

## **Gay Talese, Thy Neighbor's Wife (HarperCollins, 2009).**

### **Forward** (written by Katie Roiphe)

-“Though at first glance *Thy Neighbor's Wife* may seem like a scenic tour through an exotic and faded world, the tensions and conflicts it chronicles are still pressing. Talese reveals an America enamored with the orderly surfaces of its perfect homes, and intrigued by rogue sexual attractions. The culture at large may be in less obvious upheaval—we are, after all, more conventional than our parents—but the particular perplexity Talese explores is with us still. How do we resolve our old-fashioned ideas of marriage with our need for novelty and freshness? How do we overcome what the writer Radclyffe Hall called “the infinite sadness of fulfilled desire?””

-Talese set out to try to report on the spirit of the time, capture the landscape of the nation

“*Thy Neighbor's Wife* is often misread. People are misled or distracted by the prurience and flashiness of the subject matter. But this is not a dirty book, or rather it is a dirty book with long exegesis on Comstock's crusade, with lively and learned elaborations of Supreme Court cases about obscenity, with historical digressions into utopian communities and the trials and tribulations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, it is a cultural history in the best and most serious sense of the word. In *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, Talese captures perfectly the delicate psychological contradictions, the residual influence of our puritan past, and the adventure of freedom in all of its new, seductive incarnations. He approaches big, vague cultural trends through the quirky specificity of individual history, through Hugh Hefner's passion for F. Scott Fitzgerald, through the way Al Goldstein's father treated Chinese waiters, through a photograph of Harold Rubin's father in the army, through Anthony Comstock's diary entries on masturbation. After Talese is finished peopling his America, we can see in action the contradictory pulls of our wildest impulses and our most conservative instincts. He measures the shifts in morality, the real historical change, in its minor drags and tears at the psyche; he watches the exhilaration and headiness and destruction of the sexual revolution, man by man, woman by woman.”

-discusses the odd section near the end of the book when Talese writes about himself in the third person and how off putting it can be, but explains that Talese was criticized for the participation he had in the subject matter, for his adultery, for the enthusiasm of his immersion, so he uses the third person to be both there and not there

-this book is a classic of cultural journalism

### **Chapter One**

-discusses the obsession that 17-year-old Harold Rubin had with nude photographs he could find in rare magazines sold under the counter in the 1950s, particularly his obsession with Diane Webber

-details Rubin's relationship with his paternal grandmother who had freely shared with him her experience as a servant in a boarding house for factory working men when she was under constant harassment, then her marriage to a tyrannical man who raped and impregnated her with their only child the second time he saw her and then during their marriage had fairly open and ongoing affair with his secretary

-goes on to describe the hard relationship Rubin had with his own father

-discusses the fear that Rubin had about the growing movement to stop the publication of pornographic magazines, particularly in the Catholic-dominated city of Chicago

### **Chapter Two**

-points out that there were many pretty young women who came to California in the 1920s and 1930s to seek an escape from their unglamorous hometowns elsewhere in America and ended up as waitresses, or receptionists, or salesclerks, or unhappily married women in San Fernando Valley during the depression, raising children who came of age at a time of great California prosperity during WWII and after

-this produced a generation of children raised in California and distinguished for their good looks, casual style in dress, and relaxed view of life with an emphasis on health; one of these youths was Diane Webber

- discusses Webber's childhood who, with her parents divorced, had travelled between the rough Hollywood Hills area that she lived in with her mother and stepfather to the Echo Park area of her father's family where she was exposed to classical music, literature and theatre
- describes how Webber aspired to be a ballet dancer, ended up in San Francisco as a chorus dancer and then used her love of dance to pose as a figure model in nude photographs, catching the attention of Hugh Hefner as publisher of a new magazine *Playboy*

### Chapter Three

- describes the place in life Hefner was when he came across Webber's photos, 28 years old and head of a staff of thirty who occupied a four-story building near downtown Chicago in the second year of publication of his sex-orientated magazine
- details the care that Hefner put into selecting the pictures for his magazine, how he felt a connection to the men who would buy it and wanted to give them women who were pleasant to look at but still wholesome and demure
- Hefner himself would often take the women who posed for him as lovers
- describes Hefner's childhood as an awkward and shy boy in a very conservative Christian household
- talks about his graduation from high school and entering the army near the end of WWII, during which time he earned his pilot's licence and courted Mildred Williams, whom he would eventually marry, after he suffered through her attempts to only go so far before marriage and then her having an affair with a married man on the faculty where she taught
- details the shift that happened in the late 1940s and early 1950s towards tighter censorship of printed materials and films despite the findings of the Kinsey report on men that showed its citizens were secretly very sexual: 50% of all married men had slept with women other than their wives while married, 85% of all men had experienced intercourse before marriage, nine out of ten men masturbated, and 37% of the male population had achieved an orgasm through at least one homosexual act
- describes Hefner's early adulthood, including his unhappy early marriage arrangements living with his parents, his attempt at a Masters in sociology in which he wrote a thesis paper on American sex norms, and his early jobs in the publishing industry, eventually landing a position working for George von Rosen, a shrewd businessman who was looking to take advantage of the post-war popularity of girlie magazines
- this was at a time when legal battles were being fought between government officials and nudist groups over the right to both publish and distribute through the U.S. Postal Service magazines that showed full nudity
- von Rosen pushed past the wholesome family and nature shots that were found in nudist magazines and posed women in highly seductive poses in his magazine *Modern Man*, making sure to pair them with tame editorials on cars and sports
- makes the point that the nudity found in von Rosen's magazines was not anything different from the nudity found in classic art pieces in museums: "Of course the difference between this and what appeared in men's magazines was characterized by one word-art; and yet what was defined as art, and what was condemned as pornography, often changed from one generation to the next, depending on the audience for which a work was intended. The nude art that hung in the great museums was created for the nobility and upper classes that commissioned it, while the photographs that appeared in the magazines were printed for the common man in the street, whose museum was the corner newsstand. And it was this latter group that the censors wished to protect from indecency, and to control as well, when in 1896 the United States Supreme Court sustained a conviction against a publisher named Lew Rosen, whose periodical Broadway contained photographs of women defined as lewd. This was the first federal conviction under the Comstock Act, named in honor of the most awesome censor in the history of America, Anthony Comstock."

## Chapter Four

- discusses early American obscenity laws and the fact that they were all about blasphemy, many of the upper class had collections of erotica, and that the first time a man was charged with sexual obscenity for displaying a picture of an 'indecent' couple they US had to reach back to an existing English law from 1663 concerning public exposure of one's genitals in order to prosecute
- it was not unusual to find books that were sexually obscene in the libraries of the early nation's leaders and it wasn't a concern since reading in those days was largely limited to the well-educated minority, it wasn't until the common citizen became more literate and printing presses became more common that the need for literary censorship became of such importance
- Comstock, a man who admitted in his diary that he obsessively masturbated in his teen years, strongly believed that erotic books and pictures were the plague of the young and drove adults to degeneracy through masturbation and fornication, abortion and venereal disease
- many American leaders in Comstock's time agreed with him but worried about the invasion of people's liberties as he believed in the use of informers, spies and decoys, as well as tampering with the mail
- this was a time when fanatical anti-vice societies were abounding in England, setting up special laws for women suspected of spreading disease and in 1868 passing a law that allowed government to conduct searches of private shops to see if obscene material, defined as anything that seemed inappropriate for children, was held for sale
- Comstock, who referred to himself as a "weeder in God's garden," with direct backing from the YMCA, vigorously appealed to the NY state legislature to pass laws similar to those found in Britain
- the federal government, following the turmoil of the Civil War and wishing to divert attention from its own ineptitude and corruption as well as gain greater control over the restive population, also favored tighter regulation over the common morality
- in 1873, Comstock convinced Congress to pass a federal bill banning from the mail "every obscene, lewd, lascivious or filthy book, pamphlet, picture, paper, letter, writing, print or other publication of an indecent character" and appointed Comstock as the special anti-obscenity agent of the Post Office Department
- two months later, an organization that Comstock had founded, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, was endowed with police powers by the state legislature, and Anthony Comstock was given the right to carry a gun
- in the years that follow, Comstock and his Society terrorized publishers, arrested hundreds of citizens caught with questionable literatures as well as women who were charged with prostitution, performing abortions, selling birth control devices and writing manuals for other women about the act of sex
- most of these arrests were attained through entrapment
- the federal offense of sexual obscenity carried a punishment of fines as high as \$5000 and imprisonment as lengthy as ten years
- discusses the opposition of D.M. Bennett, publisher of a small NY city paper called *The Truth Seeker*, who said that Comstock was overstepping fundamental rights based on laws that were very vague in their definition of obscenity, which gave powerful people the opportunity to exploit the law and create criminals of ordinary citizens
- Bennett's opposition of Comstock made him a target and, in 1877, he was arrested for publishing two articles, one on the mating habits of Marsupials and the other on the veracity of Mary's virginity and again, in 1878, for publishing a pamphlet that advocated free love, denigrated marriage, favorable described people living in an erotic commune devoid of restrictions, and boldly asked: "Why should priests and magistrates supervise the sexual organs of citizens any more than the brain and stomach?"
- despite a good deal of protest from people who felt Comstock was overstepping his bounds, Bennett served a sentence of 14 months of hard labor at the penitentiary in Albany

-in the early twentieth century, both Boston and Chicago had similar groups who took it upon themselves to protect the morality of their cities, both bolstered by the influx of Irish Catholics who held very strict views on sexual morality

-discusses the ins and outs of the lucrative underground publishing industry in Chicago, mentioning the avid patronage of one small bookstore of both Hugh Hefner and Harold Rubin

## **Chapter Five**

-juxtaposes the offices of *Playboy* across the street from Chicago's Holy Name Cathedral, pointing out the Catholic's doctrine of denial when it came to sex whereas *Playboy* advocated free and open sex

-the Church openly opposed *Playboy*'s sale, the post office would delay delivery to its offices, the Postmaster General in Washington denied it the less costly second-class mailing privileges usually granted to publications and the police vigilantly enforced parking in front of the *Playboy* offices

-describes Hefner's focus for his magazine as hedonism in the pursuit of health and wealth, a modern publication for the urban man, associating romantic adventure with upward mobility and economic prosperity, believing that men who were successful in bed were also successful in business

-this was at a time when most publications, even other sex magazines presented sex as dirty and sinful, showing stern women with whips and frowning faces offering punishment for the dirty men who want pleasure

-“As Hefner planned his magazine, the headlines were devoted to more recent sexual revelations, including the sex-change operation of Christine Jorgensen, the café-society prostitution ring of the oleomargarine heir Mickey Jelke, and the 1953 Kinsey report on American women. Kinsey's statistics stated that about 50 percent of all women, and 60 percent of female college graduates, had experienced intercourse prior to marriage, and about 25 percent of all wives indulged in extramarital sex. More than half of the female population masturbated, 43 percent performed oral sex with men, and 13 percent of the women had at least one sexual experience with another woman that resulted in an orgasm.”

-while there was a lot of controversy over Kinsey's research, it was respectfully acknowledged within the scientific and academic communities and, for Hefner, confirmed what he had long suspected -women were becoming increasingly sexual, and the postwar generation was quietly rebelling against the standards of the past

-relates the restlessness of this generation to their wartime experiences overseas as well as the roles they had to play as heroes and the dutiful girl who wrote letters and held up her end of a largely fictional relationship in a time when horizons for women were expanding

-“in the 1940s the overwhelming popularity of the war effort, and the social upheaval that it imposed and allowed, temporarily exculpated in America the expedient adventures and sexual dalliance of an entire generation. The war manufactured its own morality as it did its bombers and battleships.”

-discusses the impact of returning from war, taking back on their jobs and the "tome of readjusting to a demobilizing nation applying pressure on them to settle down, obtain a home loan, raise a family"

-men like Hefner, however, found it very difficult to settle into this life and the very early popularity of his magazine told him he was not alone

-*Playboy* first published in October 1953 and was well reviewed in *Time*, *Newsweek* and *The Saturday Review*

-Hefner soon created the title of playmate, a young pretty girl who was unpretentious, healthy, and unintimidating who would sign on to the magazine for a two year contract starting with her posing for the magazine and then doing publicity and restricted from posing for any other magazine

-*Playboy*, like many sex-related things in the 1950s heading into the 1960s, became more and more accepted and mainstream

## **Chapter Six**

-details the life of Samuel Roth, the owner of a mail-order book service who specialized in erotic and scandalous works who was repeatedly prosecuted for distributing pornography throughout the 1940s and 50s

-his February 1956 conviction was appealed all the way to the Supreme Court who heard the case in April 1957

- Roth's attorneys argued that the federal mail statute, the Comstock Act of 1873, was unconstitutional, and that the controversial literature that Roth had distributed was permissible under the First Amendment
- the government attorneys argued that absolute freedom of speech is not guaranteed, especially where the interest in public morality was at stake, adding that society had competing interests of its own in granting the individual freedom of speech and press
- six of the nine justices ruled to uphold the conviction, saying that obscenity, like libel, was not protected by the First Amendment
- the dissenting opinion held that it was up to individuals to decide the value of the books in the same way they evaluate religion or politics
- religious groups, anti-vice societies and the Post Master General all cheered the Supreme Court for the ruling but so did those who were advocates of greater freedom because for the first time they had a definition of obscenity and didn't have to depend on the 1868 British law which said that even one lewd paragraph in a book made the entire work obscene and that what was appropriate for the eyes of juveniles had to be the standard, whereas the majority opinion written by Justice Brennan said that the "dominant theme" of book needed to be obscene to have it be offensive, that "the average person" was the standard of who it had to offend and he defined obscenity as being "utterly without redeeming social importance" which means that a book or film offering even a minimum of "social importance" could evade censorship
- in the following year a number of obscenity charges were reversed by the Supreme Court on the basis that the works held some social value
- "Gradually, as one obscenity conviction after another was reversed by the Supreme Court, as banned novels and erotic art films were suddenly redeemed by Roth, the name became more easily recognized as an italicized legalism than as a reminder of the illegal man now residing in prison at Lewisburg; and ironically, while serving out his term that extended into the 1960s, Roth could have received through the mail into his cell most of the books that had contributed to his being there."

## Chapter Seven

- discusses D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and remarks on how it focuses on the male body and "probes the sensitivity and psychological detachment that man often feels toward his penis—it does indeed seem to have a will of its own, an ego beyond its size, and is frequently embarrassing because of its needs, infatuations, and unpredictable nature. Men sometimes feel that their penis controls them, leads them astray, causes them to beg favors at night from women whose names they prefer to forget in the morning. Whether insatiable or insecure, it demands constant proof of its potency, introducing into a man's life unwanted complications and frequent rejection"
- "The city offers a modern version of a tribal fertility dance, a sexual safari, and many men feel the pressure of having to repeatedly prove their instinct as hunters. The penis, often regarded as a weapon, is also a burden, the male curse. It has made some men restless roués, voyeurs, flashers, rapists. It is what conscripts them into military warfare and often sends them to a premature death. Its inane seductions can lead to marital discord, divorce, child separation, alimony. Its profligacy in high places has provoked political scandals and collapsed governments."
- discusses the publishing work of Olympia Press, a Paris-based publisher of English language erotic novels that was subject to a crack down on obscenity in the post-war era and relocated to the U.S. right at the time when the new definition of obscenity was creating less censorship
- discusses the changing of the times and the popularity of the new president Kennedy, his glamorous wife and the constant rumors of his infidelities
- while the youth of the day were taking advantage of a new loosening of moral constraints, the members of a just slightly older generation working in corporate jobs and living suburban lives were having their curiosity peaked

## **Chapter Eight**

- details the life of John Bullaro, a cautious insurance executive in Los Angeles married to Judith Palmer
- describes their marriage as having lost its illicit premarital passion, Judith becoming sexually unresponsive and passive, especially after the birth of their two children
- Sunday mornings Bullaro would cycle to Venice Beach to watch the large numbers of students, hippies and artists hanging out together, wishing he could become so unconstrained
- when he attended a Palm Springs conference in September 1965 he met and started an affair with Barbara Cramer, a top-selling insurance executive

## **Chapter Nine**

- details Barbara Cramer's life and path to becoming a strong, assertive woman who took control of her own sexuality

## **Chapter Ten**

- describes Bullaro and Cramer's affair as being regular and formal, never impacting either of their positions at work or home but ended abruptly when Cramer fell in love with an engineer named John Williamson
- details Bullaro's extended time in New York and how weekend visits back home reignited his sex life with his wife but that it went back to the way it was when he returned to LA permanently
- Barbara had married Williamson but she restarted the affair with Bullaro, explaining to him that her husband encouraged her to live without restrictions, to not feel like either spouse had ownership over the other person and to be free to find sexual satisfaction with other people
- Barbara also introduced Bullaro to Arlene Gough, another married who was just as assertive in her desire to have sex with him
- Bullaro was very worried about the consequences if these women's husbands found out but still continued to see them
- describes the day that John Williamson called Bullaro's office several times looking for him, finally reaching him and inviting him to lunch where he said he knew about Bullaro and Barbara and he was happy about it
- Williamson then explained that he is forming a group that was trying to redefine the traditional roles of the sexes, looking to find greater fulfillment in marriage, and open themselves up to having relations with others
- he revealed that Arlene Gough was already a member of their group and he invited Bullaro to join in at a meeting the next night

## **Chapter Eleven**

- discusses John Williamson's upbringing with a focus on his buxom traveling show dancer grandmother, his extremely conservative mother, and his wild sister Marion who had difficulty staying in any monogamous relationship for too long
- details Williamson's military career, marriage to an aspiring German anthropologist he met in the South Pacific, work in early aerospace engineering, birth and drowning death of his first son, disillusionment with his career, birth of his daughter, obsession with *Atlas Shrugged*, move to Los Angeles, separation from his wife and meeting Barbara Cramer

## **Chapter Twelve**

- discusses John and Barbara's early relationship and John's growing interest in psychology, anthropology and sexuality
- highlights the work of Austrian psychiatrist Wilhelm Reich who said that we as humans have conditioned ourselves into the gender roles that we have as it was seen to be the way to maintain a strong state since in a male-dominated world there was an economic interest in the continued role of women was 'the provider of

children for the state' and men as protectors and providers of these women that they are exploiting for their reproductive abilities

-the average woman's social conditioning taught her to be sexually passive in order to ensure her faithfulness while men were permitted to indulge their unfulfilled lust with prostitutes, mistresses, or other women that respectable society held in low esteem but found them a necessary part of the system

-Reich directly attacked the idea of sublimation, a popular theory derived from the work of Freud that says that the social and cultural achievements of man derive their energy from sexual energies which were diverted from their original goal to a 'higher' goal

-Reich blamed the antisexual moralism of religious homes and schools, along with the 'reactionary ideology' of government for their part in producing citizens who feared responsibility and savored authority

-he also believed that people who cannot achieve sexual satisfaction in their own lives tend to regard expressions of sexuality in society as vile and degrading, that people who deny the body are more likely to develop concepts demanding "perfection" and "purity" and that the God-fixation declined in people who had found bliss in sex

-furthermore, people who had found their bliss in sex had a "genital character" in which they are more fully in contact with their body, their drives, their environment, free of inhibitions and anxiety and not blocked or diverted by destructive or irrational emotion or by exaggerated respect for institutions that are not life-enhancing

-“Reich assuredly did not believe, as did many therapists who had followed Freud, that culture thrived on sexual repression, nor would he quietly condone what he saw as a church-state alliance that sought to control the masses by denigrating the joys of the flesh while presumably uplifting the spirit. Control, not morality, was the central issue, as Reich perceived it; organized religion, which in Christian countries fostered among the faithful such traits as obedience and acceptance of the status quo, strived for conformity, and its efforts were endorsed by governments that passed illiberal sex laws that reinforced feelings of anxiety and guilt among those lawful God-fearing people who sometimes indulged in unsanctioned sex. These laws also gave governments additional weapons with which to embarrass, harass, or to imprison for their sexual behavior certain radical individuals or groups that it considered politically threatening or otherwise offensive. The writer Ayn Rand went even further than Reich in suggesting that at times a government hoped that citizens would disobey the law so that it could exercise its prerogative to punish: “Who wants a nation of law-abiding citizens?” asks a government official in Rand’s novel *Atlas Shrugged*; “What’s there in that for anyone?...Just pass the kind of laws that can neither be observed nor enforced nor objectively interpreted—and you create a nation of lawbreakers and then you cash in on guilt.... The only power any government has is the power to crack down on criminals.””

-these and other views concerning the capturing of natural energies for healing got Reich a prison sentence in the U.S. in 1956 and he died in prison in 1957

-Reich's works hit their strongest popularity in the 1960s, both within the young counterculturalists that received most of the attention in the media but also by multitudes of quiet middle-class married people on their own quest for free expression and more control over their own bodies

-discusses the increase in openness about vibrator sales for women, tutoring courses for couples looking to expand their sex lives or overcome dysfunction, steep rise in the popularity of swinging, nudist clubs and resorts and massage parlours

-particularly highlights the Esalen Institute in Northern California that ran sensuous seminars attended by thousands of predominantly middle-class couples, with its most prominent therapist Dr. Frederick S. Perls having been a patient of Reich before the war

-all of this was in line with John Williamson's attitude, although he wanted to go further by altering the sociopolitical system through sexual experimentation

-Williamson hoped to soon establish his idealized community for couples wishing to demolish the double standard, to liberate women from their submissive roles, and to create a sexually free and trusting atmosphere in which there would be no need for possessiveness, jealousy, guilt, or lying

- he believed his project, which he would call Project Synergy, could be financially profitable but first he had to organize his core group with Barbara Cramer as his main partner
- John and Barbara were married in the summer of 1966, a conventional act that they felt would create a socially acceptable façade for their unconventional life-style
- describes a weekend early in their marriage when John tested Barbara's commitment to an open marriage by inviting an old girlfriend and secretary at his work to a weekend away and spending his time between this woman's room and his wife's as well as inviting another man to join them the second night when John sensed Barbara needed encouragement to feel comfortable to explore her own pleasure
- “Making love to David that night, and again at dawn, was for Barbara a source of great release and unabashed pleasure; and far from having any misgivings about it, or feeling romantically detached from her husband, she felt quite the opposite. She believed that she had now achieved a new level of emotional intimacy with John, and that they had both shared during the night, in different rooms with different people, a gift of loving trust. Instead of loving him less after sleeping with another man, she was sure that she loved him more; and when she got up for breakfast, leaving David asleep beside her, she was greeted in the living room by her husband's approving smile and kiss.”

### **Chapter Thirteen**

- discusses John Bullaro's ongoing affair with Barbara Williamson and his trips to her house to meet Williamson's core group, the first time being greeted by Oralia Leal who he was immediately attracted to
- details Bullaro's discomfort with the lifestyle and struggle to overcome his inhibitions and his guilt over lying to his wife and then the strange evening when the Williamsons invited Bullaro and his wife to have after dinner drinks with a few other people and then confronted Bullaro about not being honest with his wife
- John Williamson claimed that the wrenching events of that evening would eventually prove to be very beneficial to Judith Bullaro and her husband, that a new level of honesty had been attained and this would allow their relationship to continue and grow without the usual deceptions and illusions
- while John Bullaro was angry, Judith seemed very receptive to Williamson's viewpoint and said that she wished to overcome her possessiveness and insecurity, to which Williamson suggested that the couple return and Judith experience her husband walking off to have sex with another woman and realize that an open act of physical infidelity was less threatening than one that she might suspect and embellish with emotion

### **Chapter Fourteen**

- in the next few weeks John Bullaro was reluctantly pushed into erotic adventures at the encouragement of the Williamsons and insistence of his wife, who readily accepted the challenging test of open infidelity hoping that it would help her to overcome her feelings of dependence and stop being the suspicious wife in the suburbs
- Judith also confessed that she had also been unfaithful in their marriage, regularly sleeping with a young black orderly during her final year in nursing school and realizing that was the most exciting sexual time for her and since then her sexual passion had been repressed
- details the strange scene in which John Bullaro went to bed with another woman, Gail, while his wife was comforted and encouraged to howl and cry loudly as she overcame her possessiveness
- Judith soon became very enthusiastically involved in the Williamson group, looking to them as a source of her stability, enlightenment and freedom
- on a weekend trip with the Williamsons Judith started a sexual relationship with John Williamson, John Bullaro observing them and feeling the crush of jealousy himself

### **Chapter Fifteen**

- John Bullaro did not take this well and he quietly plotted the murder of John Williamson as well as his own suicide, thinking best to spare his wife so that she could care for their children



- points out that Bullaro's time of turmoil was happening in the tumultuous time of the 1968 with the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, violence against protestors at the Democratic National Convention, ongoing deaths in Vietnam, problems with Cuba, strong protests from feminists, peace activists and civil rights groups and many other signs of serious unrest
- discusses the publication of *Screw*, a racy New York tabloid newspaper devoted entirely to sex, pornography and open attacks on the establishment, taking the position that nothing between consenting adults is obscene and assaulting the Nixonian bourgeois culture with a view of contemporary American life that no establishment journal would have deemed fit to print
- Screw*, with its raunchy editorials suggesting things about the sexual preference and abilities of various dignitaries, was mainly the work of executive editor and cofounder Alvin Goldstein who had an interesting and varied life prior to starting *Screw*
- discusses Goldstein's discovery of cunnilingus with the first woman he fell in love with and then details the laws forbidding oral sex, pointing out the various sentences against it ranging from one year to thirty years and in Georgia such a "crime against nature" could lead a practitioner to life imprisonment at hard labor -a penalty far more severe than having sex with animals, which in Georgia was punishable by only five years
- continues to tell the story of Al Goldstein, his failed marriages, his time as an industrial spy trying to keep workers from joining a powerful union, his unlikely marriage to the beautiful stewardess Mary Phillips, his attempt to publish the story about his time as a spy during which he met Jim Buckley, a typesetting and subordinate editor on the *Free Press*, who would help Goldstein launch his own newspaper
- Screw* quickly gained success and, in January 1971, moved offices to a tall loft building a few blocks from Union Square, a place unbeknownst to the owners of *Screw* was already under the surveillance of the police and the FBI

## Chapter Sixteen

- details the original owner of the new offices of *Screw*, a millionaire realtor Edward West Browning who had become scandalously involved during the 1920s with a fourteen year old named Peaches
- by the time *Screw* moved into the eleventh floor, the tenth floor was the headquarters of the American Communist party, the top floor housed a homosexual commune, the ninth floor contained a massage parlor, another floor the headquarters of a magazine called *Peeping Tom*
- discusses the make up of the staff and the success of the massage parlor on the ninth floor, as well as other parlours that *Screw* advertised
- details the legal ambiguity of the massage parlor, which changed as formal massage became more professional and within the medical field, although masturbation as a part of a formal massage was long held to have medical benefits
- a separation between the medical massage that sometimes included masturbation and the flashy parlors that offered topless women to give sensual massage started in the late 60s as the counterculture of free love began to get into the business of making a profit off their lifestyle
- discusses the early history of these publicized massage parlours in New York, places like the Pink Orchid, the Perfumed Garden, the Casbah West, and Stage Studio (which advertised private sessions with "young actress models")
- the masseuses were indeed actresses, as well as college student, young divorcees or dropouts looking for something better than "straight" office work
- these parlors were almost always run by male managers who took on the duty of answering the phones, collecting the money, providing security and dealing with the rare over excited man who wanted to harass the women
- these small massage parlors began to be replaced by larger clubs with shower and steam rooms, sun lamps and saunas

- discusses the decision of Goldstein, after many complaints from the readers of *Screw* that the parlors that advertised were dirty or ripped off excited customers, to personally travel around to the parlors and give them ratings and reviews in his paper
- “After Goldstein had surveyed the parlors of New York, he traveled around the country and discovered that erotic massaging had become a national preoccupation—it was the fast-food business of sex, a nutrient for the libido.”
- one parlor in Chicago, which happened to be run by Harold Rubin, had a six-hundred-pound wooden Gothic confessional as its reception desk and the men had to sign and read before the confessional (which was recording their image and voice) a statement that they were not law enforcement officers of any type
- details Goldstein's visit to Elysium, a nudist "growth center" founded by fashion photographer Ed Lange and located in the hills above Malibu Beach
- Elysium offered massages by staff professionals as well as "awareness" seminars and psychotherapy programs as well as pools and sauna, tennis courts and riding horses, and semi-private rooms in the main building where people could go to have sex
- in the 1940s and 50s Lange belonged to a pioneering nudist club, where he met, in the mid-1950s, the extremely attractive young married couple, Joseph and Diane Webber, and it was Lange who during the next fifteen years took most of the nude pictures of Diane Webber that appeared in magazines around the country
- at the time of Goldstein's visit, Lange was in a legal battle over a new zoning law that prohibited nudist group from assembling within the district, a law that was impacting both Elysium and a neighboring "growth center" located higher in the hills called Sandstone, which was dedicated to couples living in open sexual freedom and seeking to eliminate possessiveness and jealousy
- the owner of Sandstone was named John Williamson and among the couples were John and Judith Bullaro

## **Chapter Seventeen**

- describes John Williamson's purchase of a very secluded mountain retreat on the upper ridge of the Santa Monica Mountains
- the property spanned fifteen acres, had a large white two-story main residence, several smaller stucco houses and an Olympic-size pool domed in a glass building
- while many of his group believed the location to be too remote and needing too much work, Williamson convinced them to go ahead with it, persuading them that this was the ideal setting for their sensual utopia: “Williamson was stubborn and convincing. Like the founding fathers of other Utopian settlements in the past, he was unhappy with the world around him. He regarded contemporary urban life in America as destructive to the spirit, organized religion as a celestial swindle, the federal government as cumbersome and avaricious; he saw the average wage earner, who was excessively taxed and easily replaced, as existing only with detached participation in a computerized society.”
- Williamson expected each of the individuals living at Sandstone to take on some duties to help the upkeep of the property, encouraging men and women to disregard traditional roles in domestic chores and at night the property offered a space to discuss their past and their anxieties as well as to explore open sexuality
- Williamson slept with all of the women who were part of the core circle and shared his wife with the men, believing he was forming the nucleus of a cult that would soon appeal to many other couples
- John Bullaro, however, remained suspicious and remained with the group mainly because of his wife growing involvement with them
- unlike the other men who had quit their jobs to join Williamson in the restoration of the property, Bullaro remained in his day job and rejoined his wife and the other at the main house for dinner and had bought a home nearby for his family to live in
- details the night that Bullaro confronted Williamson and then left Sandstone, later finding out that he was then shut out and his wife had decided to remain at the property full time, leaving him with the children to take care of and refusing to take his calls

- Williamson had accused Bullaro of having a double standard, of enjoying sex with various women but only getting upset when his wife started to enjoy other men, but Bullaro believed that there was a difference, that his wife was becoming attached to Williamson emotionally, becoming more committed to him than to her own marriage
- Bullaro believed that truly sexually liberated women were rare and that traditional women could not engage in extramarital sex without becoming emotionally involved, they could not simply accept a man as a temporary instrument of pleasure
- Bullaro eventually gave in and apologized to Williamson and was accepted back into the group and back with his wife, he then spent less time at his office and worked more during the day at Sandstone
- one evening Bullaro opened up about his destructive defensiveness and Williamson suggested that Bullaro test his emotions by driving off into the desert and spending time in absolute solitude, which Bullaro did, finding in the end an understanding that he wasn't as independent that he took himself to be, that he could be assertive within a crowd, but he was deficient when alone
- the two days in the desert reinforced his desire to be a part of the group

## **Chapter Eighteen**

- defines what Williamson was trying to do at Sandstone as "reviving within Western culture the spirit of festival love and joyful coupling, derived from the pagan fertility rites, that existed among early Christians prior to the darkening influence of the medieval church, with its emphasis on sin and guilt"
- discusses the libertine group known as the Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit, a fifteenth-century Dutch erotic sect that considered itself directly descendant from Adam and Eve and indulging in group sex as an experience in shared love
- greater discussion given to the nineteenth-century utopia in Oneida, New York, established by a radical theologian who, with his wife, practiced free love with his closest friends for thirty years on a secluded estate
- the Oneida group all lived together, practiced open sex and collective parenting of all children born among them
- the leader of the group was seen as their messiah, an inspired medium of God's will
- their acceptance of pleasure did not mean that they tolerated unstructured hedonism or laziness and all men and women in the community were expected to work six days a week on the community farm, in the mansion, in the school, or in one of Oneida's many business enterprises, the most successful of which was their tin-plated spoon company, begun in the 1870s, and would endure and expand into a multimillion-dollar twentieth-century corporation
- all the money earned from their businesses went directly into the common treasury that supported Oneida's high standard of living
- Oneida disavowed possessiveness of any kind, starting with toys as a young child and extending to constant community pressure against any sign of "exclusive" love
- there was a drive toward female liberation, making sure the men practiced the withholding of ejaculation to make sure there weren't unwanted pregnancies and the men and women shared equal turned in the factories as in the kitchen and equal time parenting
- details the early life of Oneida founder John Humphrey Noyes, who had a normal upbringing in a prominent and prosperous Vermont family but when studying law became attracted to the dramatic flair and conviction of revivalist ministers who travelled through out New England in the 1820s, 30s and 40s challenging the traditional interpretation of the Bible and confronting the Calvinist doctrine on human unworthiness and the prevalence of sin and predestination
- some of the ministers went so far as to suggest that people could, after a true conversion, rise above sin and achieve perfection on earth, a message that struck a cord in post-revolutionary America
- this was the time of Joseph Smith exposing the principle of Mormonism and polygamy until he an angry mob broke into his jail cell and killed him

- also the time of George Rapp who lead more eight hundred followers in an agricultural haven called Harmony
- a female communitarian and abolitionist named Frances Wright founded in 1826 near Memphis a community called Nashoba, a 2,000-acre farm on which blacks and whites worked together and were allowed to sleep together
- also the time of Charles Fourier inspired "Fourieristic" settlements that practiced a capitalism that used man's inherent greed to build enclosed communities that encouraged people to do jobs that they performed at best and supplied all the people's needs, including a guaranteed "sexual minimum" provided by "erotic saints" who would make themselves available in private suites set aside for such purposes; monogamy was strongly discouraged as it was thought to be a detriment to utopianism because it promoted possessiveness, nepotism, inward-thinking, and a narrow view of life that blurred the grander vision of mankind
- perhaps the best known of these settlements was the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, located ten miles from Boston, was a six-year venture that began in 1841 and had a great deal of influence on one of its inhabitants, Nathaniel Hawthorne even though he would leave after only six months because he felt "romance and poetry need ruin to make them grow" and life was too pleasant at the settlement
- details Noyes' belief that he had divine inspiration from God and his doctrines of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth and human Perfectionism through open sharing of everything
- talks about one of the early convert couples Mary and George Cragin, who had been members of a free love cultists in upstate New York and had earlier served as evangelical workers in the congregation of the famous revivalist Charles G. Finney
- Cragins were the first couple that joined in the exchange of marital partners with Noyes and his wife Harriet but were soon joined by other couples until, in 1847 there grew rumors of "bacchanalian revelry" in the town of Putney, rumors that spread throughout the state of Vermont and Noyes was arrested for adultery
- when he was warned by his lawyer that there was a group of moral vigilantes who wanted to punish him in their own fashion, similar to what had happened to Joseph Smith, Noyes decided to jump bail and hide out temporarily in New York City
- after remaining in seclusion for several weeks he informed his followers in early 1848 he had acquired the property for their new settlement in a quiet valley on the Oneida Creek halfway between the cities of Syracuse and Utica
- Oneida community managed to, through its prosperous business relations, make many influential friends in the nearby towns, which kept charges from religious puritans at bay
- twenty years after its founding, when Oneida was very prosperous and growing, Noyes introduced a policy of selective breeding, selecting females that he considered fit material for propagation and the men he considered wise leaders as their partners; not surprisingly, the men were on average twelve years older than the women, and the man most favored by Noyes to impregnate these women was Noyes himself and his unpopular selfish and mentally instable son Theodore
- of the fifty-eight children born of this program five boys and four girls were fathered by Noyes and were given his surname, Theodore added three more
- a serious schism started when Noyes appointed Theodore as his successor, many of the group formed a faction that declared their doubts about Theodore's worthiness and instead wished to see hard working and intelligent lawyer James Towner take the leadership reigns
- in the end, it was pressure from the outside, particularly from Anthony Comstock as well as from previous member's charges that Noyes had been involved in statutory rape, that did the Oneida group in
- Noyes fled the community on the night of June 23, 1879 to reside in Canada for the rest of his days, attempting to still provide leadership through frequent letters
- with Noyes gone the group fell into three factions, one led by Theodore who wanted to make the community more secularized and capitalistic and deemphasize its identity with religion, another led by Towner who strongly wanted to continue the group's communism and religious doctrines, and a third who believed that only Noyes was the true representative of God on earth and continued to look to him for leadership

-there were many on the fringe, many who were scared of the breakdown of the community and exposure to the outside world: "Particularly prone to such feelings of insecurity were several unmarried women with children, and many nubile virgins too, who were now less eager to offer up their bodies in the blithe spirit of free love when they no longer felt the pervasive presence of freedom and love extending through the community. Many women abstained from sex during this time, to the chagrin of the men, while other women began to insist on something more than just bodily pleasure and praise from the men they favored—they wanted to be possessed, and to possess in turn, and to extract from the objects of their affection the promise of eventual marriage."

-under pressure from the young who felt vulnerable outside the security of marriage, Noyes renounced the practice of Complex Marriage and said to place itself instead "on Paul's platform, which allows marriage but prefers celibacy"

-in 1880 Oneida converted itself into a joint-stock company and all of its remaining 226 residents became stockholders of the Oneida Community, Limited and in the 1890s one of Noyes' children from the settlement, Pierrepont B. Noyes emerged as the competent head of this company

-in 1882 Towner and his faction of thirty followers cashed in their stocks and left to settle in California

## **Chapter Nineteen**

-as John Williamson began in 1970 to recruit new members for Sandstone Retreat he was not alone in the belief that alternate lifestyle communities were the way to go, as NYT reported there were an estimate of approximately two thousand separate settlements of various sizes across the US, many of them advocating "responsible hedonism" and believing that there is a correlation between monogamy, possessiveness, jealousy, and war

-many of these communes attracted rootless people who didn't want to work, wanted freedom from a capitalist society but still accepted food stamps and handouts from the government, and often living in run down places

-Williamson was quite aware that communes tended to attract such rootless people and he was very clear that he would only accept counterculture couples who could afford to contribute to the upkeep of Sandstone, which was done through a \$240 annual membership to gain access to the Resort on a temporary basis, using it as a kind of club: "They could visit during the day to swim in the pool, sunbathe nude on the deck of the main house, picnic on the lawn; and on certain evenings they could join the "family" for a buffet dinner, where nudity was customary but not obligatory, and after dinner they could venture downstairs into a spacious, dimly lit, red-carpeted room that was sixty-by-twenty feet and was lined with soft mats and large pillows to be used by anyone who wanted to make love, or merely wished to relax and listen to the stereo music, or to converse with other people around the fireplace."

-section of the Sandstone brochure: "The concepts underlying Sandstone include the idea that the human body is good, that open expressions of affection and sexuality are good. Members at Sandstone may do anything they like as long as they are not offensive or force their desires on other people. There is no structured activity at Sandstone, no programs of behavioral study, no crutches. Members are free to do whatever they wish, whenever they wish, in the spirit of mutuality.... The strength and lasting significance of the Sandstone experience lies in human contact divorced from the cocktail party context with all its games and dodges and places to hide. Contact at Sandstone includes the basic level of literal, physical nakedness and open sexuality. In these terms, the experience goes far beyond any attempt to intellectualize it. This reality of action with its effect of accepting and being accepted in basic terms, without reservation, without cover, is the essence of the Sandstone experience. It transcends fantasy and is creating a new kind of community where a person's mind, body, and being are no longer strangers to each other. In this community, differences between people become a source of delight rather than a reason for conflict."

-the applicants were interviewed and screened for a past history of alcoholism, heavy drug usage, mental illness or any other problems that be revived or aggravated by exposure to the highly charged sexual atmosphere of Sandstone

-only couples were permitted to attend the evening activities, no one under eighteen, no drugs of any kind permitted on the property, some wine with supper but the consumption of hard liquor was discouraged

-Williamson wanted to fill the membership roster with young professional couples and influential people, so he sent letters to distinguished university-affiliated anthropologists and psychologists inviting them to spend a day at Sandstone, he hired a public relations associate and gave interviews and appearances, along with his wife, to the press

-all of this was very successful, and Sandstone gained the attention of several important academics and writers

-Williamson's efforts to court the outside world changed his focus and he took less and less time caring for the needs of his core group, which was very much noticed by Judith Bullaro, who had become accustomed to his special attention

-“Less the romantic guru that he had appeared to be, and more the calculating engineer that had been his true profession, Williamson in Judith’s view was now turning Sandstone into a domestic laboratory in which his nude family were exhibited as models to attract new members, new money, and the interest of the academic world with which Williamson wished to associate himself. Lacking a formal education beyond high school, his only means of achieving academic status for Sandstone was through the establishment of an advisory board composed of university-accredited scientists and random behaviorists who, in return for the revitalization of their own physical drives, might be motivated to support Williamson’s future efforts to obtain private foundation grants, or even government funds, so that he could continue his research into the root causes of jealousy and possessiveness—problems for which Judith thought there were no cures except if people ceased to deeply care about one another.”

-Williamson himself showed signs of jealousy when women of the group found David Schwind particularly attractive and started to spend more time with him, and when Judith did this, she understood Williamson's jealousy enough that she kept it secret from him

-shortly after this, Judith told her husband she was ready to leave Sandstone but at this point Bullaro had become more involved with the group and was not willing to give up his position :“What he did not openly admit to his wife, however, was that he had been somewhat pleased that her pride had been recently wounded by Williamson’s romantic withdrawal, and Bullaro was not opposed to having her remain on the scene a while longer to absorb more of Williamson’s fading passion. It was her turn, Bullaro thought, to suffer as he had suffered when she had first become infatuated with Williamson, had made love to him that memorable night long ago in front of the cabin’s fireplace, and had thus greatly altered the course of their lives. And yet Bullaro recognized an obligation to his wife and he could not ignore the pain she was feeling; nor could he overlook the fact that it had been he who initially brought her into Williamson’s world. He also knew that her continued unhappiness could only further erode their marriage, which he did not want to destroy, and it would merely bring grief to the two children that they shared and loved.”

-when Judith continued to fall into depression, the couple decided to return to Los Angeles, living in a temporary residence while the lease on their original house wound down, and Bullaro consented to them having a marriage without sex, thinking it was healing time for his wife

-when it came time for them to return to their own home Judith requested that Bullaro not move in with her and he agreed to get his own apartment as an attempt to restore harmony to their relationship, but Judith started seeing other men and they were officially separated

-Bullaro still attended a few parties at Sandstone but he found his lost wife irreplaceable, he quit his job and spent time in the desert and reviewed his various notes and journals that he had kept on his impressions and responses to what was going on around all throughout his time with the Williamsons in an attempt to write a novel about his experience

-“The diary had been consciously produced as a cathartic experience; but now as he reviewed the notes, he winced with embarrassment. Instead of releasing him from his despair, reading back on his life was compounding it: The first sexual encounter with Barbara at the insurance convention in Palm Springs, the emergence of John Williamson as a problem solver, the nude evenings in the Williamsons’ house on Mulholland

Drive, the months that had then seemed so exhilarating and liberating, now loomed as a preamble to destruction and chaos. He saw whatever love and order that had been the stability of his life sacrificed to the whim of experimentation and change.”

## Chapter Twenty

-gives details about a party at Sandstone attended by several wealthy couples and important individuals such as the British biologist Alex Comfort, who would later write *The Joy of Sex*; the psychologists and authors Phyllis and Eberhard Kronhausen, who would establish the Museum of Erotic Art in San Francisco; the marriage counselors William Hartman and Marilyn Fithian, often referred to as the Masters and Johnson of the West Coast; the New York Post's syndicated columnist Max Lerner; the onetime Los Angeles Rams football star turned poet and actor Bernie Casey, the former Rand Corporation employees Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo, who had already made copies of the Pentagon Papers and were secretly being investigated by the FBI; artist and feminist Betty Dodson, whose heroic paintings of sexual passion had dazzled visitors at her one-woman show in New York's Wickersham Gallery; the editor Kent Carroll of Grove Press, which was planning to produce and distribute a documentary film on Sandstone; the scientific writer of sexual studies Edward M. Brecher, a close friend of Masters and Johnson; the editorial director and former publisher of the Los Angeles Free Press, Art Kunkin, whose decision in 1969 to print the names and home addresses of Los Angeles' narcotics agents led to litigation and \$53,000 in fines, and prompted him to sell his newspaper to a man named Marvin Miller, a publisher of sexual literature whose own subsequent conviction in a pornography case would be carried to the United States Supreme Court and would culminate in the landmark 1973 Miller ruling. It was this opinion that would threaten to deliberalize all forms of sexual expression across the nation, thus superseding the celebrated Roth opinion of 1957 that had countered the legacy of Comstock in America.”

-while the main floor resembled a literary salon, the floor below was the parlor for pleasure seekers and provided sights and sounds that many visitors had never imagined they would encounter under one roof during a single evening

-discusses Dr. Comfort's observation and participation in the activities in the lower level, pointing out that "Comfort believed that visitors could learn more about their sexual selves in one night at Sandstone than they could from all the authoritative sex manuals and seminars conducted by sexologists."

-“Here they could watch other people's many techniques, hear the varied responses, see the expressions on the faces, the movements of the muscles, the flush of skin, the different ways that some people liked to be held, touched, tongued, tickled, nibbled, pinched, aroused with genital kissing, anal stimulation, scrotum stroking. Special acts of titillation that some visitors privately fancied, but had never requested of their lovers because such penchants might seem “kinky,” often were on view in the room downstairs, and thus Sandstone served its visitors as a source of reassurance and self-validation. Women who required considerable time and stimulation in order to achieve an orgasm, and had wondered if this was normal, would discover at Sandstone many women like themselves; and women who had been attracted to other women but had been repelled by visions of lesbianism could watch liberated heterosexual women in triads and foursomes fondling another woman's breasts, caressing the clitoris, happily identifying with female pleasure—and men, too, though more concerned than women by the specter of homosexuality, could in the affirmative ambience of group sex touch other men, massage a male body, kiss a man on the mouth as, decades ago, during the final stage of male adolescence in a Puritan society, they had kissed their fathers.”

-discusses the activities of Sally Binford, a forty-six-year-old divorcee who entertained one lover after another during her evenings at Sandstone, being a strong woman who believed in equality between the sexes and liberation of women to enjoy their own sexuality

## Chapter Twenty-One

-describes the life of Sally Binford, an anthropologist and archaeologist who eventually joined the faculty of the anthropology department of UCLA, and her connection through local sex clubs to Daniel Ellsberg who was charged with leaking the Pentagon Papers to the press

-Ellsberg claimed that it was his openness about sex and attending orgies that had attracted the curiosity of the Puritans in Nixon's White House and that fueled their determination to defame and punish Ellsberg for leaking government documents to the press

## Chapter Twenty-Two

-Nixon came to the White House with the promise that he would purge the nation of its domestic radicals, degenerate hippies and exploitative pornographers, advocating a "citizen's crusade against the obscene"

-describes Nixon's childhood in California as being strict and impoverished, as far from the fresh, sunshine experience of others in the state as one could get

-Nixon brought to the White House people who believed in his strict moral code against obscenity, even if they were okay with attacking Ellsberg as well as raiding the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrists and the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate building

-he also replaced retiring liberal Chief Justice Earl Warren with "a majestic white-haired exemplar of high-minded Methodist morality named Warren Burger" who was known to be supportive of government wire-tapping privileges against domestic radicals, to be restrictive of freedom of the press, and to be repulsed by pornography

-Nixon was also able to appoint three more moral conservatives on the Supreme Court

-Nixon relied on these justices as well as the recently established Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography to lend considerable support for his drive against pornography

-one of Nixon's personal appointees to this group was Charles H. Keating, one of the most fanatical foes of pornography in America, an attorney whose many years of lobbying against sex films and books had caused the newspapers of his home town of Cincinnati to call him "Mr. Clean"

-Keating had founded the Citizens for Decent Literature (CDL) out of a campaign to get girlie magazines and porno paperbacks off the newsstands of his city and the CDL expanded to apply community pressure on local politicians and lawmen to close down the bookshops and cinemas that exploited sex in Cincinnati

-CDL grew to have a national presence and had a bimonthly periodical, the *National Decency Reporter*, which enthusiastically recounted raids against dirty bookshops, announced the courtroom verdicts against pornographers and printed, under the headless "Prosecutor of the Month" a flattering biographical story of a law-enforcement official who had recently inflicted punishment upon the "merchants of smut"

-this paper was edited by Raymond Gauer, a Catholic man with seven children who had been working as an accountant with a milk company in Los Angeles

-interesting description of Gauer's backstory: "Gauer had come to Keating's attention in a circuitous way. One Sunday evening while walking toward a Chinese restaurant to pick up an order of food to take home to his family, Gauer found himself standing wide-eyed in front of a sex shop that had recently opened in his Hollywood neighborhood. In the window, and on the front cases, he saw racks of paperbacks with lurid titles, arrangements of electric vibrators and rubber dildoes, French ticklers, cock rings, tubes of lubricants, garter belts, and many magazines on the pages of which were full-color photographs of young women posing in the nude with their legs spread, their arms extended, their mouths open. Though Gauer grunted disapprovingly to himself, he felt a stirring of excitement, a loathsome awareness of illicit desire. Immediately he walked away, embarrassed that he had lingered as long as he had. Later that night, after his wife and children were asleep, the reflections of the evil store window persisted in his mind. Troubled by the images, he was restless, agitated; but he also felt summoned by the spirit of the Lord, a feeling he had not felt since his altar boy days in his native Chicago, and he recognized within himself a pious passion, a wish to confront and overcome the demonic allure of the despicable pornographers. He got little sleep that night, and the next day he composed an angry letter to the



Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, protesting the presence of such a store near his home. Within a week he had received a letter of thanks, promising that the police would be notified. A few days later, he read in the newspapers that the store had been raided by the authorities and was now closed. Impressed and encouraged, and experiencing for the first time in his life the power to exert his influence within the tawdry world around him, Raymond Gauer proceeded to drive around the city in his spare time and note the names and addresses of other sex shops. In downtown Los Angeles, near City Hall, he counted six places that seemed to be thriving, and he wrote to the mayor questioning how such places could be legally tolerated in the shadow of the mayor's own office and the headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department. Days later Gauer received a telephone call from an officer with the city's vice squad who said, "Mr. Gauer, watch the papers tomorrow." On the following day the front pages of the Los Angeles press reported a simultaneous raid on the six establishments, the arrests of several salesclerks, and the confiscation of seven tons of obscenity."

-Gauer soon after met Keating and accepted his offer to join the national campaign, go on speaking tours around the country, make radio and television appearances and run their national newspaper

-on one occasion Gauer flew back to his hometown of Chicago to condemn pornography on a talk show and his opposing guest was a twenty-nine-year-old local porno merchant and massage parlor owner named Harold Rubin: "Gauer and Rubin disliked one another instantly. Gauer viewed the outspoken young man as a vulgarian lacking scruples and standards, while Rubin saw in Gauer signs of his own Chicago-born father, a repressed blue-collar conservative who was more offended by sex than the war in Vietnam."

-details the broad scope of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, whose many influential members were made to watch many hours of hard-core movies and review the literature they would call smut -the group also sent research teams to interview the makers and sellers of pornography, male college students exposed to pornography and inmates in prison convicted of rape and other sex crimes

-the group had been chaired by William B. Lockhart, who was determined to present a serious and honest study of the material, which caused a great deal of discord between him and Keating, which blew up when Keating saw that the preliminary conclusions and recommendations of the Lockhart-dominated commission were that pornography was not a national problem after all, and that the wisest way to deal with it -at least where adults were concerned -was to simply ignore it

-from the report: "The Commission believes that there is no warrant for continued Government interference with the full freedom of adults because extensive empirical investigation, both by the Commission and others, provides no evidence that exposure to or use of explicit sexual materials plays a significant role in the causation of social or individual harms such as crime, delinquency, sexual or nonsexual deviancy or severe emotional disturbances."

-the report pointed out that rapists and other sexual delinquents were less likely to be consumers of pornography than products of "conservative, repressed, sexually deprived backgrounds" and that the people who were most incensed by the popularity of pornography in America was overzealous religious types who also believed that one shouldn't have the right to attack our system of government or make speeches against God -also concluded that the vast majority of consumers of pornography were "white, middle class, middle aged, married males, dressed in a business suit of neat casual attire"

"The effect of pornography on such men did not, as some alarmists insisted, drive them madly into the streets to rape or provoke them into breaking up their homes and abandoning their families. Instead, if it stimulated them at all, it might lead to private acts of masturbation; or, if the individual had a receptive wife or mistress or girlfriend, it might add impetus to the desire to make love. But criminal behavior did not result from exposure to pornography, the report reiterated, and for this reason the Lockhart majority advocated that the United States Government—which annually invested many millions of dollars in taxpayers' money to harass and prosecute the pornographers, with questionable results—should now abolish all laws that sought to deprive adults of the right to see or read any and all so-called obscene materials."

-Keating successfully filed a suit to stop the publication of this report and then he rallied the CDL and many prominent politicians to denounce the Commission and its work

- however, Keating could not stop the publication of the report, but he did get the right to publish a separate report that would reflect his views on the question of pornography, which actually mainly contained attacks on the character and background of the other members of the Commission
- Keating's report also included a paragraph that Alexis de Toqueville had written after visiting America between 1835 and 1840: "I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and ample rivers—and it was not there; in her fertile lands and boundless prairies—and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because she is good—and if America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."
- just when the initial new stories caused by the controversy of the two reports started to die down a California publishing company produced copies of the reports illustrated with very graphic nudity and sex scene and then a California firm mailed out more than 55,000 advertising brochure that contained selected pictures from the book and told readers how they could order copies of the illustrated edition and also carried a statement denouncing Nixon for having rejected the commission's recommendations
- from the brochure: "A monumental work of research and investigation has now become a giant of a book. All the facts, all the statistics, presented in the best possible format...and...completely illustrated in black and white and full color. Every facet of the most controversial report ever issued is covered in detail. This book is a must for the research shelves of every library, public or private, seriously concerned with full intellectual freedom and adult selection. Millions of dollars in public funds were expended to determine the precise truth about eroticism in the United States today, yet every possible attempt to suppress this information was made from the very highest levels. Even the President dismissed the facts, out of hand. The attempt to suppress this volume is an inexcusable insult directed at every adult in this country. Each individual must be allowed to make his own decision; the facts are inescapable. Many adults, many of them, will do just that after reading this Report. In a truly free society, a book like this wouldn't even be necessary."
- the publisher of this book, fifty-year-old William Hamling, had already been cited in several obscenity cases
- details the background of Hamling, coming from similar place as Gauer but losing his faith and moving into the publication, at Hefner's suggestion, of girlie magazines with his own called *Rogue* and facing prosecution by the Post Office for obscenity
- Hamling won this battle and in 1959 expanded into the sex-oriented pulp paperback business and between 1960 and 1963 earn 4 million from these novels
- Hamling's fortunes came about because the nation's obscenity laws became more liberal just as he was venturing into the paperback sex business: starting with the *Roth* opinion in 1959, there followed the 1962 case of *Manual Enterprises v. Day* that permitted the mailing of several nude male "body-building" magazine to gay customers, the 1964 case of *Jacobellis v. Ohio* in which overturned the lower court's conviction of a theater manager who had shown a French film that focused on the infidelities of a bored housewife, and in the 1965 case of *Memoirs v. Massachusetts* the prevailing opinion of Justice Brennan declared that a book or film or magazine could be classified as legally obscene only if it was simultaneously guilty of each of three offenses: It had to appeal to the average person's "prurient interest" in sex; it had to be "patently offensive" to the average adult; and it had to be "utterly without redeeming social value."
- these landmark rulings actually fueled the opposition and lower courts continued to harass and prosecute sexual expressionists, campaigners against "smut" became increasingly stubborn and vigilant
- federal agents and municipal vice squads pushed for charges knowing that it would lead to a costly legal battle for the purveyors of sex, those in the post office sending decoy letters to entrap publishers into delivering to a location that would be difficult to travel to and within a conservative illiberal community, knowing that federal law said that a sexual merchandiser had to stand trial in any town where his material had been received
- details the life and philosophy of Justice William O. Douglas, whose libertarian views concerning a commitment to free press and a tolerance of sexual expression led to many of the Supreme Court cases in support of the right to publish pornography

-discusses the cases of unsuccessful appeals to the Supreme Court, the first for paperback novels that detailed homosexual relations, another for one on "selective promiscuity" housewives, and another for a publication that celebrated and showed drawings of interracial relations, all published by Ralph Ginzburg and heard by the Court in 1965 in *Ginzburg v. United States*, which upheld his fine of \$42,000 and five year prison sentence

-the reason given for this ruling was that Ginzburg was guilty "of the sordid business of pandering -'the business of purveying textual or graphic matter openly advertised to appeal to the erotic interest of their customers"

-a year after the Ginzberg case a vendor named Redrup was arrested for selling two of Hamling's smut paperbacks called *Lust Pool* and *Shame Agent*, and when the Supreme Court ruled in the *Redrup* case that the books were not legally obscene the publishing industry celebrated it as the most liberal ruling yet reached because if those two books were not obscene, hardly any book could be called obscene, and they saw the ruling as signifying the virtual end of book censorship in America: "As long as the book was not advertised in the "pandering" manner of Ginzburg and was not otherwise foisted upon an unwilling public or sold to a minor, it had the Court's permission to exist and be sold to whoever wished to read it, no matter how erotic, emetic, or unredeeming its contents."

-as happy as the publishing industry was with the *Redrup* ruling, the anti-pornography groups such as the CDL led a nationwide backlash which besieged Congress and President Johnson with thousands of letters and telegrams protesting the sexual permissiveness of the Supreme Court and it was reaction to this protest that led to the formation of the Presidential Commission on Obscenity and Pornography that led to the controversial report and Hamling's illustrated version

-Hefner was not happy with Hamling's handling of the report, a letter by his managing editor to Hamling's offices aying that "the President's report is one of the most important documents ever to be published in the censorship area. It's under tremendous assault and you guys are going to boost the wahoos' case by giving the impression that the government provided the pictures for your text. Do you think the Nixon Administration will sit for that? In any case ...I think your ingenuity is going to contribute to your downfall. You ought to have Hamling read up on the Greek concept of *hubris*."

-Hamling wrote a scathing letter back to Hefner, challenging him to use his reputation and power to help fight the battle that he has benefited from

-shortly after this spat Hamling was charged by the US Attorney General for publishing the "unauthorized" edition of the report and his response was to assert that Nixon was trying to divert the American public's attention to the "Pornography Menace" and away from "problems like: unemployment, hunger, poverty, growing urban blight, education, crushing taxation and undeclared wars far from home"

-in the end, the jury found the brochure that Hamling had mailed to be obscene and offensive because it was received unsolicited, he was sentenced to four years in prison and fines totalling \$87,000

-in June 1973, the fight took a huge step back when the Supreme Court removed the phrase "utterly without redeeming social value" from its definition of obscenity and replaced it with lacking in "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value"

-details the life of the man involved in this case, Marvin Miller, who was a distributor of X-rated home movies, hard-core photo magazines, and pornographic paperbacks

-notes that Miller was also born and reared in the city of Chicago: "It was as if that strongly Irish-Catholic town was destined to produce sexually obsessed native sons, most of whom would eventually exile themselves into more liberal surroundings."

-Keating's statement concerning the new Supreme Court ruling: "For more than fifteen years, since I started CDL, the pornographers have run rough shod over the American public, engulfing this nation in a tidal wave of filth and turning her along the path of moral corruption and decay. Their reason was money. Big money. Billions of dollars. And for money they were willing to sell their country, their fellow-citizens, and our children into the bondage of sexual debauchery. These gutter merchants wrapped their soiled merchandise in the flag of the United States, and cowered behind the Constitution. They tried to use that great document which freed men's minds and spirits as a device to enslave the men and debase the women of America. Those sordid years are now

behind us. One day soon we will look back with shock and disbelief at the depths to which we allowed ourselves to be dragged in the name of 'freedom.' Now it is our turn. And your turn. The decent people of America, backed by the United States Supreme Court, are going to wage a holy, yes, a holy war against the merchants of obscenity. From this day forward I will not rest, and no one connected with CDL will rest, until every pornographer in America is out of business, in jail, or both."

### **Chapter Twenty-Three**

- discusses the April 1974 appeals trial of Hamling at the Supreme Court
- about halfway through the chapter is the line: "There is an old saying among First Amendment counselors that 'obscenity' is whatever gives a judge an erection."
- points out that even those who consider themselves 'ultraliberal' are against the pornography industry
- as Gershon Legman commented on the American ethic: "Murder is a crime. Describing murder is not. Sex is not a crime. Describing it is."
- points out that the main problem that many people have with pornography is that its intent is to encourage masturbation, which many people see as a delinquent pleasure, an admission of failure in wooing a real woman and sexual selfishness within a marriage
- the defence case attempted to argue that there is no such thing as "national standards" regarding obscenity and that community standards should prevail in these cases and if one can prove that the general community has liberal views regarding pornography then the conviction should be overturned
- the defence also pointed out that of the 55,000-58,000 people who were mailed the brochure about the Report, twelve people had been offended and that it could be been about the political commentary included in the brochure
- in the end, Hamling's conviction was upheld on the basis of the Comstock postal statute and, after paying the fine, Hamling's sentence was reduced to a term of less than one year with five years probation so long as he promised to sever all business connections with erotic publishing, and thereafter cease to write, to edit, or to distribute any material even mildly related to sex

### **Chapter Twenty-Four**

- chapter on the lavish lifestyle of Hugh Hefner, his many businesses, his mansions, his many lovers, and his strange hyper-possessiveness and obsessions over women who he had a relationship with, particularly Barbi Benton and Karen Christy
- details the problems the Hefner had juggling multiple serious relationships when the women in his life wanted marriage or time or some sort of sense that they were special
- also discusses legal problems of the people surrounding Hefner and how that impacted his business
- describes the role that Christie Hefner had in taking over operations of the Hefner businesses
- "Emphasizing that Playboy does not display women with chains, whips, and other kinky accoutrements—which, curiously, she discovered in such women's high-fashion magazines as Vogue—Christie Hefner recalled: "As the women's movement took hold, there was a feeling for a while that if you were a feminist you wore jeans and combat boots. So all of a sudden, nudity and eroticism were exploitative, and there was in the movement a little bit of anti-sexual, anti-male bias that came down very hard on Playboy, because Playboy is obviously very pro-heterosexuality and very pro the sexual relationship between men and women." But, she went on, she saw no inherent incompatibility between Playboy and feminism; to her, feminism represented having vast opportunities and options in life, and to tell women that they should not appear in the nude—as certain puritanical feminists were now urging, and as male censors and priests have been urging for ages—was, she insisted, contrary to the goals of independence and self-determination sought by a majority of women liberationists. While she conceded in an interview in the New York Times that Playboy offered a limited perspective on womanhood, she stressed that it was a man's magazine, and its mission was not concerned with the varied complexities of being a woman any more than the women's magazines in America dealt with the complexities of being a man. Most women's

magazines, in fact, “don’t even deal with the complexities of being a woman,” she said, adding that she was a lot more eager to change the way women were being presented in Family Circle magazine than in Playboy”

### Chapter Twenty-Five

-chapter opens with this quote: “We have to cultivate women’s chastity as the highest national possession, for it is the only safe guarantee that we really are going to be the fathers of our children, that we work and labor for our own flesh and blood. Without this guarantee there is no possibility of a secure family life, this indispensable basis for the welfare of the nation. This, and not masculine selfishness, is the reason why the law and morals make stricter demands on the woman than on the man with regard to premarital chastity and to marital fidelity. Freedom on her part involves much more serious consequences than freedom on the part of the man.” —MAX GRUBER, German sex hygienist, 1920s

-then has this quote: “Among the many issues involved in the liberation of women, the two major fronts in my own personal liberation have been sexuality and economics. Ultimately, they are not separable—not as long as the female genitals have economic value instead of sexual value for women. Saving sex for my lover/husband was my gift to him in exchange for economic security—called “meaningful relationship” or “marriage.” My future depended upon finding the right partner whom I would possess forever with my gift of sex and love. With that romanticized image of sex, in a society that doesn’t have economic equality between the sexes, I was forced to bargain with my cunt for any hope of financial security. Marriage under those circumstances is a form of prostitution.” —BETTY DODSON, American artist-feminist, 1970s

-discusses Betty Dobson's days and nights as a visitor to Sandstone, stating it is compatible with her evolution as a self-proclaimed Phallic Woman, taking back the original definition of "phallus" as referring equally to the clitoris as well as to the penis and in her view, the “denial of the women’s phallus has for centuries been the essence of male dominance and female subjugation”

-discusses Dodson's work with helping women to discover their own genitals and providing them space to examine other women's parts, encouraging them to look, touch, smell and taste in order to overcome the teaching that this part of their body is evil, unclean, the site of the curse

-detail's Dobson's experience with masturbation from a teen, throughout her five-year marriage and after and her published guide *Liberating Masturbation: a Meditation on Self-Love*

-Dodson and her feminist followers were convinced that acceptance of masturbation, and the guiltless practice of it, was essential to the sexual liberation of women

-discusses Dodson's views on how female sexuality is conditioned by a male dominated society, pointing out that a woman gives up her identity and her body in marriage and that there is good deal of "social pressure on women to conform to male-defined standards of respectability -lest these women encounter the social ostracism that befalls the 'prostitute or tramp,' the very females that are patronized by many male moral hypocrites -resulted too often in women become 'crippled' sexually" and turn their own frustration into an attack on sex, becoming the keepers of Social Morality

-Dodson in interview with the *Evergreen Review*: “If we women all got together and became one unified ‘yes’ for sex, it would show us [that] men are just as uptight about sex as we are, only they don’t have to confront that. Since women act out all of their sex fears and reservations, men get to act and feel very sex-positive. Unconsciously they depend upon our saying ‘no’ or being hesitant, fearful, or passive.”

-more from Dodson: “‘Frigid’ is a man’s word for a woman who cannot have an orgasm in the missionary position in five minutes with only the kind of stimulation that is good for him. We must no longer cling to the notion that we ‘should’ have orgasm from intercourse alone. And we must not be intimidated by chauvinists in white coats who still refer to ‘coital inadequacy’ in women when their own laboratory and statistical evidence clearly contradicts this male concept of female response. The truth is very few women ever consistently reach orgasm in intercourse without additional stimulation. To be liberated a woman must be free to choose and state her preference in sexual activity without prejudice or judgment when it is her turn.”

- discusses the growth and expansion of Sandstone to new resorts in other states, with the Williamsons moving to a new location in Montana and the original was sold to a marriage counselor named Paul Paige
- discusses the changes that Paige made to Sandstone and the author introduces himself into the story (in the third person) appearing at a special ticket event featuring a talk by Dr. Comfort as well as some members of the pornographic magazine publishing industry and the author who presented some of his research done for this book
- Talese reveals that he had visited Sandstone often prior to this engagement and he detailed the work that he did to research the book, including taking in pornography and visiting massage parlors
- his talk focused on the changing sexual and more general moral landscape in America from the 1930s and 1940s to the 1960s and 1970s
- details Talese's time with massage parlors, starting as a customer and then taking up working for them as desk manager, interviewing the masseuses about their experiences with the clients and then asking them to keep journals
- Talese came to the conclusion that most of the men who visited the massage parlor were middle-aged, married and very much wanting to keep it that way, sometimes having affairs but never wanting to leave their wives, and their massage activities did not diminish their passions for their wives at home
- points out that not once did he encounter a woman looking for someone to massage them to climax, even though public adverts promised sexual satisfaction for men and women
- “Few women could be aroused by the sight of an erect penis unless they were warmly disposed to the man who was attached to it. Quite apart from the potential danger involved in picking up stray men in public places, the average heterosexual woman did not enjoy intercourse without a feeling of familiarity or personal interest in her partner. If it was merely an orgasm that she sought, she would prefer masturbating in her bedroom with a penis-shaped vibrator to engaging the genuine article of a male stranger.”
- quote from a marriage therapist speaking to Talese: “It is just as natural for a woman to reject the sexual apparatus of a male stranger as it is for the human body to try to reject any other foreign object, be it a microscopic virus or an incompatible organ transplant. The key word is foreign; if a man is a stranger to a woman, his penis is foreign to her, and she is not likely to want it inside of her, because then her person would be invaded. But if it is not alien to her, if it is a part of somebody she knows, trusts, desires a relationship with, then she can take it into her, embrace it and feel in harmony with it.”
- according to this therapist, it is for this reason that women don't respond to photographs of nude men in the way that men react to pinups, it is very rare for a woman to masturbate to pictures of unknown nude men
- Talese visited major European cities and found that women there are quite the same in their reaction to men who are strangers, they do not patronize massage parlors, very few enjoy live sex shows or hard-core films, and it is very rare to see photos of nude men in women's magazines
- “A recently divorced husband of a famous European actress told Talese: “Men and women are natural enemies. Women begin as teenaged girls, often unconsciously, to arouse men—they wear tight sweaters, they paint their lips, they scent themselves with perfume, they swing their hips—and when they have made men hungry for them, they become suddenly coy and proper.” Men want what women have to give, he conceded, but women withhold it until certain conditions are met or promises are made. Women can give a powerless man a temporary sense of strength, or at least the reassurance that he is not entirely impotent; and for a man, he elaborated, there is no substitute for the warm, welcoming place between a woman's legs, the birthplace to which men continuously try to return. But there is nearly always a price for readmission, he added, and sometimes the price is high. The church and the law try to “socialize the penis,” he said, to restrict its use to worthy occasions such as monogamous marriage. “Marriage is a form of arms control over the penis,” but it is unable to entirely contain the excess male sexual energy, and it is much of this energy that is spent in the pornographic industry and the red-light districts of cities—the areas that the vice squads, the celibate priests, and some man-hating feminists want to eliminate. “These ‘clean-up’ campaigns,” he concluded, “are really a battle against male biology, and they have been going on, in one form or another, since the Middle Ages.”

- details Talese meeting Harold Rubin and discussing a recent crackdown in Chicago against massage parlours and his continued obsession with Diane Webber
- details Talese meeting with Diane Webber, who was not impressed with being tracked down but did consent to a brief interview, which was followed up by two more interviews
- Webber's son was employed at the nudist spa Elysium Fields, which was owned by the photographer who had specialized in taking Webber's photographs
- author talks about himself in the third person going to bed with Barbara Williamson on one of his early visits to Sandstone and all the things that she shared with him about John Williamson's intentions and moods and all her relations with other men
- Talese then discusses the breakdown of his marriage, saying it was mainly over the publicity around the work he was doing on the book
- discusses the nudist park that existed twenty miles from where the author had been raised, the same park that published the magazine *Sunshine & Health*, one of the first magazines to show full nudity
- the existence of this park had always interested the author in his younger years and he ends this book by describing, at the end of all his research getting the nerve to go in, remove his clothing and enjoy the park

### **Afterword**

- says that his wife publicly supported him during the nine years it took to research the book but in the last year before its 1980 publication he found that the sensationalism surrounding the book's publication drew readers' attentions away from *what* he wrote to *how* and *why* he wrote it, and particularly why he cheated on his wife while doing the research
- lists all the names of the prominent reviewers who reacted to his book with "wrath and ridicule" and says that now, twenty-five years after publication he wishes he would have been less defensive about the criticism
- discusses the change in the 1980s with the AIDS scare, saying that many viewed it as a by-product of the sixties and seventies excesses
- asks whether there really has been a collapse of the sexual revolution, pointing out the 1984 *Time* headline "Sex in the '80s -The Revolution Is Over," that Walmart refuses to sell men's magazines, *Playboy* has toned down its covers to no longer show nudity and now wraps its newsstand issues to discourage underage browsers
- however, the world now has the internet and there are now very few controllable restrictions on the citizenry when it comes to what they can view
- "Americans have always wanted it both ways," wrote *Time* magazine's Richard Stengel back in 1986. "From the first tentative settlements in the New World, a tension has existed between the pursuit of individual liberty and the quest for puritan righteousness, between Benjamin Franklin's open road of individualism and Jonathan Edwards' Great Awakening of moral fervor. The temper of the times shifts from one pole to the other, and along with it the role of the state. Government intrudes; government retreats; the state meddles with morality, then washes its hands and withdraws. The Gilded Age gave way to the muscular governmental incursions of the Age of Reform. The Roaring Twenties gave rise to the straightlaced Hays Office of the '30s. The buttoned-up '50s ushered in the unbuttoned '60s. And, most recently, a reaction to the sexual revolution spurred a spirited crusade to reassert family values that helped sweep Ronald Reagan into the presidency."
- points out all of the sex scandals of politicians that have been very public in the last decade or so
- says that he doubts that the American of today is restraining itself that much

### **An Update on People & Places Featured in *Thy Neighbor's Wife* (at the time of this edition publishing)**

- Harold Rubin died of natural causes in Chicago in January 2007, his son saying in his obituary that his late father had lived and died believing in the U.S. Constitution
- Diane Webber continues to reside in Los Angeles
- Hugh Hefner still lives in his mansion, sharing his quarters with beautiful women and maintaining final authority over the editorial content of the magazine he launched in 1953

- lists the books recently published about Anthony Comstock showing that they see him as a warrior in the fight for America's values
- discusses Hefner's marriage to Playmate Kimberley Conrad in 1990s, that they had two sons together and were monogamous together until separating in 1999, she and the boys continue to live in separate quarters on the mansion's property
- Samuel Roth died in 1974, having spent the last third of his life in prison for publishing erotic novels
- in November 2008, at the age of eighty-six, Barney Rosset received the Literarian Award at the fifth-ninth annual National Book Foundation dinner in recognition of his career in the forefront of literary freedom
- John Bullaro is now seventy-six years old, retired and living with his second wife in northern California, still on good relations with this first wife but long out of touch with Barbara Williamson
- Barbara Williamson traveled extensively around the United States with her husband and now they have settled down in Fallon, Nevada where they preside over a non-profit organization dedicated to the study of cats
- John Williamson is now seventy-six years old still speaks out about his cause and in 2008 was a part of a four-part documentary called *Sex: The Revolution*, in January 2009 established a new website called SandstoneCommunity.com, an information center for the principles that the Williamsons and many of their followers have in common
- Judith Bullaro is now seventy-three and, after living in Los Angeles as a divorcee for decades, is currently dating a man she plans to marry
- Al Goldstein's magazine *Screw* went under and after ill health, costly divorces, reckless spending and mismanagement he filed for bankruptcy, in 2007 defaulted on a large loan from the family of one of his ex-wives and he was homeless
- Sandstone is currently owned and used as a homestead by a Santa Monica family that made its fortune in land development
- Dr. Alex Comfort died of a brain hemorrhage in 1991 at the age of seventy-one
- Dr. Sally Binford committed suicide in 1993, leaving the note that she is doing it not out of despair or depression but out of a desire to end things well, or to quit while she's ahead
- Charles Keating was at the center of the Lincoln Savings & Loan scandal, serving jail time for his role in the multibillion-dollar scandal that would burden taxpayers into the twenty-first century
- the author's marriage survived the writing of the book and in June 2009 celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary