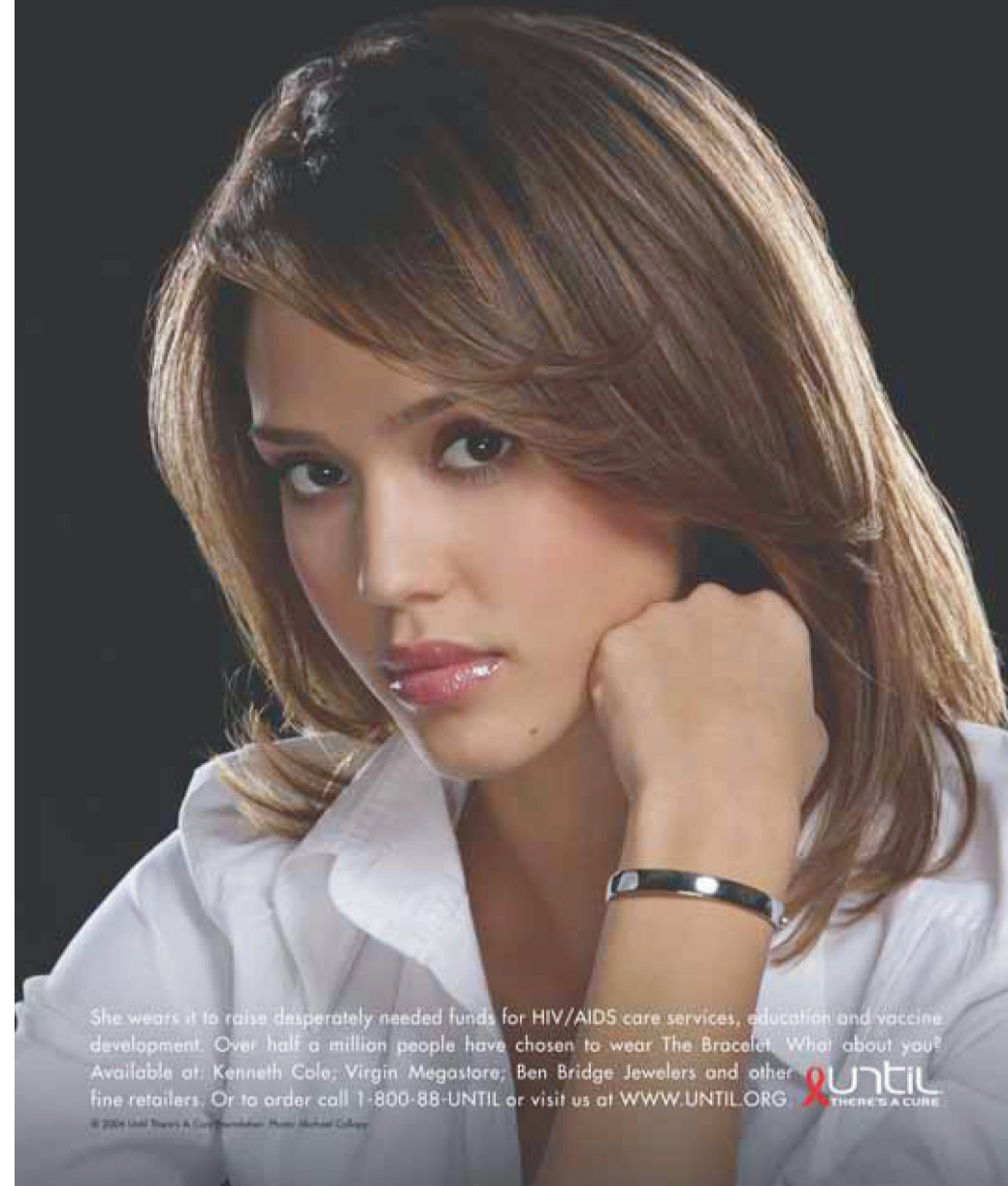
C Never mind, you will... Listen, I've got an appointment at the **Vatican** in 15 minutes. Gotta fly... oh, and watch those hooves, they can be a real thrill kill...

DS Hooves?

C Just call it my gift to you. Ciao, baby. It's been a real **Edward R. Murrow** experience... (sound of flapping wings and wind, then silence...)

... "Oh, and let's not forget women's rights, gay rights, animal rights... Zeus almighty! It was much easier getting couples together before labels and laws started getting in the way."

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