books



9/12 YEARS BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR: A MITCHELL BROTHERS STRIPPER REMEMBERS HER LOVER ARTIE MITCHELL, HUNTER S. THOMPSON, AND THE KILLING THAT ROCKED SAN FRANCISCO

Simone Corday Mill City Press, Inc., 2007 364 pgs. \$17.95

In 9 1/2 Years Behind the Green Door, readers are taken back to 1980s San Francisco and into the world of Simone Corday, a stripper working during the heyday of the infamous Mitchell Brothers O'Farrell Theater. Opened as an X-rated movie theater by brothers Jim and Artie Mitchell, the O'Farrell was and remains one of America's oldest, most notorious adult-entertainment establishments. This nightspot was the major force behind the normalization of lap dancing in strip clubs nationwide. Corday's memoir is a lengthy peek at the lives of the theater's management and employees, most notably her lover of ten years, Artie Mitchell.

The first section of the book records Corday's many emotions as she auditions at the O'Farrell Theater, begins working, and forms her first impressions of Artie. Through the next several chapters, we are introduced to the sexually charged dynamics of the theater, and its routines and rituals. Corday reveals the names of some of the celebrities who frequented the venue, including Sammy Davis, Jr., Huey Newton, R. Crumb, and the band Aerosmith. Cool recollections

of porn star Marilyn Chambers and an early Missy (the star of *Behind the Green Door*, the Sequel) feel much like the blasé recital of the latest Katie Holmes sighting from your favorite jaded New York friend—gossipy and entertaining for their ordinary, unpolished delivery.

During her stay at the theater, Corday participated in the shooting of Behind the Green Door, the Seguel and weathered the dramas associated with the productions of The Grafenberg Girls Go Fishing (featuring Tracey Adams and Sharon Mitchell among others), The Crazy Never Die (with Hunter S. Thompson) and another little-known film called Missy's Guidelines to Safer Sex, which was originally to be marketed toward high school and college students. Both The Green Door sequel and Missy's Safer Sex were box-office poison that, as Corday relates, "sat [along] with the brothers' dreams for the video potential of safe sex, in tall, unwanted stacks at the [back of the] O'Farrell." The rest of the book focuses on what passed as romantic and domestic life for Corday and Artie, including his increasingly erratic behavior, numerous infidelities, and escalating drug use. The book ends with Corday's account of Artie's murder at the hands of his brother, Jim, and relies heavily on newspaper reporting of the incident mixed with her own personal knowledge of the brothers.

9 1/2 Years Behind the Green Door falls into the long and illustrious tradition of stripper memoirs: Just as much of the great Gypsy Rose Lee's writing was centered on her mother, Rose, Behind the Green Door's heart is Artie Mitchell. However, while Rose was presented as a tough, complicated character, Corday's blow-by-blow narration of Artie's actions, their private conversations, and many sexual encounters, lack similar depth. Perhaps this flaw in the book is less the fault of the writer's than of the scanty material that made up the man. Though clearly alluring to the author, the Artie Mitchell of 9 1/2 Years Behind the Green Door is barely intriguing to the reader, who more and more frequently will need to pass over repeated evidence of his shallow, abusive personality in order to savor the rest of book.

That said, the detailed descriptions of Corday's novelty acts will entertain and nourish those interested in strip performance, just as the intimate tidbits about the production of several of the brothers' films will intrigue the porn history enthusiast. Finally, current and former strippers will find the nuances of the strip club and the interactions among dancers to be interesting, warm, and familiar. Overall, while 9 1/2 Years Behind the Green Door probably won't leave the reader sharing Corday's interest for Artie, it certainly will leave them with a deep respect for what a tough badge of honor being an O'Farrell girl in the 80s truly was.

—Shakti Ziller



YOU KNOW YOU LOVE IT: LESSONS IN SEXUAL MISCHIEF

llona Paris Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, 2008 240 pgs

Ilona Paris gives the impression that professional domination is a fast buck, all clients are potential sex partners, and setting up your own dungeon is as easy as the snap of the whip. Maybe it would be if we were all wealthy white women. A renowned sex therapist, she throws off the confines of conventional sex and invites the reader to follow her on a Hollywood-scripted journey through the world of sexual deviance.

If you are just tickled to death by Cathy comics, think ice cubes are naughty, and domination is an exotic kink you have never dared to try, than you might enjoy this book. I would not, however, recommend it because there is no mention of safety precautions whatsoever. For example, her first soiree into the realm of kink is answering a personals ad for