

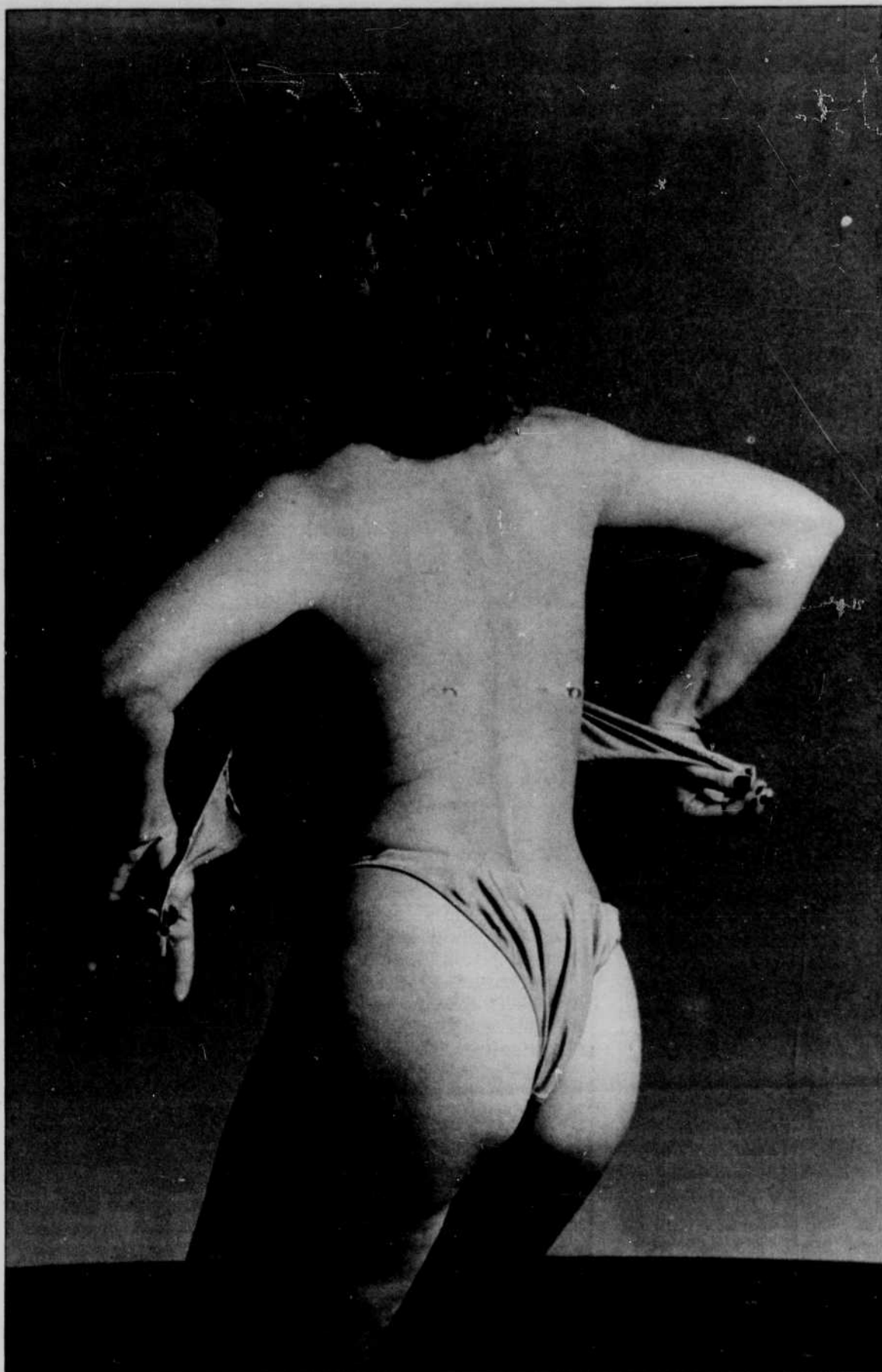


Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Rachel is one of four female exotic dancers employed by Entertainment Hotline. Her style mixes a mood of 'syrupy sexuality' and fun with the traditional dancing style of the stripper. Entertainment Hotline also has three male dancers who work for them.

is a double standard in becoming accepted as dancers and as businesswomen. "A lot of people think women have come a long way, and yes we have," says T.C., "but we're in an area where we still see the old book thrown in our face daily."

She has been open with her family — parents, husband, child — about what she does, but says, "It's real hard because relatives and friends are very, very judgmental. If I were a man, though, they'd be happy for me."

Entertainment Hotline also employs three male strippers. Male striptease, a phenomenon of the late 1970s that has been accepted in the '80s, is treated much differently by society. It's novelty and the tongue-in-cheek way that many dancers approach it has made it more acceptable as a form of entertainment.

Men who take off their clothes are not seen as desperate people selling their bodies, but as macho and fun-loving. Jeanette attributes part of this to the differing natures of men and women as audiences. Men, she

says, tend to get wrapped up in their sexual arousal and to be influenced by peer pressure, thus putting sexual pressure on the female dancer.

Female audiences, on the other hand, are more easily intimidated by the dancer himself because of social sex roles. When training male dancers, Jeanette tells them not to dance too close to the women because "it becomes a real fine line between a form of rape and entertainment."

She says female audiences can get a negative feeling of being overpowered by a male stripper. While most men request that female dancers strip to nude, Jeanette says, women prefer male dancers to strip to a G-string.

Gene, a free-lance male stripper, reflects on the differing attitudes about stripping. While Entertainment Hotline is struggling to legitimize its image, Gene approaches his part-time dancing as more of a fantasy fulfillment.

"I don't really need the money," he says. "I'm just do-

ing it as a fun thing. I work off my frustration from my professional job as a chemist."

He was drawn to stripping partly by the allure of taking off his clothes for a room full of appreciative women, and says he likes to feel that he can please them. He finds stripping "a real treat. It's time for ladies to have their turn; men have seen it for centuries. It's an expression of equal rights for women. I believe it's time for ladies to have fun like men have fun."

T.C. views stripping as an art; Gene sees it as good healthy fun. Both admit that there is a power struggle involved in taking off one's clothes in a society that bases so much on clothing. Maybe the positive attitudes reflected by these very different dancers will help reshape that society. If people like this can remove the exploitation that is often involved with exotic dancing, it may become a form of adult entertainment no more harmful than a good movie.

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