THE 21ST-CENTURY SOLDIER, PART 2:
Or, How I Got My Sorry Ass the Hell Out of the Army

BRITTANY MURPHY
A Woman We Love

Esquire

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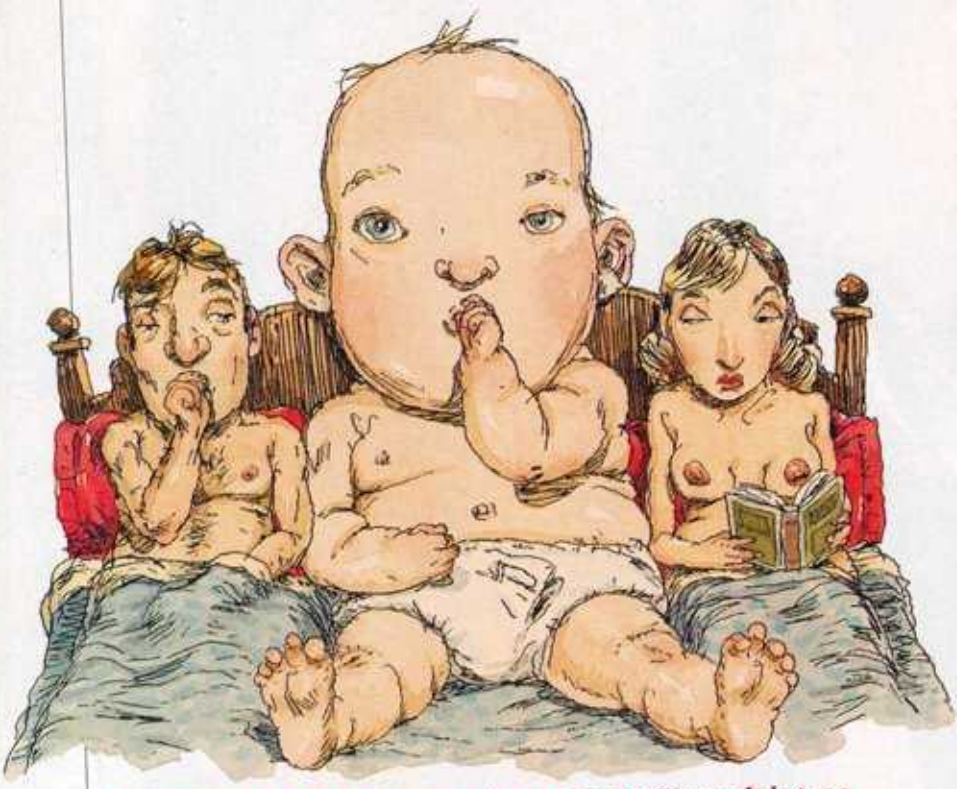
[Sex]

[BY STACEY GRENROCK WOODS]

■ You've got questions, she's got answers.



■ My wife gave birth six months ago and still won't let me near her. Could she really be that sore? After *six months*? Or is there something else going on here?

There's something else going on, all right, and I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if those *Desperate Housewives* were behind it. They're always up to something! Please know, however, that one in ten couples hasn't had sex by the baby's first birthday, so you're not alone. My calculations show that there are no fewer than four other guys at your Starbucks with the same problem. Dr. Valerie Davis Raskin, clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Chicago School of Medicine, suggests that you first rule out "some weird thing . . . like they left an instrument in there when they did a C-section." In a perfect world, that might well be the case, but it's more likely that your wife has no desire for sex, and there are as many reasons for that as there are colors of the rainbow—the sludge-gray-to-murky-beige rainbow, not the regular one. Why, there's anticipated pain, fear of getting pregnant, the vaginal dryness and hormonal changes that accompany breast-feeding, exhaustion, sleep deprivation, postpartum depression, aversion to the slightest touch—should I even go on? Some women also have a hard time equating motherhood with sexuality, but that is a situation easily remedied by watching that sidesplitting *American Pie* movie. The best thing for you to do is be patient, kind, understanding, kindly patient, understandingly kind, patiently understanding, and to patiently practice kindly understandingness. And check again for those forceps.

Viagra, Levitra, Cialis—so many options. What's a horny man with a boner problem to do? Which pill is best?

Out of respect for you, horny man, I will refrain from using this space to further any puerile "you say Viagra, I say Levitra"—style jesting. I think we've all had our fill of that. Here are the simple facts: Viagra and Levitra are basically the same; they start to work quickly but don't last as long as Cialis, which takes longer to get going but gives you a boning window of up to thirty-six hours. Variables like age, medical history, other medications you are taking, and ball circumference (not really) may make you a candidate for one drug and not another. Talk to your doctor.

I've heard that swinging is making a comeback among the young and hip. Is this true? And how do I make contact with these people?

One more thing about Viagra, Levitra, and Cialis: As with all medication, be sure to have your prescription filled by a reputable pharmacist. There has been some concern lately about the circulation of tainted or expired erectile-dysfunction pharmaceuticals since large shipments are frequently stolen. Authorities are presently looking for a band of hardened criminals.

Now, swinging has never really gone away, it's just that it has consistently failed to attract the type of patrons that anyone besides other swingers would want to have sex with. But that's not so anymore. It's not your father's swinging! Or even his and your mom's new friends'! Erotic clubs for the young and hip are popping and spurting up all over the place. One theory for swinging's resurgence is the influx of women in power positions, since a female-run club seems less intimidating and, of course, cleaner. One such woman is Palagia (rhymes with "pretension"), owner of One Leg Up NYC erotic parties, who puts applicants through a rigid screening process before they are allowed to pay to dance around in their underwear. "Basically there are six essay questions," she says. "You and your partner choose one, and then there are four mandatory questions that you have to answer along with providing your photograph." (There's also an essay on the New Deal that you can do for extra credit.) Palagia credits the success of One Leg Up not to its supercatchy name but to tight organization and stringent rules. "This is not like a lacrosse team," she says, confusing lacrosse with something else. And there's no funny business, either: If you're intoxicated or caught with drugs, you will be removed from the premises and your membership will be revoked. Hey! Just like the sixties! "I would tell my friends," says Palagia, recalling One Leg Up's humble beginnings, " 'This is going to change sexuality.' " When asked, Sexuality replied that, indeed, it felt completely different, and then it coughed a dry, hacking cough over and over again.

Got a sex question of your own? Send it to us via esquire.com/talk.

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN CUNO