

HUMOR

Well, Super Bowl Sunday has long passed, but the memory of Janet Jackson's "knocker shocker" lives on—not to mention the video.

Personally, I'm not surprised Jackson exposed herself in front of children—her brother has been doing it for years. And, even though I don't aspire to pierce my nipple with a Medieval apple corer, I do admire Ms. Jackson's audacity. You see, in addition to her breast, the pop diva also revealed she has no shame. I like that in a superstar—even if it makes her look like a pole dancer.

There's something wrong with a country that expresses outrage at seeing a boob on the boob tube but thinks nothing of watching 22 boobs pummel each other for hours on end. (Why is gratuitous violence OK, but not gratuitous sex?) So, in honor of the Breast in Show, I decided to indulge in some public wardrobe malfunctioning myself. And what better time to do it than Mardi Gras?

The term "Mardi Gras" is French for Fat Tuesday, marking the last day Catholics can gorge themselves before giving up meat and fats for Lent. In Italy, it's called "Carnevale," which literally means "meat (carne) goes (va)," but with so many of us on Atkins, it's should be "Carbovale."

Nowadays the whole thing has degenerated into a drunken bacchanal in which you expose yourself to strangers in exchange for plastic beads. It's kind of like being George Michael but without the entrapment. And my friend BoBo and I were more eager to earn beads than the Indians who sold Manhattan.



The Gospel According to Marc
by Marc Acito

Maximum exposure

What's so naughty about our naughty bits?

At Mardi Gras, women are at a distinct advantage. There's nothing like a cold February night to firm up a woman's bosom, but the winter chill causes men's genitalia to retreat into their bodies faster than Osama bin Laden ducking into a cave.

Ever resourceful, BoBo thought to preserve his largesse by means of a ring, and I don't mean the kind gay couples are exchanging in San Francisco. But these preparations made him late to meet me. "I would have been on time," he explained, "but just as I was getting it the right size my mother called."

He exhibited his handiwork by flashing me, and I reciprocated, giving new meaning to the term "double header." Together we toured a number of gay bars, and by last call we had inspected more meat than the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

But we didn't stop there. Being Catholic, BoBo and I wanted to celebrate both the sacred and the profane, and so the next day we went to Ash Wednesday services. We chose the Express Mass, which is for 10 sins or less, and we were in and out in a brisk 28 minutes. I guess the priests want to get through Mass as quickly as they can before someone slaps another lawsuit on them.

I received an especially heavy smudge on my forehead this year and was pleased when BoBo told me I had a nice ash. In the spirit of the Catholic martyrs, I didn't wash it off all day but, instead, risked acne in the T-Zone (because that's the kind of devout Catholic I am).

The point of this story is that I believe there is a place for exposing the human body in public life, despite the opinion of Attorney Generalissimo John Ashcroft, who spent \$8,000 of taxpayer money to cover up the wardrobe malfunction of an 18-foot statue. (Ironically, it's called "The Spirit of Justice.") I swear, Ashcroft is so uptight he can't even look at a chicken breast.

As far as I can see, Janet's "Nipplegate" is simply a tempest in a C-cup. It reminds me of the misplaced outrage vented at Bill Clinton. Here we had a president who

lied about a relationship (or, perhaps I should say, "fellationship") and nearly got kicked out of office. Now we have a leader who lied about a war and stands a good chance of getting re-elected. I ask you, which is worse: screwing an intern or screwing the country?

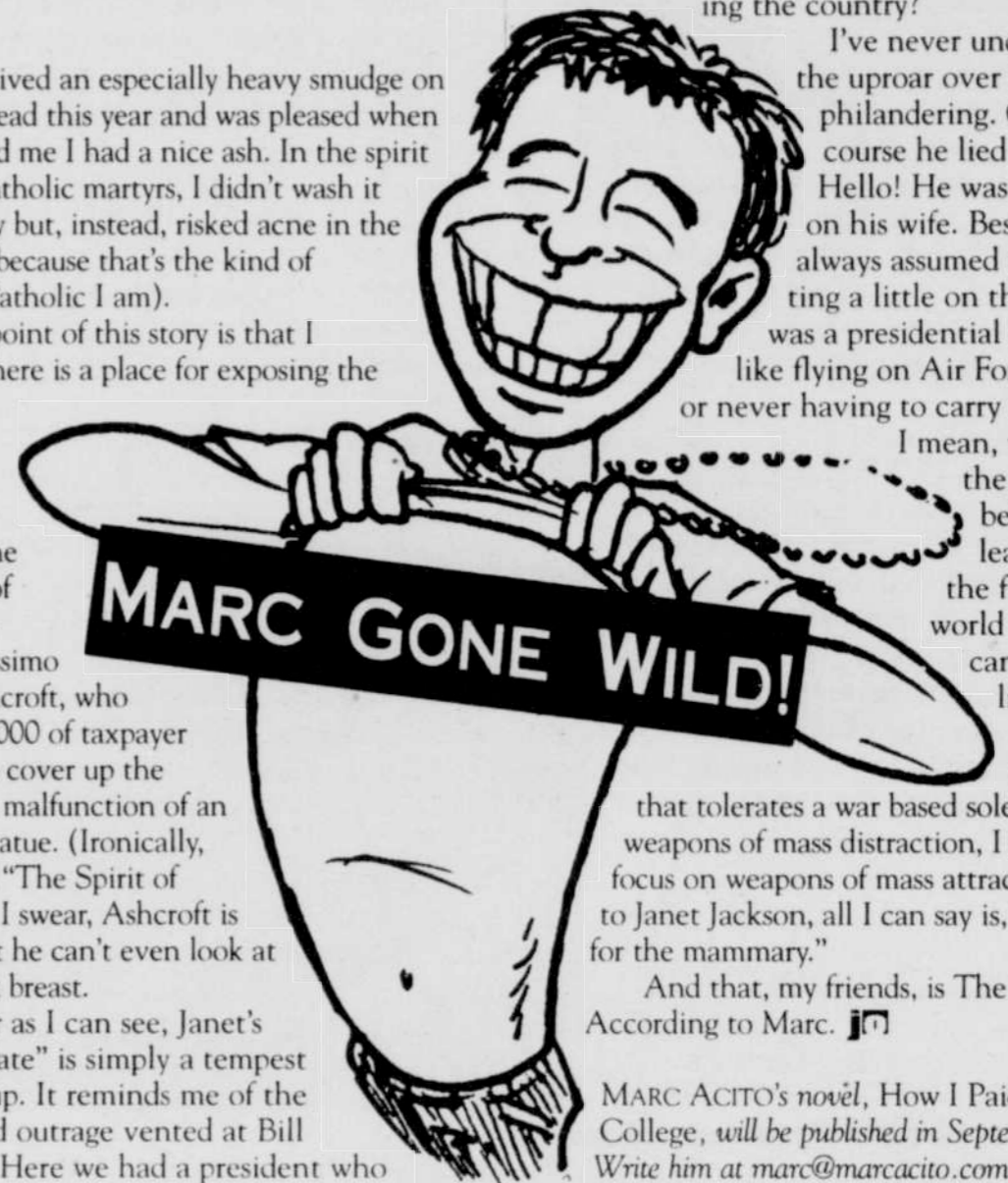
I've never understood the uproar over Bill's philandering. Of course he lied about it. Hello! He was cheating on his wife. Besides, I've always assumed that getting a little on the side was a presidential perk, like flying on Air Force One or never having to carry a wallet.

I mean, what's the point of being leader of the free world if you can't get a little tail?

In a culture that tolerates a war based solely on weapons of mass distraction, I prefer to focus on weapons of mass attraction. So to Janet Jackson, all I can say is, "Thanks for the mammary."

And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. **JM**

MARC ACITO's novel, *How I Paid for College*, will be published in September. Write him at marc@marcacito.com.



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