

U-LIFE Stripping for Dollars

IT'S 2 A.M. ON A SCHOOL NIGHT. The dimly lighted room reeks like someone tried to cover up the stale smell of a dirty ashtray with bourbon and Old Spice potpourri.

"All right now, gentlemen, start your engines and give it up for Lisa," says the DJ in his best used-car-salesman voice. With Whitesnake's "Here I Go Again" blaring over the speakers, Lisa* struts out from behind the red polyester curtains. For the next five minutes, she will take off her clothes for a bunch of sweaty, lonely guys, half of whom are no doubt named Earl.

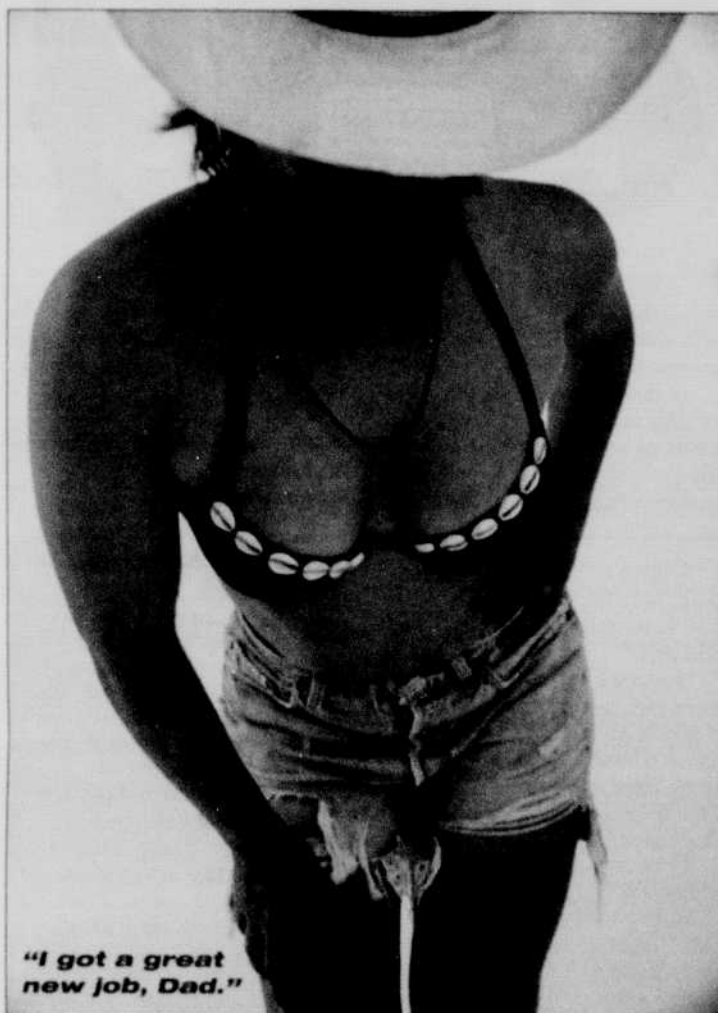
OFFBEAT

And all she can think about is that philosophy test she has in seven hours.

With new films like *Showgirls* and *Strip Tease* glamorizing the world of strippers, the perennially taboo subject is on America's mind. Most parents would go ballistic if they found out their daughter was putting herself through college as an exotic dancer. But some students see it as a fast way to pay tuition.

"Hell no, [my parents] don't know," says Lisa, an Austin Community College student who dances in Austin, Texas. "They think I have three jobs."

Kim*, another dancer in Austin, says that although the money is good, the stigma of exotic dancing can be a problem — when her boyfriend first found out about her job, he broke up with her. "He got over it, though," she says.



"I got a great new job, Dad."

Heidi Mattson, a '92 graduate of Brown U. and author of *Lvy League Stripper*, paid her college bills by stripping at Foxy Lady, a nightclub in Providence, R.I. Mattson says on a good night she earned \$900 in eight hours.

"It wasn't so horrible," Mattson says. "It was a practical option, and a lot of my financial crisis was taken care of in six weeks."

As one might guess, however, there are some risks that go along with the large amounts of money to be made in exotic dancing.

"One time I was doing a table dance, and this guy comes up behind me and grabs my breast," Lisa says in a tone of genuine disbelief. "I had a woman offer me \$2,000 to go home with her."

"I'm not planning on dancing much longer," she says. "I'm saving for massage therapy school. This is not a long-term thing."

Lisa hears the cue for her next turn on stage. The song is "Here I Go Again."

*Name has been changed.

Jason Spencer, U. of Texas, Austin
Photo: Kim Brent and Alyssa Banta / U. of Texas, Austin
Geri Sahn, U. of Massachusetts, Amherst, contributed to this story



Quest Expert: The Alien

On Stripping:
"I see no evil significance to the function of 'stripping' and have in fact visited these functions from time to time, for anatomical research purposes."



Licensed To Sell

YOU CAN DRINK FROM A U. of Miami beer mug or shot glass. You can wear that famous Miami orange from head to toe. You can protect yourself from the hot Florida sun with a Miami umbrella. But there's no way you can plant your cheeks on a Hurricane toilet seat.

Official licensing of college logos is big money for schools and big fun for fans, but some products step over the line.

ETC.

"We'll turn down anything that's in bad taste," says Charles Canfield, director of licensing at Miami. "We've tried to steer away from things that depict us as the stereotypical 'Suntan U.' And we turned down a request to put our name on toilet seats."

Budd Thalman, sports information director at Penn State U., says the Nittany Lions, too, think carefully before entering merchandise deals. "We shy away from attitude T-shirts and anything regarded as in bad taste," he says.

About \$2.5 billion of licensed college merchandise is sold annually in the United States. About \$100 million of that goes directly to the schools as royalty fees — revenue generally earmarked for use as athletic scholarships.

Canfield says Miami joined the licensing game in January 1984 and

grossed just \$6,000 its first fiscal year. But by last year, Miami's licensing proceeds had exploded to a whopping \$4.5 million.

The U. of Michigan reportedly generated the most licensing revenue last year — nearly \$5.8 million.

Miami operates its licensing agreements independently, but many schools prefer to hire licensing agents. The Collegiate Licensing Corp., which handles more than 150 schools, is the largest.

Although there is big money to be made through licensing, not all schools are making the big bucks. Eastern Illinois U. signed on with CLC this summer to protect its name rather than to generate huge sums of cash.

"There's a real misconception that all schools are out to make piles of money," says Steve Rich, EIU assistant athletic director. "Licensing allows us to control the way our name is used."

Unlike some of the larger schools, any revenue generated through EIU licensing is funneled directly to general academic scholarships and to a growing women's athletic program.

"We're not going to break the bank with this," Rich says. "But we know our name won't be used in a way that goes against our attitudes."

Does this mean no EIU Panther toilet seats? Only time will tell.

Tony Hansen, Michigan State U.
Photo by Somer Simpson, U. of Florida