New Shave Cinema

"A porn star saying he has AIDS is not a career move."

October 1, 1997 By Dominic Hamilton-Little

Fade-in, standard TV commercial. Guy approaches hot woman in a club. They dance. He's in love -- until he hears her deep voice. Concern. He reaches up, touches her face and is relieved by its smoothness. As he dives for the kiss, camera pans to the smoky-voiced seductress' purse, with a Braun razor peeking out. The tag line: "Braun... for your closest shave yet." America, meet Karen Dior, a.k.a. Geoff Gann. Assuming, of course, you haven't already seen him in porn classics such as *The Orgy Boys* or on *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Dior's been getting around. He recently guest-starred in the premiere episode of TV's *Head Over Heels*. Intrigued, I rang up Braun's newest spokesmodel -- oh yeah, he's HIV positive -- at home.

Dominic: First things first, darling -- how did you get the Braun part?

Karen: Simple -- my agent sent me out and I auditioned for it.

But didn't Braun have any concerns about using a PWA in a commercial for a razor?

I'm not sure. They never mentioned it. Well, I didn't go in and say, "Hi! I have AIDS!" But most people in the industry, when they know who I am, pretty much know the whole story. I really don't have any secrets. Besides, hiring a drag queen is kinda racy anyway, so if they're open in that regard, I don't think they're going to worry about the other stuff.

Did kissing Lucy Lawless in your *Xena: Warrior Princess* episode turn you straight or make you into a lesbian?

Lesbian. Technically I am bisexual, though politically I'm gay. And though I've mostly been with men, the women I've gone with have almost always been lesbian, although Lucy's not. But she is a wonderful person. We really bonded. Both of us have grown so much from the bad things we've experienced.

In May, the supermarket tabloid *The Globe* ran a story about Eddie Murphy picking you up outside a gay bar and how you performed oral sex on each other. What is the deal

with you two?

It's all true. Why would I lie? I've always believed in telling the truth. I mean, a porn star coming forward and saying he has AIDS is not a career move -- nor is talking about other things, like my former drug problem -- but I told the story about Eddie Murphy picking me up because they [*The Globe*] asked. I have this annoying habit of telling the truth when people ask me a question. It's not as though I'm into outing, but people like him are teaching younger generations homophobia. Discrediting him needed to happen. He's unhappy, and I hope he gets help.

And isn't he suing you now?

Me, *The Globe*, *The National Enquirer* and several other people who came forward. Like I have anything -- what does he want anyway? My protease inhibitors, my gowns and the rest of my T-cells?!

We'll have to send you out on a benefit tour...

[Karen laughs, then coughs] Excuse me [coughing]. I must have a wig hair caught in my throat. But yeah, we had a joke about the Karen Dior Legal Defense Fund.

So, when does the tell-all autobiography come out?

I am writing a book. And it comes out as soon as I've finished it. I need a deadline! It's a combination of a kiss-and-tell, dealing with AIDS and my spiritual journey.

Who are your role models?

Growing up in the Midwest, I didn't have any. It was a very conservative environment. When I was in college, I saw Boy George and Peter Burns [of Dead or Alive], and they inspired me by being themselves, being androgynous. These days, I have a guru in India, Babji, who I lived with for a month in the Himalayas. And although in the past I never trusted medical professionals, I really look up to my doctor.

How is your health?

Great. I was sick for about a year, but now, with the protease inhibitors, I feel like I've been given a second chance. Bouncing back, I see what I do have.

What's next for Karen Dior?

I've got a movie coming out with Richard Chamberlain called *River Made To Drown In*. And I've got two parts in a movie, *Just Add Love*, in which I play a drag queen and a totally different other

character out of drag. Next month my band, The Johnny Depp Clones, and I have a CD coming out called “Better Late Than Never.”

Does Johnny Depp know about this?

Oh yeah. An interviewer once asked him how he felt about it, and he just said, “How cool.”

Besides your Braun razor, darling, what three items do you always keep in your purse?

Eyelash adhesive...

Very important.

Powder...

Of course.

And the latest issue of *POZ* magazine.

Good answer!

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