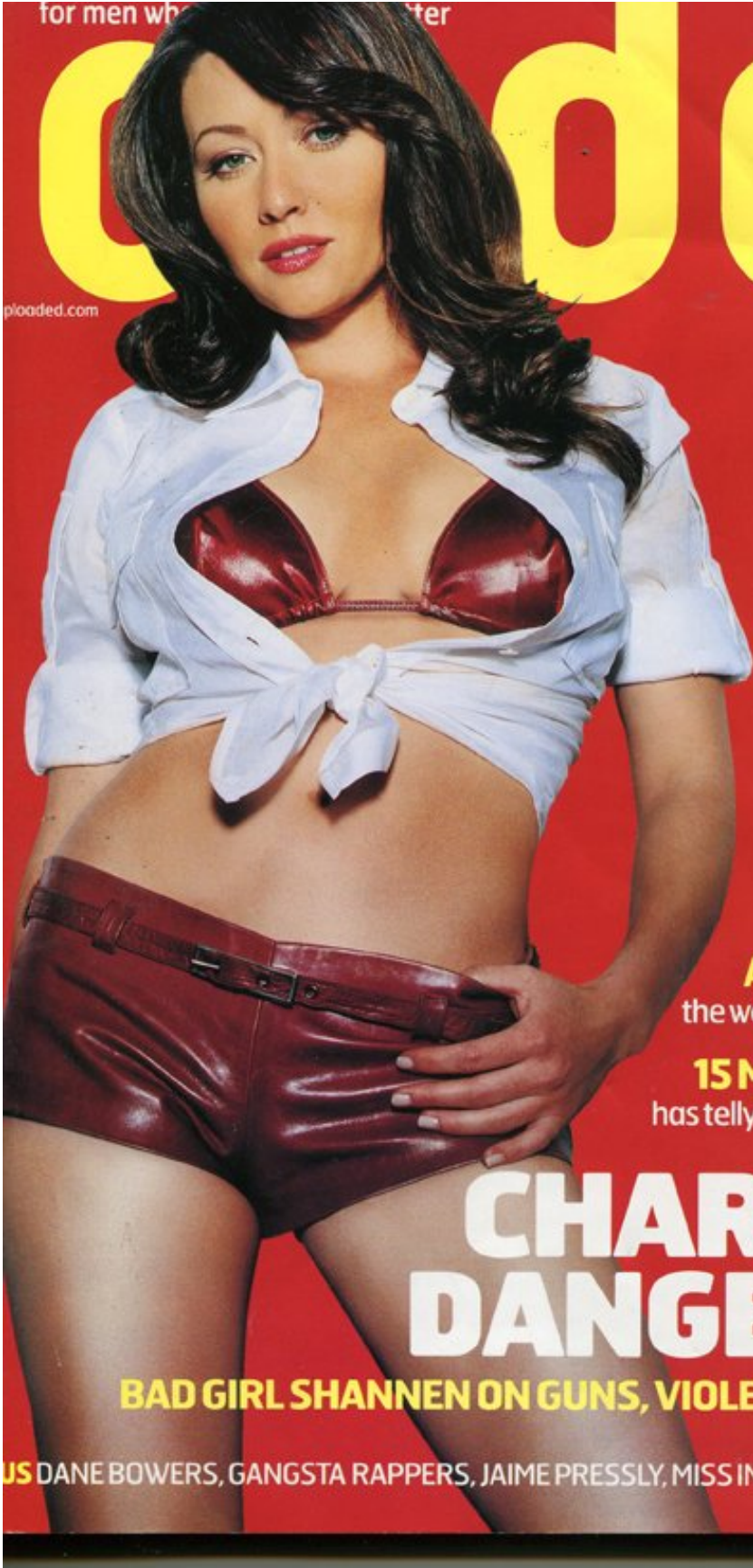


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## **BLOW ME!**

Johnny Depp shifts a mountain of coke

## **GAMBLING**

10 pages of high rollers, cheats and the man who won breast implants (for a bet)

## **IT'S BEHIND HER!**

26 great rears revealed

## **AMONG THE THUGS**

the world's hardest football fans

## **15 MINUTES OF SHAME**

has telly gone completely mental?

# **CHARMED & DANGEROUS**

**BAD GIRL SHANNEN ON GUNS, VIOLENCE AND REVENGE**

**US DANE BOWERS, GANGSTA RAPPERS, JAIME PRESSLY, MISS INDIANAPOLIS ON A FAST CAR**

Loaded Magazine, July 2001. Article "George Jung: The Inside Story"

filing out job applications. I was on the verge of being evicted from my apartment. Then Nic convinced me I should meet with his agent, and she sent me to read for a casting director who brought Wes Craven in. I read for Wes, and the next thing I knew I got the gig [*A Nightmare on Elm Street*]. So, yes, this is all Nic's fault. Nic's fault and Wes Craven's fault."

Are you ever tempted to do some big action blockbuster, just for the money?

"Oh, all the time. Absolutely. Only to the degree that it's fun to imagine what you could do with the money. You think, 'Wow, God, I could buy that island, or I could buy some great piece of art that's going to feed my eyes every day.' Whatever. It's fun to toy with the notion. It's very tempting, because money, unfortunately, is freedom in today's world."

For all the moodiness and his apparent desire to distance himself from the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, Depp's a bit of a good laugh on the set. He even turned up on *The Fast Show* last year, "ooh'ing with the 'suits you' tailors."

"I'm one of those people who's relentless on the set. I'm always the one who instigates the weirdness. Even in the deepest, darkest scene, I'm always the one trying to find the humour in it. To have fun with it, much to the chagrin of film-makers and the other actors -- it probably gets on their nerves."

Mind you, he won't be the only one mucking about on set...

"Michael Gambon was amazing like that," he recalls. "I remember on *Sleepy Hollow*, there was

## THE INEVITABLE ON HIS TONGUE



Depp frolics with a copper in *Blow*

this headless corpse. We do rehearsals and I go up and do my thing. Then we do a take, and I walk up to the corpse and lean down. Ichabod [*Depp's character*] is already really leery about getting near it. I lean down and suddenly... [*makes fart noise*] the corpse breaks wind. I fell over laughing. It was Gambon, he had an electronic fart machine. I was crying laughing."

So there you have it, Johnny Depp's guide to a happier existence. A fart, a laugh and being married to Vanessa Paradis, and suddenly life doesn't seem so bad. ■

*Blow* is in cinemas nationwide now.



## GEORGE JUNG: THE INSIDE STORY

The man who introduced Charlie to the US gives us the blowdown

**"F**UCKING CRAZY! IT WAS JUST FUCKING CRAZY!" GEORGE LIGHTS another cigarette and shakes his head. "I mean, you can take the most normal, straight-laced woman, turn her onto cocaine and she could be married and she doesn't want to leave you. Fuck it. I used to call escort services and put a pound of cocaine on the coffee table in the hotel suite. They used to show up. They'd quit!" →

story by DOMINIC STREATFEILD

loaded 77

We're sitting in the visiting area of the Federal Correctional Institute in Otisville, New York, and George Jung – smuggler, raconteur, inmate, outlaw, fondler of women (especially fondler of women) – is telling me his life story.

It's an extraordinary story. So extraordinary, in fact, that it's been turned into the film *Blow*, starring Johnny Depp as George. But the truth is better. George exhales a plume of smoke, stubs his cigarette out and immediately lights another. Then he explains how it all happened.

**W**HEN GEORGE JUNG GRADUATED IN THE EARLY 1960s, his high-school yearbook listed his future aspiration as 'business administrator'. As it turned out, it was an extremely prescient prediction. Only, the business he chose to administrate in was narcotics. He did try to go straight, but the problem was that going straight wasn't that interesting. He worked construction sites, carrying bricks and laying foundations. It was cold, it was boring and he wasn't making any money. Then he had an idea.

"I worked a couple of jobs in construction, this and that, in the winter and the whole fucking thing, with Tuna – he's my buddy, and he's like John Belushi in *Animal House* – and I said, 'This sucks, Tuna.' And he said, 'Yeah, it does suck.' And I said, 'Let's go to California!'"

George and Tuna bought a battered car and drove across the US. When they arrived in California, they shut off the ignition and looked around – and their eyes were opened.

"It was like going to a fantasy world. Like, 'Holy Shit! What's happening out here?' The women, the bathing suits... it was a make-believe world. You'd only read about it, or heard about it. And I didn't smoke cigarettes or anything like that, so to smoke pot I had to make a water-pipe and fill it with crème de menthe and ice cubes to inhale it. One thing led to another, and soon we were smoking pot all the time and taking

Beach, California, and gave it to their girlfriends (who were invariably airline stewardesses) to fly back to Massachusetts. But then they decided to move up a level...

"We thought, 'This is crazy. Let's just start driving the stuff.' So we'd load up motorhomes with 1,000lb, 2,000lb – stuff it in there, drive it across the country, listening to Jimi Hendrix, smoking pot all the way. Nobody really knew what the hell was going on. The police were unaware, it was happening so fast. Every kid in America was getting turned on, and they didn't know what the fuck was happening."

The police might not have known what was happening, but George did. Realising there was more money to be made by picking the grass up

In 1974, however, things went wrong. George, who had by now been arrested a couple of times and skipped bail, was turned in to the authorities. By his own mother. Not that this was a bad thing. Because it was in jail that he really found himself. He lights another cig and continues...

"I went to Danbury in Connecticut, which was like a country club – it was all white-collar crime. It was a crime school for upper-class criminals. And they had some big-time smugglers there. They were really good guys. It was great! And that was where I met Carlos."

Carlos Lehder Rivas was a Colombian car thief who had been caught shipping stolen vehicles back home and reselling them via his brother's car dealership, 'Autos Lehder'. But Carlos →



Jung (Depp, left) frolics with Carlos Lehder, the man who introduced him to cocaine

## "WE'D LOAD UP WITH 2,000LB OF POT AND DRIVE IT ACROSS THE COUNTRY"

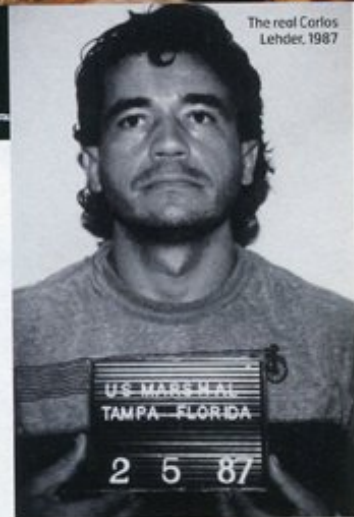
LSD, and suddenly our whole perspective on everything changed.

"A friend of mine, Frank, stopped by, and we had this punchbowl full of pot – everybody did. You could buy it for \$60 a kilo in southern L.A. from Mexico. So he looked at it and said, 'Where'd you get that? How much did it cost?' I said, '\$60'. He said, 'THE WHOLE THING? Do you know how much we can get for that back at U Mass? \$300!' And I said, 'Let's go into business, Frank!'"

Having managed to dodge the Vietnam draft by deliberately getting himself arrested with a pile of marijuana, George teamed up with Tuna and Frank and began transporting Mexican weed across the USA. At first they bought the dope from a friend called Richard Barile in Manhattan

in Mexico and flying it into the US in light aeroplanes, he bought a single-engined Cherokee 6 and started flying the stuff from Puerto Vallarta to California then driving it back east – and started seeing more money than he had ever dreamed of. He rented a big house on the beach, hired a couple of pilots and supervised operations from the patio, drinking margaritas with the woman of the moment.

"We were getting the grass for 8-10 dollars a kilo, so we were making a lot. Plus, we were on an adventure. And that's what it was really about. I was about 26, there on the patio with my girlfriends, drinking margaritas, the money pouring in. I thought it was some fantasy world. It was! Everybody else was back in Weymouth shovelling snow!"



The real Carlos Lehder, 1987

was more than just a two-bit car thief. He had ambition.

When Carlos discovered that George had aeroplanes and reliable distribution networks in the US, he asked him whether he had ever heard of cocaine. Cocaine, he said, was much more profitable than marijuana. Grass netted George a profit of about \$250 per kilo; coke would net about \$45,000 per kilo. What's more, it was far more compact and easier to transport. To cap it all, Carlos came from a city in Colombia called Medellin. Where, it turned out, he had a number of influential friends – one of whom was a certain former car thief by the name of Pablo Escobar. So, he suggested, they should team up, pooling his Colombian contacts and George's distribution networks. Jung leapt at the chance.

"I knew about cocaine but nobody was doing it. Nobody. I hadn't tried it. Nobody that I knew had. No one. I said, 'I can fly it, I can transport it out of Col.' And he said, 'Do you think you can sell it in the United States?' And I said, 'Yeah, I can sell it. Unlimited amounts!' I didn't know if I could sell it!"

Following their release in 1976, George and Carlos arranged their first move: 15 kilos, through Antigua. George's take on the deal was 5kg, four of which he sold for \$180,000. The fifth he kept for himself.

"I tried it the minute I got my hands on it. When it came in from Antigua, I split the suitcases open and started snorting it, and I said, 'This shit's great. This is fucking wonderful!' And I never stopped."

Following a bumper 50kg move in August 1977, George and Carlos moved into a flat on Miami Beach and began distributing charlie big-time, selling it though George's old marijuana dealer in California, Richard Barile. By the end of the year, George was carrying 50kg a week from Florida to California, taking \$5m back to Miami each time. He began using a lot of coke himself, and getting a bit messed up in the head.

"I was really in love with being an outlaw. I proclaimed to people: 'I'm a fucking outlaw!' One time I was on a plane coming from LA and I was in first class, and I met this guy and he was like, 'What do you do?' The plane had just taken off. I said, 'Come on upstairs. I'm gonna tell you a story, the greatest story you ever heard.' And he said, 'OK.' And we sat upstairs, and for five hours I told him a story, my whole life story – like I'm telling you right now.

"The plane landed and he said, 'Jesus Christ, the five hours just went by. Unbelievable! What do you really do?' And I said, 'I work for IBM.'"

**A**S THE COCAINE MARKET OPENED UP IN THE 1980s, however, things began to change. It became obvious that taking large amounts of the drug was not just a bit silly but a bit bloody dangerous. As the industry generated more and more money, so everyone began carrying

guns – and using them. Suddenly, the good times were over.

"Everybody was fucking nuts. I mean really crazy. Their personalities, ideologies changed completely – the irrationality, the paranoia, the violence, the insanity, the deceit... people were dropping dead."

And as the dealing moved to higher and higher levels, so the violence increased, and representatives of the Colombian networks began killing each other. In order to survive, it was necessary to keep moving. But George had had enough and wanted out. He didn't want to move up any further.

"I said to Carlos, 'Let's stay like this. Let's just transport it, let Richard market it. 300kg is \$3m a trip. Tax-free. You do a hundred trips, or 50, it's more money than you



George pictured in prison last year



Below: Richard Barile, George's California distributor, frolics with some stoned blondes

## "EVERYBODY WAS NUTS. PERSONALITIES CHANGED, PEOPLE WERE DROPPING DEAD"

ever saw in your life, or ever will see, and we can just stop and disappear and go off and do what you want forever. Put it in a Swiss bank account at fucking 20 per cent interest and live off the money like a king."

But they couldn't. There was just too much money involved. Carlos double-crossed George, moving directly through Barile and cutting him out of the loop altogether. He then purchased an island in the Caribbean and set up an industrial-scale cocaine pipeline to the US. George, meanwhile, ended up hopelessly addicted to the drug, suffered a heart attack, got caught with 660lb of it and went to jail. For a long time.

The man who has, by his own account, made \$100m out of cocaine and lost it all, is less than enthusiastic about the drug today.

"I won't be hypocritical about it because this shit is evil. I mean, nobody thinks its evil in the beginning but if you have money and access to it, it'll destroy you. I used it tremendously. At first it was just to keep awake, to do the business. Then it was a habit... It will destroy you. If it doesn't drive you nuts it'll kill you physically. It rips your system to pieces. It'll destroy your liver."

And yet, thinking back, a smile crosses his face.

"It used to drive me sexually. I used to get really horny. I wanted to screw anybody on the planet. And women fucking LOVE it. All they want to do is fuck on cocaine. They lose their whole morality. What more could you want than having all the cocaine in the world and all the fucking money, and you can have all the women in the world? Everyone. Everyone's fucking wife, girlfriend, everybody. C'mere!"

Fair point. But then again, you might like to be able to sleep at home – in your own bed, instead of in a cage in upstate New York – at some point in the next 13 years. ■

*Cocaine: An Unauthorised Biography by Dominic Streatfeild is published by Virgin at £20.*



Pablo Escobar, 1984