



Hey Folks!

As part of my research for *Vampire Strippers Must Die!* I interviewed a former Chippendales dancer. He talked about the group's misadventures while touring Eastern Europe, what happened when his mom came to his show, and why his fraternity brothers wanted to score tickets. And he even revealed a secret trick that women can use to pick up Chippendales dancers after the show.

Christian is a model who became one of the new batch of Chippendales dancers when they restarted the group in 2001. Because he's working as an actor in LA these days, he asked me not to use his real name.

So how did you wind up being a Chippendale?

After college I worked in DC for four or five years, doing corporate consulting work, and acting on the side. I would call in sick so that I could sneak out to auditions. And then, if I got the part, I'd have to call in sick again to go shoot the commercial. That was getting kind of hairy.

So I decided that I needed to take a break from the eighty-hour weeks. I quit my job and went up to New York to do acting and modeling. My agent at the time had a huge house. He and his wife would put up ten of the guys he was representing. Looking back on it, it was a little ridiculous. I figured I'd live there for a few days while I looked around Manhattan and found my own place. I wound up staying there for four weeks.

One of the other ten guys in the house was a Chippendale. Not one of the originals. The group had closed down years ago because one of the guys murdered somebody. But now they were re-starting. It was 2001. They'd been rehearsing for the new show all winter and were going to be opening in March.

So this guy said, "We're opening in about a month. And we're gonna need waiters, and hosts, and servers."

And I thought, "All right. I'm not super comfortable with stripping and all. But I'm only going to be a waiter, it's only Friday and Saturday night, and they paid \$75 a night plus tips. That was pretty good for a job that only took three hours. We got there at seven pm, opened at eight, and the show was done by ten."

As a waiter, you wear the standard outfit for a Chippendale: black leather pants, bow ties, and white collar cufflinks. We call 'em cuffs and collars. And no shirt.

I did that for two months.

How did you like being a Chippendales waiter?

Women are pretty cheap. I waited tables in college, and I found it was true back then, too. Granted, this was New York. Drinks were small and easy on liquor but very expensive.

It wasn't great money. But it was only three hours of work. And my night afterward was free.

The money sucked. But it was interesting. At least I got to meet some new girls and a few casting directors.

How did you become one of the Dancers?

I'm waiting tables, but I'm doing all this stuff on the side for my acting and modeling career. Taking dance classes, going to the gym. And I had studied martial arts since I was a kid. Tae Kwan Do. And some Kung Fu and Aikido. We would do nunchucks and some weapons.

And one of the numbers in the show required nunchucks. It was a West Side Story kind of thing. They had a Latino heartthrob, and a gangster guy. And the Latino and his two friends would dance and do their thing. And then the white guy would do his dance number with the nunchucks.

And it happened that the guy with the nunchucks had a G addiction.¹ So he had trouble making it through the whole show. He would get so messed up. He was crying on the sofa backstage. By the finale, he usually wasn't awake.

And his drug problem just got worse and worse. He would drink alcohol, and do his G, which ... I mean, G by itself is a mess, but it's also

¹ GHB (Gamma Hydroxy Butyrate) is a controlled substance that is typically sold as a clear liquid or white powder. It causes intoxication, disinhibition, desire to socialize, enhanced sexual experience, and loss of coordination. Severe side effects can occur when it is taken with alcohol.

something you don't ever mix with alcohol. But he would do tequila shots in the middle of the show.

They didn't have rules about that?

Well, they had rules. (laughs) The rules... Chippendales is ... I don't know how to say this... it's not a traditional corporate environment.²

There's not like a hierarchy. I mean, our dressing room was a side room where they kept empty kegs. There was half of a mirror, but no lights. We were kind of making it up as we went along.

So no, rules were not important. And ultimately, as long as the guys get on stage, look great, and don't act too retarded, they were happy. Make the ladies happy, that was the important part. There was no quality control. There were no reviews. No promotions, or salaries, or raises, or evaluations.

So this one dancer has a drug problem....

So about a month and a half into the run, the director is getting worried. They can't keep depending on this guy when he's in tears at the end of the show. So they need to replace him. And they found out that I was a dancer and I was a martial artist. And they asked how I would feel about being an understudy for the West Side number and this guy's track through the whole show.

² One dancer (who spoke on condition of anonymity) had a slightly less charitable description of Chippendales' corporate culture: "I always figured the group was owned by the mob or something. The manager was like some Italian guy's nephew. And when we came back from tour, they'd give each of the dancers an envelope full of cash to carry through customs. It was always just under \$5,000, or whatever the limit was that you'd have to declare, and they got it back from us as soon as we cleared customs. There was definitely some shady stuff going on."

At the time I had no steady income. I was waiting tables for \$75 a night, two nights a week, plus tips. So maybe \$200, for the week. Which you can't live on in New York. And acting and modeling are kind of hit or miss, and sometimes it takes two months to get paid.

So I needed something. And when the director approached me, he was really cool. He knew that I did well from waiting tables. I was always on time, and not on drugs or anything

He said, "Think about it. No pressure. But this guy has a drug problem. We'd like to replace him. You have a great body, and you're already familiar with nunchucks. And the pay, instead of \$75, it's \$175 a night plus tips. And there's also a little rehearsal in the middle of the week. It's kind of a joke, but they pay you \$75 for it. So with tips, you make at least \$500 for working Friday and Saturday night and one extra hour on a Thursday."

So the money sounded pretty reasonable.

But I wasn't comfortable with being nude. I didn't want to be nude on stage. That's where I draw my boundaries.

I don't know if you're familiar with what a typical skit is like in a Chippendale's show. It's completely different from female stripper clubs. Sometimes the girls will come out in pasties and a g-string and heels, and they're already naked.

Chippendales isn't like that at all. A female audience wants different things. Chippendales do better playing up imagery and painting pictures and telling stories. There's more fantasy.

We come on fully clothed. Every one of the numbers, we come out, maybe as an officer in a full naval outfit with a hat and everything, and it comes off piece by piece. And at the end, we're never nude. We're usually in a g-string, or boxers. Or we'll turn upstage, and then rip off our boxers, and they'll see our butts from behind. Never full frontal

nudity. There are laws, too, in New York. I think it has to do with the liquor... you can't serve alcohol and have nudity. So Chippendales, that's one rule that they never break. Because they can lose their license.

Every once in a while we had one or two guys who didn't care, who had no problem showing off everything in a number. And they would get reprimanded, to the extent that Chippendales ever reprimanded anybody. Women want to see a lot, but you can't show them everything. Otherwise, New York city would come in and label this as "lewd and lascivious".

In the West Side Story number there were rip-away G-strings. And at the end of the number, the two guys would be on opposite sides of the stage. And they would kind of play with the audience, like "would you like to see more?"

But I wasn't comfortable taking off my g-string on stage. So the other guy would turn around face up stage, and take his g-string off. And I would just turn around and pull mine down a little bit. I don't care if they see my butt. And then lights go down, and that's it.

So that number was not nude. You know, this is within my boundaries. I'm fine. And I thought that as long as I was comfortable having a family member come and see the show, then I was fine with it.

And actually, my mom did come see the show. And I had Fraternity brothers come, and friends.

Anyway, I decided I would do it. And this guy's track through the show was not terribly difficult. And then maybe two weeks after I started rehearsing with the choreographers, another dancer didn't turn up to a performance. Ironically, it wasn't the GHB guy. He was still there, still fucked up. But one of the other guys didn't turn up. So it was a trial-by-fire situation.

“I don’t know how much of the routine you know. But we need somebody NOW!”

So I stepped into this guy’s part on stage. And I did OK, for a part that I’d never rehearsed. I mean, some of the choreography was the same, but some of it was... Well, the good news is that it was Chippendales, which is not exactly the Metropolitan Opera. Women didn’t really care. Even if I just walked in a circle when everybody else was doing dance moves, it didn’t matter as long as at the end of the routine the trench coat came off and I unzipped the black velvet pants, they didn’t care about the rest.

That first time was the hardest. By far the hardest. I could see why the GHB guy had such a problem. It’s a lot of pressure. But I got through that first time. And then they kept teaching me more and more things so that I could cover other parts.

I was a quick study, and some of the other guys were pretty good. Out of eight leads, there were maybe two or three that could pick up choreography in a decent amount of time. Not at a professional dance level, but fast. And there were some guys that just couldn’t. It took weeks for them to learn like a shoulder roll or something.

There were varying degrees of talent and intelligence. Some of the guys were really smart. Not so many. And some were just pure physique. They were trainers and they had great bodies, but they were not the brightest of guys.

So how did your fraternity brothers wind up coming to a show?

That was a few months after I moved to New York. I threw a party and had some friends over. My fraternity brothers, and girls that were in this sorority that we mixed with a lot, and friends from school. We all got together for a Saturday afternoon. And I’m like, “Well I have to get to the show. I have to perform. And I can get you all in for free.”

And it was a great club afterward. At the end of the show, the club was packed with beautiful horny women who just saw the Chippendales. And they all want to dance. And all my guy friends loved coming to the club afterward. They would come late, because all the women want to hook up afterward.

So they do a little bait-and-switch thing. “We’ll let the girls go look at Chippendales and do their thing and get drunk. And then we’ll show up. And yeah, we’re not Chippendales. But we’re guys. And we’re available, and we’re looking for it.”

So my fraternity brothers, they didn’t really watch the show. They pretty much stayed at the bar, and when I had numbers I would see some of them come over and watch. But I don’t think my fraternity brothers cared much for me dancing or any of the Chippendales guys. But they still had a good time and the girls loved it.

We actually separated the guys and the girls in the audience. Because women, deep down, don’t respond as positively to the Chippendales on stage if there are men in the audience with them. They will be more on guard. They will have their walls up more. They won’t go nuts or be as free because they think that have to behave as ladies, and they shouldn’t be looking at certain things.

So the men had to be on the top level, the balcony level, and the females were down on the floor. And in between certain numbers, there was a time when the Chippendales guys would go out into the audience. We called it the “kiss and tip”.

Basically, you walk up to the girl, and you give ‘em a kiss on the cheek, or dance with them. And they tip you. Some guys would do the whole lap dance thing and go to town. And there were others who didn’t even want to go out during this part. It was completely up to the dancer.

I usually wouldn’t go out so much. I didn’t really care to be in the audience, among the women, in a G-string.

The way it worked was we would do two or three numbers up on stage. And then they would turn up the house lights, and whoever just performed for the last number would come out and they would get tips. And then three minutes later the lights would come back down, and we would do another two or three numbers on stage. And then the house lights would come back up and the next guy would go out into the audience.

It was only the leads who did the kiss and tip. Of the Chippendales, there were eight lead dancers. They're the big guys, the traditional Chippendale dancers. The company preferred guys who were six feet and taller. Every once in a while they would make an exception and hire a guy who was 5'11", but they really didn't like to go short. Because all the other guys on stage were already so tall, and they didn't want a dwarf Chippendale.

So there are eight leads, and then they always hire four "ensemble dancers". And these are pure professional dancers, they don't strip. They're there to add to the quality of the show. And they will dance in the background behind the big guys, but it's like the chorus of a Broadway show.

I was a lead.

How did your mom wind up coming to a show?

I told her what I was doing. I wasn't ashamed of it. I mean, Chippendales is a good name. We treated it as an off-Broadway show. We had an intermission, we had a break in between. Very traditional style shows, not like pole dancing.

There are different levels of stripping. And Chippendales is on the classy level of stripping, if there is such a thing. I've been to other places where there's dicks swinging and other stuff, and that's not Chippendales. We're much more about fulfilling fantasy and painting pictures. Showing them what a romance novel romance would be. Some kind of adventure.

For some numbers we would bring up one of the girls from the audience, and she would interact with the guys on stage. And they always loved that. And most of the time they were pretty excited to go up there. But every once in a while they would be shy at first.

“OK, we’ll do it. No, I don’t want to do it. OK, I’ll go.” And at first she would be shy. But after thirty seconds she would get into it. And by the end of the number, we would have trouble getting her off the stage. “Ok, the number’s done. We need to do our next number. Get off.”

So it was more of a classier level of stripping.

Did it freak you out to have your mom in the audience?

She was smiling the whole time. I had the guys go over and dance with her. I wasn’t going to dance with her, of course.

I mean, I saw her, she waved. But I didn’t want the other girls in the audience to know that she was my mom because then I wouldn’t get any tips. You’ve gotta keep the illusion. The romance novel guy is not a real guy. He’s a dream. So I’m going to give him a five-dollar bill. And he’s gonna dance with me. And that’s gonna be it.

But if I see his mom, then he’s just like Joe Blow. So I sent the other guys over to see mom. And she loved it, she had a great time.

At the end of the show, ladies could come up and for \$10 have their polaroid taken with the Chippendales. And the line would be out the door sometimes. So mom came up afterward. And usually if one of the Chippendales guys had guests, we would do it for free. We’ll all pose with her for a second.

Mom was cool.

So what was touring with Chippendales like?

In Europe, Chippendales are huge! They treated us like we were NSYNC or something. We had security that would follow us around that had like guns and tasers. We couldn't go anywhere by ourselves. It was only a problem once or twice.

And Chippendales made way more money on tour than they did in New York. With all the expenses of being in New York and renting a club, their overhead was pretty high.

Our first tour was to Romania, in 2001. We were going for nine days, so we canceled the show in New York for one weekend. We left on that Monday or Tuesday, missed the weekend, and then came back on the weekend after that.

We flew into Romania and landed in the capital. And immediately we were greeted on the runway by news cameras and people speaking languages that we don't even recognize. And we had a press conference. "The Chippendales have landed!"

And after the press conference, we did the first show.

I remember the first show was kind of a jolt. They had us performing in a stadium! Not like New York, where we performed in a club. They would get a small stadium, like a soccer venue or something. And larger-scale things, like Radio City Music Hall.

And we went out for "kiss and tip". Now in America, it's not a big deal to walk up to a stripper and put a dollar in his G-string. But over in Europe, they are not so comfortable interacting with performers. So they were a little more standoffish, the audience.

And they're poor. They're poor as dirt over there! Their money was the equivalent of... it translated to a nickel, this little dollar thing that they had. This red slip of paper, it was like a nickel. And then a yellow bill was like a quarter.

So they would wave it at us. And we'd see the paper flashing and think "that's money!" So we go over to it and dance with them.

But eventually we stopped going out, by the second or third tip set. Like, we're getting no money. We're getting nickels! It's not worth our time to walk out there. I'd rather change and get ready for the next number and get the show over with.

I remember at one point a red bill fell out of Johnny's G-string. And one of the girls came out of the audience and was trying to hand it back to him.

And he went, "You know what. Keep it. It's a nickel, honey. I'm not gonna run back up the aisle to get a nickel. Keep it."

And after that, I think all of us were like, "You know, this isn't going to be worth it."

We also found out that our security was stealing from us while we were up on stage and they were waiting in the dressing room. Stealing our nickels! That was crap. Eventually, we got the wardrobe folks to keep an eye on it. And we had to confront the security guys about it. But the thing is, for us it's nickels. But for them, that was real money. They saw us throwing it around in contempt, upset with these nickels, when for them that's like their weekly salary. Eventually, we always had someone in the room watching over them.

So that was the show. Afterward we would go back to our hotel, and every night we had an after-party. It was usually sponsored by some kind of alcohol. They would book out the parties, with no other men allowed. And we had the pick of all these beautiful women who were thinking... I don't know.... green cards? Or sex? Or free drinks. Whatever.

The lead guys really were all straight. Some were more aggressive about the ladies than others. At the time, I was hooking up with chicks. Like if I found one that I really liked and was interested in. But some guys, it was like their mission, to never sleep alone. That's not me, but to each his own.

I would be surprised at the caliber of women that the guys would bring home. You'd think that it would just be like wow, the stunning ones. And a lot of times it was. But sometimes, you're like "Damn! What were you thinking?! How did that happen?"

If a girl wants to hook up with a Chippendale, I would tell her the best thing to do is just show up at the party and stay late. Because at the end of the night, every guy in the Chippendales will want to go home with someone. And if you're there, when all the other girls are tired and have gone home, guess who's going home with a Chippendale?

It's totally stupid. But guys are whores anyway. Chippendales just want to have sex. They put on a sexy show all night long, and then at the end of the night, they want to go home with someone.

All told, we got maybe five hours of sleep a night. We would get free drinks at the party, be treated as the guest of honor, and then around two or three we'd find our bodyguard and go home. And then have to be back up at 7 or 8 the next day for a continental breakfast before we got on the bus.

The Chippendales have a rule: **NO GIRLS AT BREAKFAST**. You couldn't bring the girl you spent the night with to breakfast with you.

They didn't tell me this rule until the second or third day. I'd met a really cool girl who was very friendly and wound up spending several days with her. Some shows were only like an hour away, so she would travel. And she would always be my guest at the show, and we would hang out backstage. And maybe the second or third day, she came to breakfast

with me. I mean, she had a cigarette for breakfast; she didn't eat anything.

But after that, I was told by the guys, "No girls at breakfast." Usually it's for the better. This girl was cool. But a lot of the girls that the guys would bring were...

The breakfast rule is so that whatever annoying-ass girls came home at four am wouldn't annoy the other guys. And it was also an excuse for the guys to say, "OK, you've got to go. I can't have you at breakfast." It's an easy letdown.

"You've got to get out now. 'Cause we have to go to breakfast, and we have a schedule."

But more than anything, it was because nobody wanted to talk to some annoying groupie fan girl that one of them had pity on and brought home at the end of the night.

Anyway, that was Romania. We went to Transylvania. We went to Vlad's castle. It's a hotel now, with a restaurant and lots of little peddlers outside selling trinkets. Little bat key chains. Romanian puzzle boxes. Gargoyles.

So did you make much money on tour?

Oh yeah! When we went on tour the pay was completely different. It was just a flat rate for the tour. We got paid \$2,500 for nine days or something like that.

Whenever we went on tour we usually did pretty well. At least a thousand dollars a week. And we would take pictures after the show, Polaroids. It would translate to the equivalent of ten dollars, whatever country we were in. Chippendales proper would get eight dollars, and the remaining two dollars per polaroid was split among the eight guys. So we each got a quarter for each picture that was taken. But what would happen is that we would split up and we'd have four different groups.

Two of the leads at each station, and the girls would line up behind whoever they wanted their picture with. So we ended up making an additional ten to twenty bucks a night. Just for sitting afterward and smiling at the girls and taking Polaroids in our black leather Chippendales outfits.

All things told, we ended up making a good bit of money.

What happened after Romania?

We came back to New York and did a few shows. And then we had another tour to Germany. That started the day after Thanksgiving, and we got back on December 24. So it was almost a whole month.

This time we had an amazing crew that had worked with the Rolling Stones in the sixties or seventies. They were 100% professional. They were on it. They had all kinds of buses and trucks that were there ahead of time. Their lighting was beautiful. They had tech rehearsal every day. Everything ran like clockwork.

And we all kind of got into a groove. We couldn't do the wake-up, drive all day, press conference, show, afterparty routine for a whole month. I understand why people who do tours have drug problems. Because you can't keep it up. You can't stay awake that long. You just can't.

So we discovered Red Bull. It started in Romania. Before every show, the director would come out with two Red Bulls for everyone. They would get cases of it. Because our energy was so... "ugh. We have to go do a show?" And it was right as Red Bull was coming out, in 2001. So we found that, and in Germany it became standard fare. We would be issued two cans of Red Bull before every show.

Anyway, we kind of found our routine. We eliminated the "Kiss and Tips". It was just too hard, and it wasn't worth it. There were some after-parties, but about halfway through the tour I realized that the world would go on if I missed one of them.

At the hotels, we were sleeping two to a room, which wasn't always the nicest thing when someone wanted to bring back a girl. Usually, we'd work it out. I had the same roommate most of the time. And as a nice little bonus, in each city, they would get one extra room. And so whoever's turn it was would get the single room that night.

So every once in a while you get your own bed. And so usually that guy was out on the prowl that day. But I would be lying to say that we weren't out on the prowl the bulk of the time. Some more than others.

For myself, I didn't want to get too screwed up. This wasn't my life, it was just what I was doing for kicks on the side. I actually didn't like the fact that it took me away from New York so much. But they were paying us some really good money, like two thousand dollars a week.

There are some guys, I remember in interviews, all they wanted to be was Chippendales. Growing up wherever they grew up. They came and auditioned and got it, and they were set. For me, it was like, "I'm just doing this because I want some money."

Anyway, in Germany, the fans would come before the show for a "meet and greet". The guys didn't really like them, because usually we were tired before a show, and we wanted to just take an hour off. We would travel on a bus to wherever we were, and then we would eat, and then we would have probably an hour or so before showtime. And about half an hour before curtain, there would be a VIP meet and greet beforehand.

The women, they were just happy to be there. Usually, pretty well-to-do women, who knew the promoter. They'd have a glass of wine and want their pictures taken with the guys.

It was always a drag for us, though. We're barely understanding these women, and they always ask us the same questions.

"What is it like to be a Chippendale?"

"What is America like?"

And it was just after 9-11, too. It was November, just after 9-11. So, with all of us being from New York, that would come up a lot. And we can't talk about 9-11 before a show. We're trying to keep our energy up, get excited for the performance. But every single fucking day we'd have this same conversation. So that was kind of drudge work.

There was this one new guy, who had mislabeled himself as a singer before the tour. There's one number in the show that was sung live. It was usually a guy who was not the best body, but he sang. And this guy said that he could sing. And for some reason, they didn't audition him.

So we get there, and we were teaching him the show, and he was like "Where's the bouncing ball?"

"What are you talking about? What bouncing ball?"

He thought he was going to be doing karaoke! With that little screen that he could look at and sing off of. He sang one note into this mic and all of us were like "Arrg! What happened?"

So anyway, this character got put on permanent "Meet and Greet." All the bullshit work that nobody wanted to do, he was there. He would be the one taking the polaroid pictures. All the crap work. And every single one of those "Meet and Greets" before the show, he was there first of all.

So what happened to this guy?

His body was not on par with the other guys, so he became the default host. But his lack of charisma made him more of a liability. He had this ability to suck the energy out of a room.

We would do an opening number. Our opening number, it was high-energy choreography with black trench coats like "The Matrix". And it was a great number. It was hard to get the energy up for it. But by the end the women were excited.

“OK, we’re gonna see a show tonight! All right!”

And then this guy would come out. And in a monotone say “Good evening ladies.” And he would just suck all the energy out of the audience. All of us, we just worked so hard to build up their excitement, for our loser non-singing guy... I shouldn’t say loser. He was a nice guy. But nobody respected him.

There’s a ... I wouldn’t say a pecking order. But as with any group, you get close when you’re constantly with one another. He was kind of the odd man out.

I hesitate to label the guys, but everybody had their role. There was the stoner of the group. There was the pretty boy. The Fabio guy with the long blond hair. The token tall, dark, and handsome Puerto Rican guy. There was the older guy. And by older I mean thirty-nine or forty. Chippendales are normally twenty to twenty-five. But this forty-year-old guy was great. He pulled it off. He was cool.

There was the one guy on drugs. Not the GHB guy that I replaced. Once I knew his track cold, they let him go.

Did you guys get on each other’s nerves a lot on tour?

I guess it’s part of the straight-man thing. We didn’t really get on each other’s nerves so much. It was a bunch of easygoing guys, that were just trying to take decent care of their bodies and make a decent buck. And have sex whenever they wanted.

For a straight guy, it’s a pretty cushy gig. You get paid good money, particularly for guys who didn’t necessarily go to college. It was a good lifestyle. Women would throw themselves at you. It was totally weird.

Sometimes I would be walking down the street or going to a club with other friends. And I remember thinking, “Oh, I have to fight for a girl’s attention just like every other guy. It doesn’t make any difference.”

And then I would go and be a Chippendale and women would throw themselves at me. Like I can't keep you all away! Which one would I want to go home with tonight? I could pick any of these five here! And they all know that the other girls are all looking at me.

Did you ever take all five home?

I never tried that. (laughs) Other guys did. The one guy, he would... I think he had at one point like three women waiting outside his room, kind of like forming a line. One would go out, and whoever was up first would go in next. And that was just nuts to me, but he LOVED it. That was the Puerto Rican guy.

In all my years, I've never seen anybody who ran as much game as that guy. We'd be sitting at the Hard Rock Cafe, an hour before we were going to go to our next destination city. And he'd point to a girl and say, "She's pretty cute. What do you think about her?"

"What are you talking about? Yeah, Johnny, she's cute."

And then he'd call to her. "Hey! You! I see you smiling. What's your name? Come on over."

And an hour later they'd be in the bathroom having sex, keeping us from going to our next destination. And she'd end up following in her own car to the show, and bringing friends!

Did you have any weird stalker situations come up?

Yeah. One of the first few nights in Germany I met one girl and her good friend.

How it would work... at the end of the show I told you there's the polaroid session. And the girls would get in line for whoever they wanted. And while we were taking the polaroid pictures, if we liked the girl we would say, "Hey we're having an after party at blah-blah-blah hotel. Why don't you come and hang out?"

And you didn't always know if the girl was interested or not. So you kind of tell a good number of girls, to guarantee that there would be plenty of women to pick from.

And this one girl was pretty cute, so I told her "We're going to be at this hotel tonight." But then, as I got to know her, I realized that I wasn't super interested in her. But her friend took a huge liking to four of the guys. She wasn't particularly cute. But remember, I told you that the moral of the story is, "Good things come to those who show up."

So they came to the hotel, and no one talked to them all night long. We were all hanging out at the bar. Nothing nothing nothing. And then Nate, the stoner, the girl he was really interested in decided that she was not going to have sex that night, and she went home at two.

And low and behold, there are these two girls just sitting over there in the corner. And one of them has been making eyes at him all night long. And he goes and gets her, and takes her up to his hotel room. I think the girl who was interested in me went up to the lounge and hung around outside the room. And then they left that night, as they always do, because they can't come to breakfast.

I think those two girls came to six or seven more shows. And Nate would do the same thing every time. And almost every time it would work out, that whoever he was interested in would change her mind, and there was his fallback option. And then sometimes it would happen to one of the other guys. Like Jeff.

He'd be like, "Well shit. There she is. There's pussy sitting right over there in the corner. Why not?"

And in the meantime, her friend, who I met with originally, would always say "hi" to me. I'd always be cordial. I'd never be nasty. Girls can be kind of bitchy if a guy is being too aggressive. And some of the Chippendales could be the same way with women. But I never had it in me to be mean. So I guess this girl took it as a sign that maybe I was the

right guy and we were clicking. She gave me a letter saying that she was hoping that it was going to work out. And maybe I would stay in Germany with her. Maybe we could get married. Or some shit like that.

And she sent another letter to me through the Chippendales here in the States, and they forwarded it on to me. And I'm like, "Thank God she didn't have my address." It was kind of creepy.

Her friend, on the other hand, almost set a new record. There are eight leads in a Chippendale's show. And it was rare that one girl would have spent the night with two different guys. If that happens, either she's pretty hot, or willing to put up with not being spoken to for hours and being the last pick.

But this one girl, she was with Nate. And then Jeff. And then Dan. And then back to Nate.

So she was with three. And the record was that no girl had never been with half of the cast, half of the Chippendale's tour.

And the last day, at the airport... The tour bus comes to the airport at wherever we are in Germany. The door opens up, and guess who's sitting there? This girl who'd been ignored the whole time and my stalker friend. Smiling.

And the director walks off the bus, sees her, walks back on, and says, "The record may be broken yet!"

And we were like, "Who's gonna take it for the team? No one's ever been with half the Chippendale's cast before. Maybe this is the one, in the airport."

But even Johnny at this point was like, "No." Johnny, who would have sex at all hours of the day, constantly, day in day out. He was like "No. No way." We were done. We were just so done.

We weren't sure who was going to be the fourth one. So she did not break the record. She tied the record for three guys.

Her name was Nicky. We called her "Nasty", but she didn't understand what that meant. The thing with this girl, I think she just had little self-respect and would allow the guys to treat her like shit. I mean, I feel bad, but I still kind of chuckle about it to this day. If nothing else, she had a good time.

Who'd she tie for the record?

This stripper back in New York. It was someone's ex-girlfriend who broke up with him by sleeping with someone else in the cast. And then she was so hot that another guy slept with her.

Anything else scary happen on tour?

There was one situation that came up in Holland. There was an afterparty, with a lot of rich beautiful upscale women. And my roommate found this one older woman, beautiful. And they were hitting it off fine. And she had some girlfriends there.

So they disappeared. That's one of the benefits of having the party at the hotel. You don't have to get a taxi cab. They just disappeared upstairs.

So her girlfriend started asking, "Where's girlie-girl?"

"Well, I'm sure she'll be back down in a few minutes," I said. "They're probably just walking around."

I mean, I know they're having sex. What does she think they're doing? Everybody knows what they're doing. They're upstairs in the hotel room screwing.

Then she starts getting a little more finicky. "Where? Can you find them?"

“No. I’m not going to go search around.”

“Look, her husband is here.”

“Her HUSBAND is here?!”

“Yeah, he’s a pilot.”

And I’m like, “Oh, my God. Um... yeah. Hang on. Just keep him busy.”

And it’s been like forty-five minutes. The wife is gone. They can only say that she’s in the bathroom for so long before he says, “Can you go in the bathroom and get her.”

So I go upstairs and they’re just coming out of the hotel room.

And I go, “Hey Dan. Hey girlie-girl. Your friend is downstairs.”

And Dan is looking at me kind of funny. And I look at her and go “You have someone waiting downstairs for you. Your friend.”

And I did this to Dan. (Points to his ring finger.)

“Your FRIEND is downstairs, looking for you.”

So he was like, “OK.” And thinking “Well, we talked about it, and she said she wasn’t together.” And I remember I was there when they were talking about it. So they’re done. And I go back to the elevator with them, and we push the down button.

And Dan and the girl are talking and giggling. You know, after sex and in a good mood.

And “Ding!” the doors start to open. And there on the elevator is the angry girlfriend with a look of death on her face. And the doors fully open and the husband is right there, in his pilot outfit.

So I get on the elevator first. And then the wife gets on, and Dan gets on. And the guy figures it out immediately. He’d seen me downstairs talking, so he knew that it wasn’t me.

So they start yelling in a foreign language. And Dan and I, we had nothing to do but look at each other and stare at the ceiling. Those five floors down to the lobby were like the longest five floors I’ve ever spent on an elevator. Crazy people screaming in a foreign language.

It doesn’t matter what language this is, everyone knew what was going on. There was no goodbye. The elevator doors opened up. The friend with the look of death stormed out of the elevator. Dan and I get out, and jump out of the way of the husband and wife, who stormed out of the lobby yelling at each other.

So that was the only close call. And the husband was smaller. It’s like you’re not going to get in a fight with a huge Chippendale. I mean, even if I didn’t care for my roommate Dan, I’m not going to let him get beat up.

How was touring in the U.S. different from touring overseas?

We didn’t go on long tours, really. We would be in New York and then we would fly somewhere for two days, and then we’d fly back to New York, and then we’d fly somewhere else for two days.

The States were pretty good. It was much nicer to speak English to women, and not have that be an issue. And we were comfortable, we were in new hotels, and the restaurants served American food.

Women in other parts of America received us better than the women in New York did. Part of the problem is that in New York there are beautiful men everywhere who are chiseled and well put together and

sharp. But in rural Indiana, and rural Washington outside of Seattle, you don't find good catches like that with the men. So when Chippendales come to town, that's something.

Whereas in New York, you'll see ten models walk down the street. And then you'll go see a Chippendale's show and think, "Well, they look as good as the ten guys I saw on the street today. Not a big deal. Why should I tip them anything at all, when I see beautiful men all the time?"

The bar is set higher in New York and LA. That's where traditionally where models and actors gravitate too.

You mentioned the one dancer who had a GHB problem. Were drugs a big part of the Chippendale's scene?

It was an easygoing group of guys. If anything, pot was the main thing. Some guys would smoke it. Me, I like alcohol. I like to have drinks.

Some guys would do some harder stuff from time to time. Some guys would do shrooms. I'm sure some of the guys did coke, but that was actually more of the wardrobe guys and the stage guys. The thing is when you're traveling, you can't fly with pot. You can't fly with any drug.

The directors made that very clear. "We cannot be in the press for not getting through customs in some city in Germany because they found an ounce of heroin or an ounce of marijuana."

So if you wanted to have drugs on tour, you'd have to get them from the gay ensemble dancers. Somehow the gay guys with us could talk to the gay guys in whatever area we were in, and they could get their hands on anything. It was like gay people spoke another language. And then you'd have to use those drugs or get rid of them before your next flight.

But honestly, there wasn't a lot of crap that we would put in our bodies. Because if it was bad for the body, it was bad for our job. We didn't eat much shit, either. We would have a lot of chicken breasts.

Alcohol, we would drink a lot. We would get drunk. But we were never driving.

Was there any rivalry between the guys?

We would always keep track of who got the most screams. Kevin, the guy with the long blond Fabio hair, would always get the most. But we would throw him out, because they were cheering for his hair, not his performance.

We told him, “You don’t count, because you have that unfair advantage.” But it was never a jealous or bitter thing.

The interesting thing is that wherever we went, there would be a favorite. In general, the Europeans loved Kevin and his long hair. But each area had a favorite. And it was never the same. Like in Seattle, they liked our Puerto Rican guy the most, they would go nuts for him. And then in Indiana, they would go nuts for me and my roommate Dan, with his pretty eyes. And then somewhere else, they’d go nuts for Nathan. He was kind of a stockier build, and he had a military haircut, so he looked military.

So each place had its own favorite of the guys.

What did you like the most about your time as a Chippendale?

A lot of good friendships came out of it. The guys are pretty cool. They’re not divas. Straight guys get along for the most part. They aren’t smart, all things told. But they’re street smart. So they’re good with business.

I wouldn’t do it again, but I’m glad that I did it. I certainly got a lot more good out of it than bad. It doesn’t go on my resume, and I don’t tell people right away. Unless someone asks, I don’t bring it up, just because of the stereotype associated with being a stripper.

Chippendales, we didn't really consider ourselves strippers. I guess that's an arrogance thing. There's no higher form of stripping than Chippendales. And there's a whole lot worse. There are divvy hole crappy places, with pole dancing and going all the way with the full monty.

Chippendales is the classiest of the strippers. So even when I was on tour, I would never have introduced myself by saying "I'm a stripper." I would say, "I'm a Chippendale."

I guess they go hand in hand. Maybe it was just my mental way of justifying what I was doing.

But I don't think of it as a bad thing. Like I said, Mom came to a show. I never did anything that I wouldn't have a friend come and see.

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I hope you enjoyed the interview. If you haven't subscribed to my newsletter yet, you can do so at www.Keith-Hatman.com