

HEARTBREAK. **HOOKERS** AND THE LORD: THE LAST HONEST MAN IN **HOLLYWOOD** 

BUTCH BELAIR

lead in Liz Smith's column yesterday), furtively exchanging dish.

On February 19, in a development only less surprising than Michael and Lisa Marie's split, Sheen announced that he was divorcing his wife of five and a half months, model Donna Peele. That he married Peele less than six weeks after turning in his most arresting performance to date — as the star witness in the prosecution of Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss (during which he testified, between furious gulps of water and sweaty tugs at his collar, that he'd spent more than \$53,000 on 27 trysts with her employees) - is reason enough for all the whispering. But further enhancing today's head-turning entrance are new reports that Sheen has returned to his old bad-boy habits of visiting strip clubs (which he denies), dating porn stars (which he kind of denies) and resuming his friendship with former O.J. houseboy Kato Kaelin (which he proudly proclaims never ended).

He's tough to miss today in his electricblue Versace jacket (left over from his salad days as a celebrity endorser), the dazzle of which is diminished only by a prominent,

light-reflecting Rolex and a diamond-studded pinkie ring (emblazoned with the initials C, for Charlie, and M, for Machine - a nickname bestowed upon him by awed pals for his sexual and partying prowess). Negotiating a steady, if not self-conscious, course through the battle zone, Sheen settles on a table near enough the patio for an aprèsmeal smoke. A recluse of late, the 30-yearold actor proves just how far his social skills have fallen when he attempts to make small talk with the waitress, who misinterprets an offhand remark as a dig at her serving ability. "You should try it sometime," she says icily. "What makes you think I haven't?" he replies, referring, unbeknownst to her, to his weekly stints at his father's soup kitchen. "I understand," she snaps back. "I saw Terminal Velocity."

While Sheen himself holds the 1994 Disney flop partially responsible for his current career slide, he's not exactly thrilled to hear that theory espoused by a bad waitress in the Valley. "That's just uncalled for!" he bellows after she's gone. "I'm a guest in this establishment, and I don't need to be insulted like that!" Calming down, he admits he's a little

REMOVING HIS SHADES, HIS EYES NARROWING beneath the brim of a Cincinnati Reds baseball cap, Charlie Sheen enters a San Fernando Valley restaurant and cases the room, looking for a place to smoke. All eyes are on him. Waiters exchange a subtle code of nods and glances indicating not only that a celebrity is among them but one with impressive tabloid credentials. Diners, accustomed to the presence of notables in these parts, linger behind menus in that patented L.A. tactic of looking the other way while actually appraising appearance, assessing career and, in the case of a ringer like Sheen (for God's sake, he was the sensitive, adding that earlier this afternoon someone who identified himself as one of his "biggest fans" then blindsided him with the question "So when are you going to start making good movies again?"

The slights cut deep. Sheen's career, once among the most promising in young Hollywood, with his back-to-back megavoltage roles in Oliver Stone's Platoon ('86) and Wall Street ('87), has taken a precipitous dive. After two more hits, Major League ('89) and Hot Shots! ('91), in which he redefined himself as a comic actor, the son of seminal '70s star Martin Sheen has hit a long, hard dry spell. The much-hyped sequels to both Hot Shots! and Major League didn't fare nearly as well as their predecessors, and 1993's highly anticipated The Three Musketeers, despite screen-stud co-stars Kiefer Sutherland and Chris O'Donnell, also fizzled at the box office. Sheen's luck didn't improve the following year, with both The Chase and, as the waitress noted, Terminal Velocity crashing and burning upon release.

David Twohy, the writer-producer of *Velocity* (he also wrote *The Fugitive*), believed in Sheen enough to cast him again, this time against type, in his own film directorial debut, next month's sci-fi thriller *The Arrival*. "On the surface he wasn't the most appropriate choice to play the role of a radio astronomer," admits Twohy, "but I knew he had it in him. I know Charlie is capable of more than most people give him credit for."

For his part, Sheen says he just needs another shot at a good dramatic role. "I didn't show up to be a comedian, you know," he says, referring to the *Major League* and *Hot Shots!* franchises. "I'd like to shock people into remembering where I came from." Whatever the case, he isn't working enough to his liking (although he has *The Shadow Conspiracy* slated for fall, and he provided the voice for Charlie the dog—a "gift" to his 11-year-old daughter, Cassandra—in last month's animated *All Dogs Go to Heaven* 2) and realizes the necessity of good reaction to *The Arrival*.

Regrettably, the actor's most talked-about performance took place offscreen at last summer's Fleiss trial (for which he was granted immunity), the biggest sex scandal to rock Hollywood since Fatty Arbuckle was accused of raping a starlet in 1921. To be fair, though, Sheen is hardly the only well-known actor to engage in such extracurricular activities (see Tiffany's chapter in the latest hooker tome, *You'll Never Make Love in This Town Again*). He just had the temerity to pay for his pleasures with signed traveler's checks.

Whether that has anything to do with his

career dip is anyone's guess, but Sheen has his theories, of course, and he isn't shy to air them. In fact, over the course of this two-day interview, he never pleaded the fifth — even when his publicist practically shouted at him to shut up. "I told the truth, and I'm not ashamed of the truth," he explains.

"That's what I love about Charlie: He's just so wonderfully honest," says his sister, actress Renee Estevez. "I think he really knows who he is, and he doesn't feel like he has anything to hide." Even, she adds, when he has everything in the world to lose: "He's always been open about his actions. Whether it's good or bad, he owns everything he does." You haven't done an interview in a while.

I don't really remember the last one, but I'm sure it was a disaster.

Well, it was two years ago in 'Movieline,' and it became pretty infamous because you took a number of your peers to task for their acting skills. You were particularly unkind to Keanu

Reeves. I just want to tell you what he told a colleague at 'US' when she asked him about that. He smiled and said, sincerely, "I think Charlie's a great actor, and I love reading his interviews. I think he's very funny." Your response?

[Beaming] That's incredible! My hat's off to him, because he had every right to say, "To hell with Sheen." I have the right to believe what I want about somebody's work, but I don't have the right to pass public judgment. That displays an absence of class, an absence of respect on my part. I'd like to apologize to Keanu for that. You haven't run into him since then?

No, man, and it's a good thing, too. He'd probably kick the s--- out of me.

You've had the s--- kicked out of you this year anyway, right?

It's been radical. I'm out there fighting a war. Who's the enemy?

That's the problem. I'm not sure. If I knew that, if I had a crystal-clear image of that, maybe I could plan my attack differently. Let's go through a list of things that have been written about you in just the past few days. Tell me what's true and what isn't.

OK, but you have to believe me when I tell you that when I knew there was going to be a lot of heat [after the divorce was announced] I turned to a very good friend of mine and said, "It's about to get hairy. What do you recommend?" He said, "Go with some bliss. Try ignoring it." I said, all right, I'll give it a shot. So I'm not really sure [what's been reported]. I honestly don't know all the details. Well, yesterday's item was that a stripper named

Charity said that you paid for her breast implants.

Really? Damn, if I did that, I'd love to see them. *Joke!* I had dinner with her months before I went to New York and met Donna. She had them [already] and was complaining about them.

So you had dinner with this woman, talked about her new breasts, and the next thing you know you'd bought them?

Incredible, isn't it? You know what my advice is to women about the implant situation? You can always go there, but you can never go back.

But they can be removed.

Yeah, but then they've violated the natural element of the gland. The mammary.

Sounds like an area you're well educated in. Are you pro or con the procedure?

It depends on the work. I've seen amazing work, and I've seen really bad work. And I always feel so bad for women that couldn't



NEXT OF KIN: CHARLIE RECEIVING A STAR ON HOLLYWOOD'S WALK OF FAME IN 1994 WITH (ABOVE FROM LEFT) BROTHERS EMILIO AND RAMON, DAUGHTER CASSANDRA, MOTHER JANET AND FATHER MARTIN; WITH HIS BRIDE DONNA PEELE (OPPOSITE)

afford to go the extra mile — or inch. Sorry. You see, I'm terrible.

Second item, also yesterday's paper -

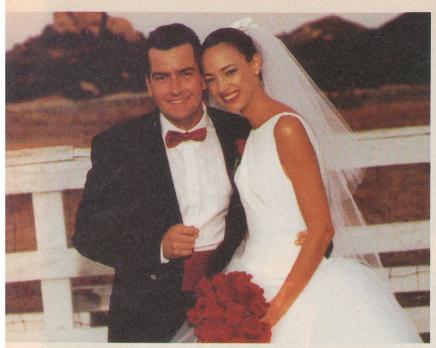
This is all yesterday? I had two items in yesterday's paper?

Yeah, move over, Charles and Di. The 'Daily News' reported that you've been asking out a porn actress named Jenna Jameson. The story claimed that you tried to reach her by phone from the street while you were leafing through her photos in 'High Society.'

[Stammering] Wow —I —you know — that's incredible! Incredible!

What's incredible about it?

It's incredible how they've taken my requesting — and I'm telling you straight dope here — at some point in the future, a way to make contact with this person. What I [said] was there's no immediate rush, because I've been a bit of a recluse and, in an interesting direction for me, completely celibate since the breakup. That's what, three whole weeks?



[Smiles] We're not into a major sabbatical. Has it changed you?

[Flexes arm] Look at my right bicep. [Laughs, then becomes serious] No, I asked someone to possibly arrange [a date], postsettlement, out of respect to my wife - being a 30-year-old male who has been through some painful times - to possibly get an introduction to this person. You know, you can't score if you don't shoot a basket. What's the worst thing that happens? Someone says no, so you move on. But the idea, the notion, that I tried to make contact is preposterous. The request was to get a number later on, to establish contact when it's appropriate. [Pause] Have you seen her? She's gorgeous. Uh, is this the type of woman you should be pursuing now, all things considered?

Probably not, but I didn't really plan on taking her to a Lakers game during the playoffs and sitting in the front row, you know? But do you want me to deny all that? And lie? Of course not. I thought you would've known about this already, though.

No. I followed my friend's advice. I've been ignoring everything. I watch ESPN.

So you only see the cheerleaders.

Hey now!

Sorry, innocent mistake. There was something in 'Time' —

I made Time? Cool.

It was basically a slam for the comments you made about your wife ["You buy a bad car, it breaks down, what are you gonna do?"] on 'ET.' Yeah. I have to apologize for that. There's no dancing with that. It was stupid. It was wrong. I've already apologized to Donna for it. She was cool.

Why did you choose to announce the end of your

marriage on TV?

I thought it would bring the rumor mill to a bit of a stand-still — give us a jump on it. Rather than issuing a statement, I wanted to let them hear it from me. But I didn't really have my thoughts organized. What I said was asinine. We all make mistakes.

Yes, but some of us make thousands of them.

Did anybody advise you against getting married?

Everybody. Not against Donna. They just wanted me to give it some time.

So why didn't you?

[Sighs] I just had this whole

story in my head about turning 30 and getting married on my birthday. That way I'd never forget the anniversary, and if I had to get out of dubious birthday things, I could say, "Guys, I've got to do anniversary stuff with my wife." And if I had to get out of dubious anniversary things, I could say, "Honey, I've got a birthday thing." Not to make light of it, but that was part of the plan. And it just seemed like it would be a great day. And it was. It was the most incredible wedding that anybody had ever been to, myself included. It was one of the best days of my life.

Which begs the question: Then why are you giving up on it so fast?

[Pause] I've always been one of those guys given the gift of realistic recognition. I just rely on my instincts, you know? I suppose that's what's kept me alive, kept me success-

ful from time to time. Kept me in touch with some semblance of reality. And...[a long pause] I've found God. I did. I got saved a couple of months ago.

What?!

SPEND

Yeah, and I'm not going to bore you with that.

You're saying you're a born-again

Christian?

Yeah.

Are you serious?

Yeah, but it's nobody's business, really. It's between me and God, and that's where I'm going to keep it. I just got tired of walking alone. I need something to believe in.

Has it changed your life dramatically?

No, not really. It's all good. I mean, the spiritual aspects of it are all good.

Are you reading the Bible?

Not yet. I'm only, you know... I don't want to get into it too quick. I've got the rest of my life to explore it, right? But it's exciting. It's different. It's so far beyond me. It's so much more powerful than anything I can control that I have to surrender. And I need something like that. I need that.

How'd it happen?

There was a voice. Not like drug-induced voices, but there was a voice that kept telling me this will not work.

Meaning your marriage? Yeah.

Was it the voice of God?

I'm not going to claim I have that much connection. It's a lit-

tle egotistical to think you've got a direct line to the Man, you know? Maybe it was a voice I was creating, and now I had a belief to put to it. I don't know. What's interesting is that when the decision was made, the absence of protest on Donna's behalf told me she felt the same way.

Was there a kind of otherworldly incident?

Yeah. I've had a shoulder problem for years, and then it was healed. I'm not lying to you. The gentleman who did it said, "If this goes away, will you believe?" And I said, "Yes, absolutely," because there was no way it was going to go away.

And just who is this gentleman?

He's a reverend. Reverend Tipsu. He goes all over the world performing miracles. I've only known him for one day. He showed up at the right time. But I never did anything like that before. I never believed it was pos-

sible. I'm one of those guys who needs proof. I need proof, man!

So, what? He touched your shoulder and said, "Through the power of Jesus Christ—"

"I command you to heal Charlie's shoulder." And it was gone. Very intense.

What are you going to ask the good reverend to heal next?

[Long pause] The perfect answer right now would be "a broken heart."

Are you brokenhearted?

No. [*Laughs*] I'm sorry. I'm sorry! But I can see the interview in print, and you'll see "broken heart" and then, like, a paragraph about how "he paused, took a moment." No, we're not going to go there.

So you were not in love with Donna?

I was very much in love with her. Painfully in love with her. I was so excited that I just wanted to get married and spend the rest of my life with her. But things changed.

Let me guess: You discovered that you didn't know her as well as you thought?

[*Wryly*] Bingo. You can move to the hundred-dollar round now.

Was it good for the first few weeks?

It was great for a few months. I felt like there was something substantial. It felt concrete. S---, it felt stable. And that was like, wow, stability! I had heard about that.

Before I forget: When we were in the restaurant earlier today, you almost fell out of your chair when a beautiful woman walked past. If I hadn't been there, would you have approached her? Right then? No. Post-settlement? Yeah.

And what would you have said? I don't know. I'm a little rusty.

Not that rusty. It's only been six months.

Yeah. If you try not to appear too slick, if there's a certain amount of bumblance, if there's a self-deprecation, almost an expect-

ation of a turndown...

It works?

Sometimes. I don't know. Do you walk away from it and then wonder — for the next week, month, year — what would have happened? Or do you give it a shot and find out what did happen?

But what are you looking for? I mean, theoretically, isn't there always going to be another beautiful woman around the corner?

Tough question. The bottom line is I love women. I adore them, I worship them. I think they're the coolest thing on the planet. It would really suck if we didn't have any women. It's funny, I hadn't really thought about it till you brought it up. But now I'm thinking about...her legs. Sorry.

Will you ever marry again?

I think so, but I'd definitely spend the time to get to know the person more. I violated one of my own beliefs. I always thought, You've got the rest of your life to get married, what's the rush?

Was your quick engagement and marriage a reaction to your involvement in the Heidi Fleiss scandal?

I try not to believe that I got married for all the wrong reasons, but in retrospect I'm pretty sure that had something to do with it.

Do you think your career suffered because of your relationship with Fleiss?

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TIRFD

I've pretty much said everything I want to say about that, but I haven't had a chance to say this: I took a bullet for a lot of guys.

You're talking about testifying at the trial.

[Nods] They asked me to roll. I was asked to sell some people, and I said, "No, I can't do that. That's not what I'm about." It never would have gone into a deposition phase had I sung.

Because there were bigger names involved?

Sure, [but] the public is more interested in a guy they go to the movies to see than the guy who's producing the movies. But there were other stars involved, right?

Not that I can remember. [Laughs, then speaks with an artificial gravity] I'm suddenly drawing a blank. Have you read this book that just came

out, You'll Never Make Love in This Town Again? It's incredible. Some of the s--they talk about these people doing is so... embarrassing!

Are you in it?

Just once! It was actually flattering: [Recites] "We don't understand why Charlie paid for the things he paid for, but the one thing we knew to be true was that every time a girl left his house she always had a smile on her face." [Sits back, satisfied.] [Editor's note: The actual quote reads: "I don't know if it was because Charlie was good in bed, if it was the money he paid for her services or if it was the fact that Charlie was so famous, but she always had a smile on her face."] That's the only thing they said about me. I saw that and went, Wow! I ate the bullet and went through all this bulls--- and then, karmically, these other people are finally talked about

in a really despicable manner — and I'm given a compliment! I'm not saying, "Hey, Mom, look!" It just felt nice to finally not be the only person involved.

Do you feel bad for your colleagues like Tim Hutton, Matt Dillon and Warren Beatty, who

had their sexual predilections splattered all over the pages?

Well, it's not right for anybody to get turned out like that, especially if it's true. [Laughs] I do feel bad for them, but it's difficult for me to have a lot of sympathy, because I had to deal with being the only name [at the Fleiss trial].

Are you still angry about that?

I was really happy when it was all over. It was not a good time to be me. And its lingering effects may never go away.

So, the fact that you're not as busy as you used to be might be a direct result of that?

I wonder. I would hope not, but if it [is], maybe it's not unjustified. I always thought it was about what you did onscreen. Did you learn anything from this experience, Charlie?

[Nods] More than I can go into right now.

[Sheen's publicist enters, obviously having overheard his client's comments regarding Fleiss; he and Sheen get into a heated argument. The publicist warns him that his comments will just "perpetuate the bulls---." Sheen angrily responds that he doesn't want readers to see "a string of no comments"

and think he "wimped out." After a few more exchanges, the publicist gives up and exits.] I think they're being hard on [Fleiss], I can say that. I think they really went after her. It's not my problem, but I can feel bad for her. She's a human being. I'm compassionate. She never wronged me.

OK. But I've got to ask, and I think a lot of people want to know this: Why would a guy like you—successful, talented, good-looking and wealthy—use prostitutes?

[Carefully] Because of the influence and the access that the paparazzi have achieved. Because of the war that they're winning and the wall that we're up against with these—not all of them, a lot of them—parasites, these people working for the devil. [They] generally create more hassle and chaos to deal with— [when I] go to a bar, meet a young lady, [Continued on page 105]

## CHARLIE SHEEN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 105

little victories along the way, but the overall

process... God, it's becoming a Woody Allen movie.

But you've been seeing the same shrink for a while now?

Well, actually about six months, and, s---, it feels like we're making some progress. I mean, I've taken off the lobster bib and I'm on top of the couch now, at least.

Are you sober?

Most of the time. I leave Saturday night open. I'll be honest, you know, I really have a clean week, and I've earned Saturday night. You just cut loose?

No, I don't want to still be recovering on Monday in the gym. But I don't see anything wrong with having a good time one night a week. You can have a great time every day, but to feel good in your head, to go to a different place in your head and know that you earned it... I mean, c'mon! Jesus drank wine. He also made it. I've become a martini drinker. I just need three and I'm cool. But can you stop at three?

Usually, yeah. You're talking per hour, right? Sorry, yeah, what do they say? One is not enough, two is too many. I've only been drinking them for six months.

AA has a very strict definition of sober -

Oh, God, keep those AA people off my back! I don't claim any allegiance to the program. Stay out of my hair. I'm not in the program, and I don't plan on being in one. I've been through that fire. It's not for me.

You've been rehabbed how many times now? [Takes a long drag on his cigarette] Three. When was the last time?

Oh, God. I got sober before *Terminal Velocity* came out [in 1994]. And then I stayed really drunk after it bombed, for a couple of months. Just couldn't drink it away, you know? I realized that, and yeah, it's been up and down for me, but I think what I'm doing now is working, and that's all that really matters.

What's going on with your career? You haven't released a film since 'Terminal Velocity.' It's been almost two years.

*Terminal* was a motherf---er. That one really hurt, man.

Whose fault was that?

I'm not going to point the finger at any individual, but there was a changing of the guard [at Disney], and it was one of the films that fell through the cracks. The ad campaign was miserably handled, and I think every person involved was fired under the new regime. I took a hit. A big one.

But that's only one film. Everyone has flops.

It doesn't matter. Not anymore. It's all about your last deal. It's amazing how quickly it's changed. It's all about the *flav du jour* now. It's all about, What have you done for me lately?

Well, there's a buzz, as they say, on 'The Arrival.' What do you think?

I think it will cross over. It's a science-fiction thriller, but I don't think you have to be a Trekkie to appreciate it. The script was fantastic. I couldn't put it down.

You could use a hit.

I just need something really substantial to get the studio and the major-independent interest back. Just give me the right material. I need that one at-bat. Something has got to break.

Do you think your professional reputation has been tarnished by your personal problems of the last few years?

Probably. But they can never say that it ever affected my on-set demeanor, behavior or approach to the work. They can never say that my set etiquette or my acting is anything but professional. I love the whole process. Jon Cryer recently gave an interview in which he talked about working with you on 'Hot Shots!' He said, "Charlie's amazing. He'd show up an hour late, in a convertible with a porn star in the back seat, yet still—wham!—he'd hit his marks, hit his lines and get everything right on the first take. Then—wham!—he'd be gone off to warm up some porn star."

Jon said that? Yeah! Some positive press. Thanks, Jon!

Explain your new tattoo.

It's a zipper that's pulled open, and there's a female finger holding the zipper open from the inside and an eyeball looking out. It's so deep, I don't even know what it means.

You're a writer's dream, Charlie: getting tattoos, dating porn stars, smoking, drinking and becoming a born-again Christian all at the same time. We don't have to worry about you becoming Pat Boone anytime soon.

Thank you.

Maybe Jimmy Swaggart? [Laughs] Negative.

Contributing editor Tom O'Neill wrote about the epidemic of Hollywood stalking in the February 'US.'

US Magazine (ISSN 0147-510X) is published monthly by US Magazine Company, L.P., 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. The entire contents of US Magazine are copyright € 1996 by US Magazine Company, L.P., and may not be reproduced in any manner, either whole or in part, without written permission. All rights are reserved. The subscription price is \$19.94 for one year and \$31.92 for two years. The Canadian subscription price is \$24.94 for one year including GST, payable in advance. The foreign subscription price is \$24.94 for one year, payable in advance. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canadian Second Class Postage Permit #9339 paid at Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Canada Goods and Services Tax Registration no. R125042689. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to US Customer Service, P.O. Box 58667, Boulder, CO 80322-8667.

## **CHARLIE SHEEN**

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58** 

get a phone number and drive home — than there would be if I just made a phone call. And as far as the women go, we're not talking about street urchins with needles hanging out of their veins. We're talking about college students, secretaries, actresses and models who, because of the Democratic government these many years, cannot make ends meet. You can directly relate it to the state of today's economy.

That's debatable, but basically what you're saying is it's easier to use prostitutes because there were no strings attached.

Exactly. It just made sense. It was a lot easier. There was no hassle. There was no threat of that whole other world. And it wasn't like she was sending up little boys—hey, it's not as bad as sitting in your car in a public place. Sorry, Hugh.

What about the video Fleiss says she has of you in the act with two of her girls?

I told her to put it on television if she had it. She didn't play it, so she didn't have it. That was a scare ploy.

Is she a smart woman?

Oh, yeah, look what she did for all those years. But you've got to pay your taxes. You pay rent to live in the best country in the world, that's all it is, you know?

Did the feds ever threaten you with jail? It was used as a fear ploy as well.

Did it scare you?

Out of my shoes. They said pandering carries five years. F--ing A! It was scary.

How did your dad handle the situation? I know he's something of a moral crusader and strict disciplinarian.

He was completely supportive. He felt bad for me. He just said, "Tell the truth. That's all you can do. That's all you should do. Nobody got killed. Just keep your chin up, and don't feel like you've got to hide."

Speaking of hiding, would you ever consider leaving Los Angeles for a while to get away from some of your bad influences?

Honestly? No. It's the one city in the world where I truly feel comfortable. I love it here. You know what I love most about L.A. — and boy, this could be taken out of context — the services. [Laughs] The everyday stuff: the plumbers, dentists, doctors, lawyers. There's never a problem getting somebody to work for you here.

Does that include therapists?

Sure. I've been in private therapy. Psychoanalysis.

Is it long-term?

I don't know, man, they don't want to solve anything. There's [Continued on page 106]