

American Gigolo



So there's always a first time. If John Kerry wins in November, he will be the premiere president of this great country of ours to be also a gigolo.

The dictionary defines "gigolo" as a man supported by a woman in return for his sexual attentions and companionship. It might sound rough for John Kerry, but it's right to the point. Let's face it. The 44th president (maybe) is as close to a gigolo as I can think of, and I have known many. In fact, my best friend and best man for my first marriage to the beautiful French countess Cristina de Caraman, was the numero uno gigolo of his time, the fabled Porfirio Rubirosa.

Mind you, being a gigolo is no picnic. The "little woman," as the ultimate provider, has the last word. None of this "I am the man of the house" stuff applies. She who pays the bills decides, and if you don't believe me, become a fly on the wall of the Kerry household. Teresa got her moolah the old-fashioned way, she married into it, and so has Kerry. Even in his first marriage, to Julia Thorn, he was number two in the providing stakes.

In the United States, the word gigolo has lousy connotations. A man who lives off his wife is looked down upon by hard-working Americans used to making their own way. In decadent Europe, it's almost a compliment. Blenheim Palace was rescued earlier in the past century when the then Duke of Marlborough came over here and married the beautiful Consuelo Vanderbilt. She got a historic title, and he got a new roof for his palace and walking around cash. Alas, the union did not work out. They seldom do. Marlborough took Consuelo for

granted, a glorified cash machine. She walked. But the roof is still there, as are the trust funds for his descendants.

My friend Alexander Hesketh, ex-whip in the House of Lords before Tony Blair turned that wonderful upper house into a Tony's cronies yes-chamber, dines out on his grandfather's trip aboard his yacht to San Francisco. Old Lord Hesketh was desperate. His finances were in worse shape than his yacht, which sunk of dry-rot in the San Francisco harbor just as the wedding to a rich American heiress was sealed. Alexander and his brother are still enjoying the fruits of that particular merger.

Most gigolos I have known have been great charmers. Charm goes with the territory. Manliness, too. In America gigolos are seen as effete walkers of old ladies, but once upon a time, especially in the old continent, gigolos had not only to be good dancers, but also tough guys. Most of them were good athletes, polo players, race car drivers, and tennis players. Golfers made lousy gigolos. Too much time on the links. Rubi was a terrific polo player, a very competent racing driver, and a hell of a boxer. We used to work our polo ponies in the morning, have lunch in town (Paris), and then box a few rounds before dinner. He married three very rich ladies, Flor Trujillo, Doris Duke, and Barbara Hutton, took their money and spent it on beautiful, young, but poor women. (He also got a Dakota airplane, 80 suits, and a string of polo ponies.)

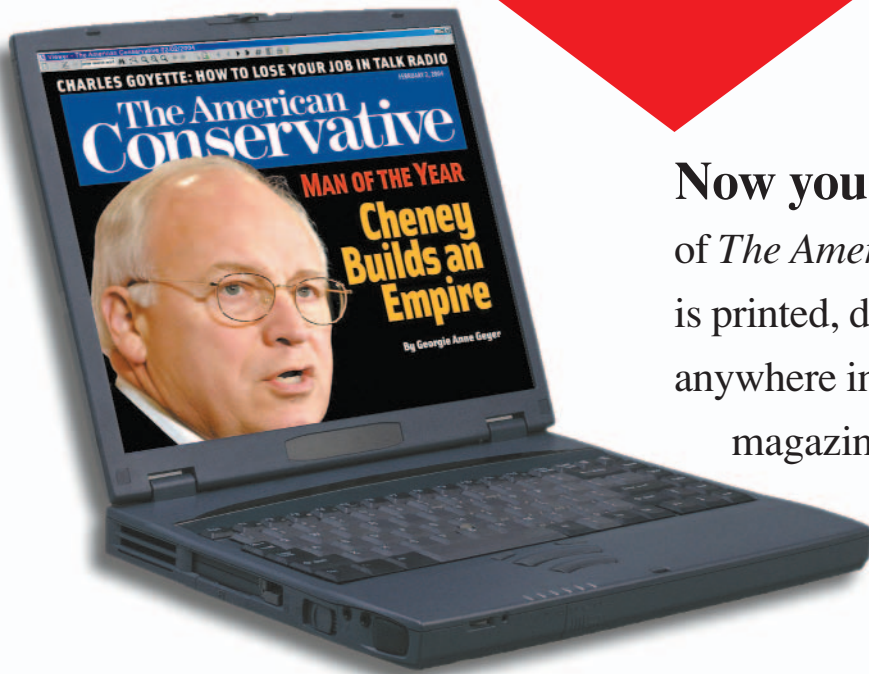
Like Kerry, Rubi picked up small bills

and left the big ones to the wife. Unlike Kerry, however, Rubi was a straight shooter. He openly sang "I'm a Gigolo," a popular French song of the time and admitted that he took from the rich and spent it on the poor. He was known never to lie to a man and never to tell the truth to a woman. Hear, hear! Kerry is the opposite. He has told more whoppers and flipped-flopped on more issues than any of the liars inside the Beltway, yet I somehow envision him telling the truth to women. "You must understand, dear Teresa, I love you madly but I cannot keep you in the style dear John did, so unless you're prepared to live like me, searching and searching for a place to live, however uncomfortably, we should not keep seeing each other..." Or words to that effect.

And of course it worked. An \$8 million Idaho chalet on five acres; a \$12 million Nantucket waterfront beach house; a \$6 million Washington, D.C. 23-room townhouse; a \$14 million, 90 acre Pennsylvania colonial compound; and a \$12 million Beacon Hill, Boston mansion just for starters. Not to mention the Gulfstream jet and other accessories those who were not born into them yearn for. Kerry's lies, and they are almost Clintonesque, are very significant in the context of his lifestyle. He will do and say anything to get his way, to hell with principles and standards.

Both Kerry and Clinton learned to lie early and often, and have continued the practice because it has served both men very well. When Clinton was elected, I was the first to refer to him not by his name but as the draft-dodger. If Kerry wins the prize, he will be known in this space as the gigolo, or Mr. Flip-Flop. Better yet, the flip-flop gigolo. ■

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