



Not many actresses have to go through the ignominy Andie MacDowell suffered on her first film. The ex-Elite model (she still represents L'Oréal in Europe) landed the role of Jane in Hugh Hudson's *Greystoke: The Legend Of Tarzan, Lord Of The Apes*. But her Southern accent – she was born in South Carolina – was so pronounced that Glenn Close's voice was dubbed over hers. At 25, her acting career looked over before it had begun.

Then, four years later, she rebounded with *sex, lies, and videotape*, winning acclaim as a sexually repressed housewife. MacDowell has since racked up a slate of hit romantic comedies, including *Four Weddings And A Funeral* and *Groundhog Day*. But the 43-year-old plays very different roles in her new films: the younger man/older woman romance *Crush* and war drama *Harrison's Flowers*. Now single, MacDowell has three children from her marriage to Paul Qualley.

You've got two movies coming out, but you're not playing a comic role in either. That'll throw your fans.

One of the films, *Harrison's Flowers*, is about a woman who goes through the Bosnian war to find her husband – a missing photojournalist. I don't remember the statistics exactly (I've had a couple of glasses of champagne today, so my brain's not working real straight!), but a very high number of journalists went missing during the war. It was an incredible part for me because I was the hero – there aren't many roles where the woman saves a man.

And last summer you were in the UK filming *Crush*. You also made *Four Weddings And A Funeral* and *The Object Of Beauty* here. Are you planning on moving over? I love England. I love the Cotswolds.

I rode my bike a lot and took my kids out on bike rides. I love London; I think it's a beautiful city. It's very elegant, the parks are clean, it's got great restaurants. And I like Marmite. But then I'm weird. I don't eat it like most people. You'll probably be disgusted when I tell you what I like to do...

You spoon it straight out of the jar?

No, I like a really good cup of tea, steeped properly, and white toast with Marmite (and here's the gross part) and marmalade. It's the salt and the sweet! And it's my thing and I'm sorry and I like it and it's really good together.

So when your co-stars come in for a clinch, they get the full flavour of Marmite and marmalade. Yum! Who was a better kisser: Miss Piggy or Hugh Grant?

[Laughs] People are always trying to get me to say who I prefer as a co-star – John Malkovich, Gerard Depardieu, Michael Keaton... or Hugh Grant! And I can't, because I feel blessed to have had each experience. But Miss Piggy is one of the best actresses I've ever worked with [laughs again]. She's great. I'm a little jealous of her.

You're being very polite and demure, even after two glasses of champagne. Are you raunchier on screen?

I tell you what, I'm pretty shocked with what I do in *Crush*. I saw it and went, 'Oh God...' It's nothing I'd have done, but it's something the character would do.

Oh c'mon – what could be so embarrassing?

I have an affair with a very young guy – he's 23. I sleep with him the first time

I meet him, on a tombstone. I haven't played a part before where I was so open sexually. Even when I see it now, I blush.

Aren't you pleased the film changed its name from *Sad Fuckers Club*?

When I first heard it, I was like 'What? I can't do something called that!' But when you read the script, you understand the title, although I think people would have misinterpreted it as being distasteful.

I really wanted the role, and I had a meeting with the director, John McKay, and explained that I understood this character because I was a sad fucker. I'm single and dating right now and it's horrible. [She split from former model Paul Qualley, her husband of 13 years, in 1999.] I have strong feelings for what it is to be single and lonely. I have three kids and a great job, so I focus on that right now, but I'd like to have somebody.

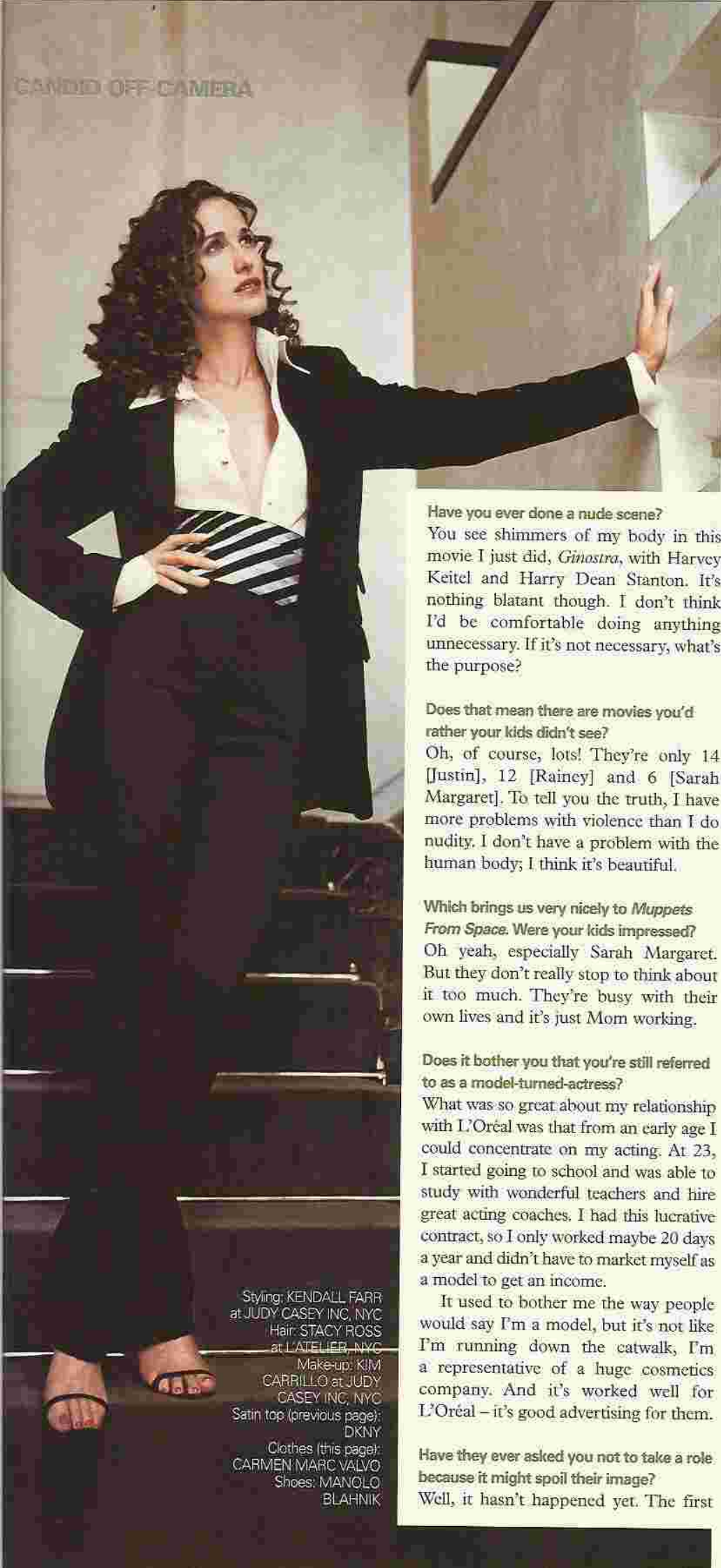
Is dating more difficult when you're famous?

I guess there's always going to be some confusion about my job. Inside, I'm the same person I always was and I never anticipated having so much. But being famous kind of makes you a weird person. Hopefully if I get to know somebody they'll help me with it – not be intimidated by it. They'll maybe put their arm around me and tell me everything is going to be OK. That's what my kids do. My kids are the best. I love being a mother. It's the greatest part of my life by far.

So would you like to date a younger man?

I've had young guys come on to me and I can't do it. I wouldn't want to embarrass my kids, so I wouldn't allow myself to be attracted to a younger man. >

# ANDIE MACDOWELL



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**Have you ever done a nude scene?**

You see shimmers of my body in this movie I just did, *Ginostra*, with Harvey Keitel and Harry Dean Stanton. It's nothing blatant though. I don't think I'd be comfortable doing anything unnecessary. If it's not necessary, what's the purpose?

**Does that mean there are movies you'd rather your kids didn't see?**

Oh, of course, lots! They're only 14 [Justin], 12 [Rainey] and 6 [Sarah Margaret]. To tell you the truth, I have more problems with violence than I do nudity. I don't have a problem with the human body; I think it's beautiful.

**Which brings us very nicely to *Muppets From Space*. Were your kids impressed?**

Oh yeah, especially Sarah Margaret. But they don't really stop to think about it too much. They're busy with their own lives and it's just Mom working.

**Does it bother you that you're still referred to as a model-turned-actress?**

What was so great about my relationship with L'Oréal was that from an early age I could concentrate on my acting. At 23, I started going to school and was able to study with wonderful teachers and hire great acting coaches. I had this lucrative contract, so I only worked maybe 20 days a year and didn't have to market myself as a model to get an income.

It used to bother me the way people would say I'm a model, but it's not like I'm running down the catwalk, I'm a representative of a huge cosmetics company. And it's worked well for L'Oréal - it's good advertising for them.

**Have they ever asked you not to take a role because it might spoil their image?**

Well, it hasn't happened yet. The first

time I worked for L'Oréal was 22 years ago, before I'd even done *sex, lies, and videotape*. Wow, 22 years, that's scary! I think actually it's to my credit that I'm 43 and still allowed to be accepted as being beautiful, and I think it's to the credit of other women who are 43 that they're allowed to be accepted as sexy and beautiful. I have an aunt who's 85 and she just had to choose between two boyfriends. If she's got two guys beating down her door, age can't be that bad.

**If you could go back in time and talk to yourself at 25, what would you advise?**

Too many things; not to worry about what other people think; to believe in myself; to trust my instincts; not to be hard on myself. I told my son Justin - and I think this is the greatest thing you can tell a teenager - never to say anything ugly about somebody else, because what comes out of your mouth is who you are, and if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it.

**What scares you the most?**

I have a fear of heights. Being away from my children, I worry. I'm afraid of flying, and I do it all the time.

**That's a tricky one in your line of work.**

I pray every time I get on a plane. I get nervous in turbulence, on take-off and on landing, mostly because of the responsibility I feel towards my children.

**If you could change one thing about your body, what would it be?**

I'm in better shape now than I was in my twenties. I think we need to accept ourselves and all our imperfections. And I have loads of them, but you might not notice them if I don't say what they are.

**What music would you want at your funeral?**

See, now I'm nervous that I'm gonna die on the airplane on the way home [laughs]. Um, Marvin Gaye, *Let's Get It On*. And maybe something romantic and religious. I like church. It makes me feel at peace, calm.

Aren't you sick of talking to me yet?

**Are you sick of talking?**

No, but I'd rather talk about you.

I don't think *eve* readers would go for that. [He was right.] ☺

*Crush* will be released in late October, and Harrison's *Flowers* will be released later this year.