

Chapter 9

'CIGARETTE SIRENS': THE EROTIC ANGLE

I am 6'1" tall, 180 lbs. black haired, brown eyes male. I very much enjoy watching women smoke. I am also very submissive. If you hate housework and want me as your slave to do cleaning, washing, ironing and what ever esle [sic] you ask i [sic] will. If all you want is to use me as a house slave fine, if you want me for sex i will do as told. All i ask is after i have served you, you will allow me the honour to watch you smoke while i worship at your feet. Age, size, race are unimportant, just an understading [sic] of my fetish. Any intrested [sic] ladies should e-mail me. 1lb@toronto.ark.com. For your referenced [sic] i am located in Toronto, Canada.

A CURIOUS PHENOMENON that may or may not be causally related to the antismoking crusade is the recent emergence of a subculture whose adherents (victims?) are obsessed with images of women smoking—the younger and more attractive the woman is (clothed or unclothed), the longer the cigarette or larger the cigar she wields and the denser the clouds of smoke she generates, the better. At least one newsletter, now growing into a full-fledged magazine, is devoted to the subject, as well as an Internet newsgroup called alt.sex.fetish.smoking, to which the plea above was posted.

Whether this subculture is a consequence of the antismoking crusade is problematic; most of those who belong to it have had the fetish from a very early age, before they became sexually conscious and presumably before they were bombarded with or became susceptible to organized antismoking propaganda. But it is also problematic whether

they would have the fetish if smoking were still as socially acceptable as it once was.

That the antismoking movement has played some role in fostering this subculture's growth, however, is suggested by the following excerpt from "my own personal story of my sexual fascination with women smoking" posted to alt.sex.fetish.smoking by "ideslovr@aol.com":

I can't recall when the attraction first started. In growing up, like most children, I considered smoking as not only taboo, but also "nasty," partially as a result of all the antismoking propaganda delivered in schools . . . Perhaps like drinking and messing around with girls in the backseat, smoking was attractive because of the taboo. I began to see smoking by the opposite sex as attractive.

Those who share this attraction invariably say that their first intimation of it came at a young age, usually in the preteen years but sometimes even earlier, as witness a letter to *Smoke Signals*, "A Monthly Newsletter Devoted to the Smoking Fetish":

I still do not know how those of us with this fetish acquired it. I know that I have had it since I was a very young child, because I remember seeing one of my mom's friends, who was attractive, smoke when I was a small child, and having a funny feeling in my genitals. This was long before I even knew what sex was! As a teenager, before I had any interest in sex, I remember watching one of the high school girls smoke, and it made my penis hard. I didn't know what was going on!

Confesses another:

My fetish comes from watching my aunt Eva, when I was 4 or 5 years old. I would play with her and after we stopped, I would watch her smoke white, non-filtered cigarettes. My aunt was a beautiful woman and beautiful smoker; one time she kissed me and my heart started pounding away! I would look forward to her coming over so I could watch her smoke.

"Confess" is used advisedly. Wrote the editor/publisher of *Smoke Signals* in its inaugural issue in September 1994: "Nobody knows how many men (or for that matter, women) are keeping this terrible 'secret' to themselves. But whenever a person who is captivated by the sight of a sexy smoker finally discovers a kindred spirit, the reaction is always the same: 'I thought I was the only one!'"

I first stumbled across *Smoke Signals*, and the fetish, while surfing the many smoking links on the World Wide Web in the course of researching for this book. I sent \$5 for a sample copy to the Providence, Rhode Island, address of the publication and received the December 1995 issue—a 12-page newsletter consisting of six individual sheets of paper stapled together at the top left corner, probably printed on a desktop printer, probably in the publisher’s home. (Nine months later the newsletter was still only 12 pages but commercially printed, the cover glossy stock, the pages gutter-stapled and folded over magazine style and the editor hopeful that it might eventually be available on newsstands. The magazine also now has a site on the Web.)

The first page and a half were taken up with an eminently sensible editorial I will quote from in Chapter 10. The next two pages carried letters from subscribers. For example:

Dear *Smoke Signals*: I don’t smoke myself, but I agree with you that watching women smoke is an incredible turn-on. I think most men (and women) believe that smoking is erotic but are afraid to admit it. It’s certainly a phallic image. Nothing gets me hotter than being on a date with a beautiful woman and discovering she smokes, when she reaches into her purse and comes out with a cigarette. Women in sexy lingerie who smoke are particularly hot, especially when they wear high-heel pumps. —Scott

The reaction of nonsmoker Scott stands in vivid contrast to that of a young fellow portrayed in an antismoking message I saw on television a few years ago. He is standing among a group of young people, at a disco or party or something, when he spots an attractive girl across the room. Just as he is about to approach her, however, she takes out a cigarette and lights it. His interested expression is immediately transformed into one of disappointment and disgust and he turns away, clearly writing her off as someone he might want to know.

As well as foregoing the chance to speak to the girl about the terrible thing she was doing to her body, and perhaps assist her in breaking her health-threatening habit, the boy in this antismoking ad might also have missed another opportunity with her, as suggested by another letter:

Dear *Smoke Signals*: In a recent letter from Duane, he had a theory that women smokers could be more likely to do ‘naughty’ things. There is no question that this is true. This makes more

sense than ever, considering that in this day and age smoking is perhaps the ultimate naughty behavior. A 1992 survey of young women ages 14-21 found that 81.6% of young women smokers were sexually active while only 33.3% of their nonsmoking counterparts were sexually active. This is an absolutely stunning difference! —Jason.

Jason didn't identify the survey but there is no reason not to believe it's as valid as the multitude of surveys cited by antismokers. Didn't there use to be a saying that "a girl who smokes cigarettes is a girl who will do anything"?

Next in the sample issue of the newsletter came "This Month's Smokin' Story!" This was a two-and-a-half-page tale, apparently non-fiction, by an anonymous writer who described how he acquired the fetish as a child watching his mother and female relatives smoke, a behavior he found "fascinating and exciting."

On page nine was "This Month's Reviews" of videotapes and photo sets. First of two featured was a tape by "Selena - 30 minutes - various brands - no sex or nudity. \$29.95 plus \$5.00 shipping. Coherent Light Photography, 60 E. 15th St. #184, Edmond, OK 73013-4301. Smoking videos and photos are available. They also have an artist available for custom smoking art."

The second was "Wicked Leather," a photo set by "Miss S." "Because we've gotten such a strong reaction to the photos done by Miss S., we're reviewing a new set that she's just produced. In 'Wicked Leather' she shows a more dominant side, posing in a leather outfit, with garters and chains and heavy makeup, while smoking long cigarettes, of course! There are several close-up shots of Miss S. in mid-french inhale or exhaling through her nose."

"Wicked Leather" consisted of "10 photos - 120mm cigarettes - no nudity. \$15.00 (cash, money order or check payable to Smoke Screen Productions, P.O. Box 221, Dept. S, Bridgeport, PA 19405. Various photo sets available; \$15 for ten pictures; \$25 for twenty pictures. Custom sets (20 photos) for \$40. Miss S. has also completed her first video, which is available for \$40."

Below this information was a black-and-white photograph of the somewhat less than stunning Miss S. "with a mouthful of smoke." That's what the caption said; the smoke was not discernible in the poor quality picture.

I guessed correctly what a “french (or French) inhale” was. (Why do we always identify the French with eroticism?) As for a “snap inhale,” which I came across later, I wasn’t sure until early in 1996 when *The Wall Street Journal* discovered the existence of the fetish and defined both terms (see below).

Following the video and photo review was “December’s TV and Video Rental Guide,” a listing of mainstream movies on tape and on cable TV in which even the briefest instance of a woman smoking, or just *holding* a cigarette, was called to the attention of the fetishists.

For example, under the heading of “Don’t Miss - Rentals” was the movie “Dolores Claiborne” in which “Jennifer Jason Leigh chain-smokes; as usual, she’s not an outstanding smoker, but this entry is better than her earlier work.”

“Mad Love”: “Drew Barrymore smokes throughout; there are many deep inhales, although the exhales aren’t great. The director has also unfortunately mastered the technique of cutting away just as Drew starts to take a drag.”

“Malicious”: “Even though the producers use her smoking to show that Molly Ringwald is a villain, there are a few outstanding scenes in this one.”

“Swimming with Sharks”: “One very nice sequence by Michelle Forbes, including several nose exhales.”

Under the category of “The Best of the Rest - Rentals” were:

“Cover Me”: “One very quick drag.” “Mirage”: “One incidental shot.” “New York Cop”: “One drag on a joint.”

As for whether any of these films were worth watching for the *story*, that apparently was of no interest to the readers of *Smoke Signals*.

Next came “This Month’s Best Smoking Shots” in magazines:

“*Us* for December has a fabulous full-face color shot of Elizabeth Shue, in mid-french inhale; thick, creamy smoke covers her lips. There’s also a nice posed head-and-shoulders shot of Mira Sorvino holding a cigarette, with a pack of Shermans on the table in front of her (proving she’s a *real* smoker!).

“The winter issue of *Cigar Aficionado* is out, and there is a lovely photo spread (with text, of course), on the growth of cigar smoking among the 20-something generation. Needless to say, there are several young ladies in their 20s who were more than happy to participate (alas, no good exhale shots, though).

“The usual foreign fashion magazines fall short this month, unfortunately. There *are* six shots in *Italian Glamour* for November, and also six shots in November’s *Italian Vogue*; they’re nice, but certainly not of the caliber that can drive you to actually consider laying out the twenty bucks or so it costs to buy the magazines in the States.”

The last page was an ad for two more videos, with accompanying photos:

“Cathy. This lovely brunette is a wonderful smoker. She chain smokes long white cigarettes in a holder, often french-inhaling, popping her hits [I’m still not sure what *that* means—D.O.] or taking double drags. And she obviously loves every single drag! See May’s *Smoke Signals* for review.”

“Zerina Dreams. Porn star and exotic model Zerina Dreams (64FF-26-36) smokes cigars as she changes lingerie and outfits in this outstanding video from the nation’s number-one producer of cigar fetish videos. See June’s *Smoke Signals* review.)”

It amazed me that men would actually lay out \$35 or \$40 for a half-hour video of not especially beautiful or even pretty women smoking a cigar or cigarette. If they really wanted to see women smoking all they had to do was watch some of the movies from the ’30s, ’40s and ’50s on American Movie Classics on cable TV. But perhaps those movies don’t appeal to them because, back when these films were made, the smoking by the actresses was natural and unposed; their smoking was purely incidental, not the whole focus of the film.

SPEAKING OF LAYING out good money, this one issue of *Smoke Signals* should have been enough for me. But chiefly because of the rationality demonstrated by the publisher in his editorial I quote from in Chapter 10, I was still curious about the kind of people who were wrapped up in this fetish, so I sprang for the ridiculous sum of \$39.95 for a year’s subscription to the newsletter. However, each issue proved to be much the same as the sample one, differing only with such new features as The Question of the Month (“Describe your ultimate fantasy smoker.” “Describe your best ‘sighting,’” etc.) and lists of both well-known and less-well-known actresses who not only smoke in films but are IRL (“in real life”) smokers. It seems to be very important to the fetishists to know—or to think—that a celebrity *really* smokes, not just pretends to.

Only two months later, in the February 1996 issue, the publisher could proclaim that “By the time you read this, our fetish may already have been put into the national (and international) spotlight. If all goes according to plan, the fetish will be showcased in, believe it or not, both *Playboy** and *The Wall Street Journal*, both of which are working on what they see as a fascinating story . . . Almost all of us remember the ‘I thought I was the only one’ feeling, and remember how long it took us to find out how wrong we were. Imagine how many smoking fetishists will see these articles, and will join our growing fetish community!”

The Wall Street Journal did indeed alert the world to the fetish on January 31 with a story headlined: “Drag Queens: Paula Puffs and Her Fans Watch, Enraptured.” Under that: “‘Smoxploitation’ Films Signal That Smoking Is Becoming a Fetish Among Many.”

Wrote staff reporter Suein L. Hwang: “Cigarette smoking, it seems, has fallen so far out of the mainstream that it has entered into the nether world of fetishes and erotica.” She quoted Dian Hanson, editor of *Leg Show*, a popular fetish magazine claiming a circulation of about 250,000: “Smoking is the fetish of the ’90s. Anytime anything becomes widely condemned and taboo, it will be eroticized.”

But the eroticism has limits. “Unlike some fetishists—those into underwear or shoes, for example,” Ms. Hwang reported, “many smoking fetishists don’t want overt sexual content muddying up the scenes . . . Smoking technique is paramount.” She quotes *Leg Show*’s Ms. Hanson again: “‘The exhale is very important—seeing smoke actually exiting the mouth. [Viewers] don’t want to see a long ash on [a cigarette]; they want to see lipstick on a cigarette.’”

They also want to see mastery of a technique called the “French inhale,” which Ms. Hwang described as an actress letting smoke out of her mouth and inhaling it through the nostrils, and the “snap inhale,”

*Some time after writing this chapter I happened to be browsing through the February 1998 issue of *Playboy* (looking for an article, of course) and came across a small ad at the bottom of page 147 placed by a company offering videos of “Gorgeous female models, elegantly dressed, smoking cigarettes and cigars!” I wonder how many readers of a mainstream men’s magazine like *Playboy*, who are usually interested in elegantly *undressed* models (as well as the articles, of course), would be attracted to the smoking fetish. I’ve never seen the ad again in subsequent issues (while looking for articles, of course.)

in which she allows a puff of smoke to emanate from her mouth before quickly drawing it back in.

Unfortunately, the smoking art—or at least a filming session of it—is long and life is short.

“Paula, now an Oklahoma college senior who won’t reveal her last name, quit smoking just two weeks after shooting her namesake video,” the article ends. “I smoked a pack of cigarettes in three hours and it’s pretty sickening,” she says. “I was tired of it by the end of filming. I was just green.”

Some people will find the smoking fetish pretty weird and even disgusting. Others, less condemnatory, will consider it merely silly and essentially harmless morally, if not harmless from a health standpoint. But even with “normal” people, smoking has always been associated to some degree with sex, whether it is the proverbial cigarette enjoyed in the afterglow of intercourse or simply the idea of “naughtiness” or daring, which for many if not most of us enhances sexual feeling.

What might be called a more normal combination of smoking and sex is described in a message found in Robert Wagner’s Internet pages, alt.smokers.faq (“frequently asked questions”). From “laszlo@alpha1.csd.uwm.edu (Tyson F Nuss)”:

I hold my cigaret to her lips, and she takes a full drag and inhales. We then press our lips together in a sensual, moist, insistent French kiss. While kissing, I inhale while she exhales, so that I draw my breath from my lover’s lungs. Then I return the same breath, and we continue sharing the same air until one of us is gets too dizzy to continue.

Another variation: She takes a drag, inhales, and we bring our lips very close together, but without touching. She exhales a plume of smoke as if blowing a kiss, and I inhale, receiving her air-kiss. This is very subtly, insidiously sensual.

I say this is “more normal” only because I can personally relate to it. On one occasion, many, many years ago before we were married, my wife-to-be and I were sitting and smoking in my car in a park. For some reason we began to blow smoke into each other’s faces as we alternately smoked and kissed. This progressed to where, similar to the procedure described above, we would each take a deep drag and then blow it gently into the other’s mouth, then receive the smoke back in like manner, again and again until a fresh infusion of smoke was needed.

I suppose it was erotic, but for both of us it was simply a spontaneous, different and fun thing to do. It was certainly not an essential component of or precondition for sexual arousal and we never repeated it.

As I said above, subsequent issues of *Smoke Signals* were much the same as the first, but each one provided a little more insight into the fetish, and those consumed with it. In January, for example, “Dar” wrote that “I am glad that smoking videos are produced without porn and sex. The porn stuff is frankly uninteresting. What is exciting is [*sic*] the close-ups of women’s lips, their hands holding the cigarette to their lips, and most of all, the smoke itself!”

To which the editor/publisher commented: “Most of the readers we’ve heard from regarding sex in smoking fetish videos agree with you, but there are still quite a few who like to see some more explicit action in their videos. Our read is that people who have a strong and exclusive smoking fetish find the sexual action distracting; those who have the fetish as just one part of their sexuality, prefer a more ‘varied diet.’”

Makes sense to me. Yet as seems to be the case in other aspects of life, those who find “explicit action” not just distracting but offensive are the ones most vocal about it. Wrote “Christian” in a later issue: “I was very disappointed when I received my May issue and saw the review of a video that included nudity and masturbation. Please! I realize that you are trying to offer items that appeal to everyone; however, I have no desire to watch a woman masturbate or play with her breasts (yuck!). I hope that in the future you will offer more videos of women who are fully clothed while they smoke. That turns me on more than anything.”

SO JUST WHAT IS it about seeing women smoking, with or without clothes, with or without engaging in explicit sex, that turns the fetishist on? “From the Publisher” in the February 1996 *Smoke Signals* may provide some insight:

“I was asked by *Playboy* for some thoughts on the fetish,” he began. “Not knowing how much (if any) of that material they’ll use, I thought it might be worth sharing the material with you. I hope it reflects, in some way, the thoughts and feelings of our readers, gathered after years of speaking with and hearing from hundreds of you. There are many opinions and theories as to why men (AND women!) find smoking attractive, sexy and alluring.”

He then suggested the following:

- Women who smoke are self-confident, sophisticated and socially adept; they handle their smoking with confidence and style.
- Women who smoke are “naughty”; they deliberately do something that is sometimes (today, more than ever!) viewed as unacceptable, unfeminine or just plain “wrong.”
- Women who smoke are more relaxed, carefree, fun-loving and not as uptight; many guys see smoking as a reflection of the attitude: “I do what I like.”
- Women who smoke are more often confident of their sexuality; they may even use their smoking as a “tool” or “prop” to attract attention.
- Finally, many can’t even explain the reason for their attraction to women who smoke, any more than some guys can explain why they’re attracted to women with long hair or nice legs. Plain and simple, it just turns them on.

“There are also some ‘deeper’ aspects of the fetish or attraction that we hear at times,” the publisher of *Smoke Signals* continued. “Some with the fetish are attracted to dominant women who smoke, with the smoking one symbol of their dominance (it seems that those who feel this way are less likely to smoke themselves, increasing the symbolism of the woman in charge who’s ‘allowed’ to smoke). Less common aspects that we also hear involve a Freudian oral fixation . . . or an attraction to women who are heavy smokers dependent on their habit (we’re not quite sure what the psychological basis is for that, but there probably is one).”

As for what exactly it is that fetishists are attracted to, he lists the three most common answers:

- The exhale—French inhaling, inhaling through the nostrils, blowing smoke rings, etc. “It’s quite sensuous and alluring, particularly when women are ‘accomplished’ or ‘talented’ smokers.”
- The manner—how they handle their cigarettes and their inhaling and exhaling.
- What’s being smoked—women who smoke long cigarettes, women who smoke cigarettes with white filters or brown filters, women who smoke strong cigarettes, women who smoke cigars or women who use cigarette holders.

He concludes:

Those who might claim that the tobacco industry perpetuates the “myth” that smoking is attractive or sexy totally ignore the social history. Obviously, dating back to the early days of women taking up smoking in America, there was a sexual mystique surrounding women who smoke (a recent book of postcards from the era 1890-1930 clearly demonstrates that fact), and the way that female smoking was portrayed in early American films (I’m sure most people have very clear memories of the way smoking was portrayed in the black and white films of the ’30s and ’40s) makes it clear that there has always been a ‘sexual component.’ The Virginia Slims ads of the ’60s, to use one example, didn’t CREATE that perception, they REFLECTED it. [Caps in original.]

In the second anniversary issue of *Smoke Signals*, September 1996, the publisher reprinted part of his editorial in the very first issue, in which he had quoted from a magazine called *Platinum* that “if you want to draw a bead on the American psyche, look no further than American cinema—the who, what, where and why of how we live our lives is all right there. If it happens on the street, it happens on the screen . . . Bogart, Davis, Dietrich, Dean. In countless scenes and studio publicity photos, smoke forever curls from the lips of our favorite stars. Whatever the image desired by the studio, the history of film is a history of smoking.” Commented the publisher:

It should not, then, come as any surprise that many people have fixated on smoking as an object of sexual desire or arousal. For some, it is just preference that their partner smoke. *For others, it is a necessity.* [Emphasis added.] That difference is crucial, when it comes to understanding some people’s fixation on a link between smoking and sex . . .

[S]tudies in psychological and psychiatric journals have found smoking to be a common focus of this sort of sexual behavior. Further, most studies conclude that there is little or nothing that can be done to ‘cure’ any sort of fetish, and a wide variety of experts has concluded that as long as the fetish is one without a victim, there’s no reason to try to change it.

So, what does this say to people who are attracted to smokers or have a smoking fetish? Basically: relax, accept it as just one of many parts of your identity, and enjoy it!

AT RISK OF BELABORING the subject, a few more reader comments from other issues of *Smoke Signals*:

My personal preference is for girls and young women who look way too sweet and innocent to be smokers. —Bob

In response to a Question of the Month—“Describe the first sexy smoker you can ever remember seeing”—an unidentified reader wrote:

My first memory of a sexy smoker was at a wedding reception which I attended when I was 12. The woman was the cousin of [the bride]. This woman was in her early to mid 20s and was absolutely gorgeous! She was seated directly across from me at a small table which sat only six people, so I wasn't more than three or four feet from her for the entire evening. She wore very heavy dark red lipstick, had beautiful long dark red fingernails, and smoked Herbert Tareyton Cork Tips.

. . . I watched her smoke cigarette after sexy cigarette all night long. She must have known that she was turning me on, because she frequently looked directly at me and smiled as she dragged, or inhaled, or exhaled. Sometimes she would blow the thick smoke in my direction as she smiled at me. Until that night I was kind of an anti-smoker. Suddenly, I didn't mind cigarette smoke as long as it was an attractive woman or girl who was smoking.

On the other hand, “Michael” thought that “Even a plain Jane can be suddenly transformed into a beautiful, alluring creature with the addition of a long, thick, good-quality cigar.”

In response to “Describe your most memorable sighting,” another unnamed reader wrote:

The sighting I still remember most was during the spring before I turned 12. Up until that point, I had followed the household party-line—viciously anti-smoking all the way. But then, while I was on an application tour at a private school, at some kind of official function at the end of the day, I saw one of the mothers, and my life changed forever. Striking red hair, impeccably dressed (imagine a woman coming out of a Wall Street boardroom and you'll have the right image), appeared to be smoking B&H [Benson & Hedges] or VS [Virginia Slims] or something similar, executing a perfect nose exhale. I think it was at that moment that sexual attraction became something more than just theoretical for me (even though she was easily three or four times my age).

If watching a beautiful woman smoke can cause even a “viciously antismoking” guy to defect from the ranks, no wonder the antis are so upset when attractive people are shown smoking in movies or on tele-

vision. (It’s okay for the villain to smoke, although that’s bad enough.) It is no accident that television news broadcasts about the “latest smoking study” are invariably illustrated with unflattering closeups of homely people sucking on the weed.

In another issue of *Smoke Signals* the question was asked, “If you met your dream woman, but her smoking was only ordinary, what advice would you give her to make her smoking perfect?” One reader responded:

No single factor can alone make a truly glamorous smoker, but one possibly underappreciated factor might be the tip and ash management. I like a nice, rounded tip, slightly pointy, and to observe an orange glow as much as possible. It turns me off when the tip is uneven and blackened, as if it is about to burn out. The single most important thing, of course is *never ever* use thumb and forefinger. [Emphasis in original.]

So much for male smoking fetishists. Are there any female ones? Well, there is at least one, unnamed, who submitted a first-person story to the August 1996 issue of *Smoke Signals*. I think it’s worth quoting in full:

I always used to think that my feelings about cigarettes and smoking were unusual, but thanks to your publication, I now know that I am not as unique or bizarre as I had believed. Obviously, untold numbers of people share the smoking fetish.

For me, the association of smoking with extreme pleasure and sexuality began when I was still in grade school. I remember thinking how attractive and pretty a long, white cigarette looked when held gracefully between a woman’s fingers. My best friend had an older sister named Valerie, a very gorgeous and very mature girl who was in her teens, and I was so impressed by her and her girlfriends, all of whom smoked and seemed so cool to me. In my eyes, they were fully developed young women who got to wear makeup, go out on dates, and right along with that, they smoked cigarettes, almost as if to say, “I’m not afraid of anything.” I was so intrigued by the image of these “naughty” girls, participating in what was obviously a rebellious, even forbidden, gesture.

Valerie always wore bright pink lipstick and shiny lip gloss to accentuate her full lips, and I would gaze in total fascination and be hypnotized as I watched her perform the smoking ritual. She would tap a pack of cigarettes, open the box and pull out one long, white filter-tipped 120 [millimeter] cigarette, and put it between her pretty lips. She looked to me so wild, young and hungry, sucking deeply,

taking all that lovely warm white smoke deep into her lungs. She exhaled with a sly pout that spoke volumes: “ah, pure pleasure . . .” she seemed to say. I loved everything about it, the softness of the filter tip, the long white length, the heat and glow of the orange tip which would brighten with each hard pull her mouth took on it. To this day, I am still captivated by this very sexy, erotic act. Oddly enough, I am a non-smoker, as my boyfriend dislikes the idea of my smoking. I like it this way, because I will never become immune to the pleasant sensation smoking gives me, and it will always be reserved for special occasions. Occasionally I will have a cigarette, always in private. I usually smoke it very slowly and deliberately, and wow! Do I enjoy every deep drag! It actually makes me feel amazingly good like nothing else.

My closet fetish has changed my life in the sense that I am always on the lookout for sexy pictures or films of women smoking. I must confess to enjoying lunch hour in the city where I work. Because of the no-smoking ordinances, attractive young women huddle together in all kinds of weather, greedily smoking away in little cliques, sucking in nicotine hungrily. It looks like a real bonding experience shared by lady smokers, like a secret club, which I think is adorable. I guess it all goes back to the days when Valerie and her teenaged girlfriends who looked so pretty and were so “cool” would fill the room full with cigarette smoke, looking so mischievous and sexy as they practiced french inhaling and chain-smoked together for hours. Thanks, *Smoke Signals*.

What a refreshing contrast that letter is to the dismal propaganda of the antismokers, who are incapable of appreciating the true virtues of the noble weed!

I also found a couple messages of a different nature from females on alt.sex.fetish.smoking, which is another treasure trove of material on the fetish. One wrote: “Hi guys, I love to smoke during all kinds of sex. Send me some hot e-mail and tell me what you like. — Kim.” Another: “I love to give head to smokers. I’d love to talk about it. — LuAnn.”

Lest anyone be tempted to contact these ladies(?) I’ve deleted their e-mail addresses, both in the interest of upholding American morality and because women, and sometimes men posing as women, have been known to use the Internet to promote scams aimed at the sexually desperate.

Another long message was posted on April 28, 1996 by “Jenny” on alt.sex.masturbation and alt.sex.stories, as well as alt.sex.fetish.smoking. It was prefaced by a challenge to story writers to come up with the best

learning-to-smoke and sexual-awakening story based on an electronic conversation she had with “Margo” via what is called Internet Relay Chat. What follows has been edited for length only:

jenny: hi
margo: hi jenny
margo: where are you
jenny: palo alto
jenny: lez or bi
margo: i'm in seattle
margo: lez you??
jenny: lez
jenny: is 19 your age
margo: are you really 15???
jenny: just turned 16
margo: happy birthday
jenny: thanx
margo: you are welcome sweet
jenny: is 19 your age
margo: yes i'm 19
margo: what are you doing up at this time of morning
jenny: can't fucking sleep
margo: alright
margo: would you like to talk??
jenny: fuck yes
margo: i'm in the middle of puget sound on this computer
margo: is your family sleeping
jenny: mom is out with her gf [girlfriend] i'm alone
margo: cool
jenny: r u in school
margo: yes u of w [University of Washington]
margo: i assume you are to
jenny: soph in HS [high school]
margo: doing well???
jenny: pretty good
margo: glad to hear that
jenny: i'm 5'2 long blonde hair blue eyes small tits
jenny: so what do you look like
margo: i'm 5' blonde hair blue eyes 95lbs 34-25-36
jenny: :) [an Internet “icon” indicating a smile viewed sideways]
margo: small can be beautiful
jenny: speaking of small how big are your tits
margo: i have a 34c
jenny: i'm barely a 32b but I dont wear a bra anyway

margo: probably don't need one i don't wear thos things either
jenny: cool
jenny: i need t get some matches brb [be right back]
jenny: i'm back
margo: :)(: [smile, frown]
jenny: do you smoke?
margo: yeah nasty habit but life without vice would be very dull indeed
jenny: i smoke vs120's
margo: me winston lights but i think i'm going to try to quit before i
get in too deep
jenny: my gf kelly got me started when I was 13 she said it made me
sexier she fucking started at 12
margo: tell me about kelly
jenny: well she's about 5'4 very thin maybe 90 lbs, very small tits
maybe 30a, long sandy brown hair, brown eyes, she looks like
she's still 12, but she smokes 2 packs a day and says fuck in al-
most every sentence, and masturbates twice as much as me—
if you can fucking believe that.
margo: you believe it makes you sexier???
jenny: kind of like how i look in the mirror
margo: well alright
jenny: what about u
margo: what do you mean
jenny: you believe it makes you sexier?
margo: smoking? not really ever have a cigarette [*sic*] during sex?
jenny: not really but I smoke when I masturbate in front of the mirror
margo: do you??
jenny: yes
jenny: do you smoke when you masturbate?
margo: i get too excited to smoke i'd probably burn the place down
jenny: I masturbate a fucking lot usually three times a day
margo: i do it a lot if i don't have a girlfriend

There were no more references to smoking. The balance of the conversation dealt with the girls' masturbation frequencies and techniques and their lesbian experiences.

I encountered another Jenny on the World Wide Web, Jenny G., the author of "Jenny's Teen Smoking Page" (www.eccentrica.org/teensmoke). This site featured photographs of wholesome-looking young girls smoking cigarettes, evidently sent in by the girls themselves. Other pages carried letters from fans of female smoking, mostly from males. (Jenny G. also hosts, or used to host, another Website called

“Jenny’s Teen Lesbian Page.” Why so many young female smokers seem to be lesbians, I couldn’t say.)

Links from Jenny’s smoking page took me to other teen smoking Websites, letters to which I quote from in Chapter 10, as well as several run by adult female smokers, including “Sabrina’s Smoking Chat House,” Ciara’s “ciara2sexy/Personal WBS Home Page” and Suzy’s “suzysmokesex/Personal WBS Home Page.” Here’s how the latter introduces herself:

Hello, I’m Suzy and I am your ultimate smoking fetish. I’m a student at an eastern university and I am a professional cigarette smoker. I’ll blow smoke in your face. I’ll ash your carpet and I’ll burn your furniture. You’ll be so aroused by my luxurious smoking style you’ll be unable to control yourself. I enjoy being with women as much as I do men but men will submit to me and my sexy cigarette and my collection of long, sophisticated holders. Once you see me smoking in my leather outfits, heavy make up and bright red lipstick you’ll know I’m a woman of class and elegance. I’ve made a few home videos of myself smoking which is only appropriate since I model part time when I’m not attending classes and I may offer my smoking videos for sale in the near future so you must “cum” visit my site often.

On alt.sex.fetish.smoking, “p006778b@pbffreenet.seflin.lib.fl.us (J.C.)” revealed to the news group what happened when his wife started smoking:

She tried smoking during sex, and we fucked like hell and she masturbated to a hot, hot cum! Next day she bought her first pack, and in about 3 days she was hooked. Smokes about half a pack a day now and masturbates plenty, and does girls as well. Any other girls start smoking recently and notice increase in your sex drive?

As these examples suggest, for some reason that shrinks might want to look into, a lot of female smokers, both “professional” and amateur, seem to be inclined towards all kinds of sex, both heterosexual and lesbian. Does smoking activate their libidos, as J.C. asks, or do they smoke because they are already highly charged sexually?

It is also evident that if some females are turned on by smoking, it is their *own* smoking or that of other women. Others may be turned on by the knowledge that their smoking excites men. In all my explorations of this subject, however, I have yet to come across a female who

is excited by a *male's* smoking. For good reason has the smoking fetish been called a new form of pornography, which historically has been almost exclusively a male interest. (Heterosexual pornography, that is; smoking does not seem to play any erotic role in gay pornography.)

But what if you've got a girl (and the fetish) and she doesn't smoke? "Choralmike@aol.com (Choralmike)" posted this message on alt.sex.fetish.smoking:

"Any advice out there for me? I'd love to get my girlfriend to start smoking. Problem is, she's shy, straightlaced, and 'semi' antismoking. I think she'd do just about anything to please me sexually, but I haven't a clue how to even get started on this idea. Please e-mail me or post here with any ideas/advice. Thanks."

"Jay Messersmith rhvohvo@popd.ix.netcom.com" replied:

"I was in the same boat. And my girlfriend is very similar to the qualities you describe. But after a lot of playing guessing games, I finally came out to her. We tried VSL (Virginia Slims Lights) 120s, but she couldn't get used to the taste. It was thru this newsgroup that I learned about, and decided to try, clove cigarettes. It was the best decision I ever made. She's been doing this for me for about five months now, and learning how to French inhale. I enjoy teaching her, and the effects of everything else too. Although she doesn't like 'real' cigarettes, she says the cloves make her feel sexy, and it's kind of like 'her' brand."

"kfenske@fast.net (Ken)" agreed that "Cloves are a great way to get a girlfriend to smoke. They are really good tasting from the start and a semi-anti can be easily convinced that it's not a 'real' cigarette."

However, "Brian Murphy CA 1clbmurph@compapp.dcu.ie" cautioned: "You should be real careful when trying to introduce your partner to a personal fetish at the best of times but when it's something that could, at an extreme, harm her health then you should really ask how important it is to you."

Brian evidently decided it was very important to him, however. He continued:

I've been with my girlfriend for many years now and it's only recently that I've managed to fully share this fetish with her. I guess I started by gently letting it be known that I'd like it if we could share a cigarette together at times . . . For me, my girlfriend is now what I would call a social smoker. If somebody offers she will take a cigarette and when we're alone she'll sometimes smoke. She knows

I find it attractive and she really hasn't got a problem with it. But it took me years of thinking about how to go about introducing her to this wonderful habit to get where we are today. Today, she's quite happy to smoke in bed and even during sex. I guess she knows that it's a power she has over me.

Ah, but the rewards of giving one's girl that power are great. Writes “y7mark@aol.com (Y7 Mark)”:

My girlfriend always told me she would never smoke. Then one day she said, “I'm so glad you don't smoke.” To which I replied, “It wouldn't bother me if you smoked.” . . . Later that night, I bought her cigarettes, on the premise that it was a joke.

It started a whole new page in our relationship. Later that night we had the greatest sex while she smoked a cigarette. Now she masterbates [*sic*] while smoking and tells me about it later . . . The greatest thrill I had is one day when she was in the shower. I was looking for a pen and found a pack of cigarettes that she had purchased on her own. She was becoming a fullfledged smoker . . . And then just a few weeks ago, we were going out and she was out of cigarettes but said she had another pack in her glove compartment. I got an instant hard-on.

On the other hand, some people who are heavily into sex are turned off by smoking, by females and males alike. For example, people who advertise in “swingers” magazines specifying they wish to meet non-smokers only. (“You can sleep with my wife, just don't smoke in her presence.”)

A mail-order catalog for pornographic videotapes I happened to see, from a company called Leisure Time Products, had several one-page articles on various sexual subjects interspersed among its offerings. They were thoughtful and well-written, even had scholarly references. One of the pages roundly condemned smoking as a dirty and disgusting habit and totally unerotic. The article was surrounded by dozens of pictures of women with their faces splattered all over with semen.

As they say, different strokes for different folks.

Later, quite fortuitously, I ran across a site on the World Wide Web which evidently was the source of these articles. A disclaimer stated that the sexual content of the site was not intended to appeal to the prurient-minded. It's name: “Kinkysexacts.com.”

* * *

GETTING BACK TO the voyeuristic aspects of the fetish, in a posting to alt.sex.fetish.smoking, “75110.1153@compuserve.com (Ken)” asked anyone who had pics of pregnant smokers to “please post them!” He told about a pregnant smoker who was a coworker of his a few years before:

I worked at a computer center and most of the operators smoked in the computer room, those were the days! Anyway, this one woman was about 5 foot 2, thick and brown hair. She was quite attractive and smoked constantly. She was never without a cig and must have smoked almost 3 packs a day of Marlboro Reds. She became pregnant and I was surprised that she didn’t alter her consumption at all. It was really nice to come in every day and talk to her about her pregnancy and whatnot while she had a cig hanging out of her mouth. Near the end she even seemed to increase her consumption to combat the stress of the pregnancy.

Then, with words to make a pediatrician roll his eyes heavenward:

She returned for a visit during maternity leave with a beautiful baby boy in fine health. She said she was breast feeding and she was obviously still a heavy smoker. I would have loved to see her breastfeed while enjoying a smoke.

I can hear the antis saying, “Sure, maybe the baby *looked* healthy, but it was probably underweight and mentally retarded and will develop all kinds of physical and psychological problems later.” Today, indeed, such a mother’s behavior might even be grounds for taking her child away from her (see Chapter 8).

I had an experience similar to Ken’s when I worked for a time in a new Wal-Mart store in Roswell, Georgia, during my third retirement. The district manager, a reformed smoker but not the type who demanded that everyone follow his example, ordered the employees’ break lounge to be partitioned off to give us smokers our own room. (Non-smokers would occasionally stick their heads in the door and cough elaborately.) One of the denizens of this den of iniquity was a very pregnant young woman. I never had the nerve to ask her if she was aware of all the warnings about smoking during pregnancy, much less ask her why she ignored them. I never saw her again after she left to have the baby, so I don’t know if it was healthy or not. Skeptical of the

antismoking medical establishment as I am, and especially since seeing the studies of smoking and pregnancy from Wanda Hamilton’s bibliography that I cited in Chapter 3, I would bet that it was. That’s just a guess, of course, as my personal knowledge on this subject is limited by the fact that my wife stopped smoking while she was carrying our son. He was, however, unaffected by exposure to the secondhand smoke of two parents after his birth and all through his childhood.

In one of the most imaginative letters I saw in *Smoke Signals*, “George” made the following suggestion:

I just had an idea. While stories and videos are great turn-ons for us, we all really crave the excitement of being in the presence of a sexy lady smoker, smelling the smoke, even receiving smoky kisses. One of the best things about this fetish is that it allows us smoking spectators to basically engage in sex in public in a perfectly legal manner. This may even extend to watching underage smokers. No one gets hurt, and all we’re doing is watching a legal activity. Well, because smoking is sexual to us and perfectly legal, I thought it might be interesting to set up services in various locations where your readers live that would have sexy women (18 or over) smokers perform in person, one on one, with a client. For a fee, the smoker would smoke, even share smokey [*sic*] kisses and it’s all legal as long as no other sex goes on. The client could request certain techniques like nose exhales, smoke rings, cigarette holders, cigars, specific brands, etc. As this would be legal, you could advertise for women smokers to participate and make money, and you could actually run a personal-ad type section for men wishing to make these connections. It may sound a bit weird at first, but think about it. What could be a better nirvana for us?

Smokehouses instead of cathouses? Sorry, George, the antis would never allow it. And remember what happened to Paula, the fetish-video star.

Another idea to facilitate the “legal” observation of smoking women was suggested by another posting by “Ken” on alt.sex.fetish.smoking:

It occurred to me that a great place to see women smoking heavily is one of those smoking cessation programs where they make you smoke continuously for an hour . . . It might be a great way to chain smoke in public with the women really getting off. Afterwards you can hang around and perform a public service by helping people off the wagon and perhaps pick someone up and

give them whole new reasons to smoke. I think that people who go into these things are misguided anyway, they've gotten into a rut and need something to make smoking exciting again.

You can always dream, Ken.

An anonymous contributor to this news group related how he watched two women smoking in a restaurant:

One, a delicately pretty and nicely attired blond of maybe 35-40, caught my notice in particular. Immediately upon being seated, she reached for a Va Slims Light 100 . . . Then, adeptly and nonchalantly, she broke the filter off it and lit the no-longer filtered end. She smoked with a wonderful demureness—slow, steady pulls, reasonably long and deep breaths of the strong smoke, slow exhales, discarding the end only when it was down to an inch or so. After a while she enjoyed another, same lovely unfiltered technique.

He concluded, “There are some good things about this trend of separate smoking areas in restaurants.”

Finally, from “sksmk@aol.com (SKSMK)”, the most unusual variation on the fetish I have seen (emphases in original):

I've seen through this newsgroup that this fetish takes on many forms. Here's another. As a nonsmoker with the fetish I've experimented for several years with “smoke pumps” that produce smoke and that I employ in various fantasies (I'd never dream, or so I thought, that I'd ever divulge [*sic*] any info about my fetish to anyone). Well a friend figured out what turned me on and got me to tell her all about it. She doesn't smoke but has seen me watching women smoke for years. She wanted to know all about the smoke pump. Finally I agreed to show it to her. We went to a secluded place where I could show her how it worked. It smokes several large cigars (cigarettes are used up too soon and cigar smoke is *much* more effective.) The pump uses up to twenty cigars at once and can produce large quantities of very thick smoke.

She was really turned on by the thought of using the thing on me and, unknown to me, had procured [*sic*] some very heavy restraints. I set it for her, not expecting, but hoping that something would develop. Before I knew it, after the pump was producing smoke she was taking off my clothes. She forced me down onto a bed in the very same room (with little resistance from me) and proceeded to restrain me until I was unable to move. Then she started repositioning the hoses from the smoke machine so they

were aimed strategically at me. Then much to my ecstasy [*sic*], dense, soft smoke began coming for me. Soon the entire bed was covered with a thick fog. She puffed smoke over me again and again until she couldn't take it anymore either and mounted me. While I struggled under her, the smoke kept puffing down over me while she stayed on me. Needless to say things went *very* well and we'll be repeating the whole event soon.

REGRETTABLY, THE ADVICE of the publisher of *Smoking Signals* to “relax and enjoy” notwithstanding, there is a dark side to the smoking fetish. While many, perhaps most, enthusiasts of smoking videos or photographs seem to be satisfied with this form of voyeuristic sex-by-suggestion or sex-by-proxy, others are gravely burdened by a life-complicating and often frustrated need for smoking plus *real* sex with a *real* woman. One rather pitiful example was an anonymous posting to alt.sex.fetish.smoking in April 1996:

I have had a fetish about smoking women since my teenage years and am now in my early forties. Throughout those 30 years I have found it has varied from being very exciting to something relatively unimportant, but nevertheless always there. It is something that I have never felt entirely comfortable with, and despite the excitement I have felt that I know regular readers of this group can readily relate to, it is something that I would rather not have, if I am honest with myself. Particularly now, as it is fundamental to problems I am having in my marriage. Let me explain.

Anonymous (who apparently does not smoke himself) states that we must first go back 20 years, to a time when “I, like many others who have posted here, thought I was abnormal and a bit weird”:

It was then that I met the woman who was to become my wife. I fell in love with her as a complete person and it didn't seem to be much more than a bonus at the time that she was also a smoker. It wasn't long before she started to notice that I had a bit of a “thing” about watching her smoke. I would try very gently to bring the “thing” to the surface more and more. This was a very gradual process taking years rather than months. After being together 6 or 7 years, she let me take some pictures of her smoking, albeit somewhat bashfully in the process. They would be quite appreciated in this group, I can tell you! This was the golden era of the relationship in some respects, because at this stage she was a confirmed smoker who quite readily admitted she loved smoking.

After being together 10 years, she became pregnant with our first child. She knew she ought to quit, but she was addicted and still liked smoking, so she continued to smoke, albeit a bit less than usual. As time went on after the birth [presumably normal?—D.O.], her smoking consumption soon returned to its previous level. It was around that time that I began to notice a change in her smoking. Before the child was born, she used to just smoke for pleasure in a relaxed way, but she was now often to be seen smoking fast and furious in the breaks between tending to our child. Instead of sitting down to smoke with a drink, book or TV, she would grab a cigarette while doing something like putting dishes away. She would now start to take a drag, remove the cigarette to inhale, then put the cigarette back in her mouth while exhaling so she could carry on working. She had become a stress smoker as well.

Our second child was born 6 years ago and this one was quite demanding on being fed during the night [but otherwise also normal?—D.O.]. After one of the many feeding sessions in the middle of the night, my wife came back to bed with a cigarette. Being the typical man, I usually slept through all this, but something made me stir into that semi-awake state. I leaned over to kiss her and got to her lips as she was in mid-exhale. She tasted delicious. I came to and said I wanted to make love. She asked if I could wait until she had finished her cigarette. I said that I couldn't wait and, yes, after 14 whole years I at last made love to my wife while she smoked. It was wonderful and I told her so.

For the next 5 years she would often smoke while we made love. At long last I had achieved what I had always wanted, and she said she was quite happy doing it some of the time, but not always. I was happy too.

Then a year ago, out of the blue, she said she was going to quit smoking. She felt ashamed of the kids having to grow up with a smoking mother and the bad influence it represented. Besides, she had been smoking for 20 years and that was long enough. I knew what she was saying made perfect sense, but I also felt devastated about the prospect of losing something that excited me and I loved. By this time I had discovered *alt.sex.fetish.smoking* and realized I was not alone in my fetish. I decided to lay all my cards on the table and explain how I felt. She seemed to understand.

During the ensuing seven months Mrs. Anonymous somewhat reluctantly agreed to occasional smoking during or as a prelude to sex to please her husband.

But then came “another bombshell.” Anonymous “lost out badly in a company restructure” and became very agitated. An additional

business venture he and his wife had started was not doing well, adding to his agitation.

So my wife chose the very same time to give up smoking. This time she didn't warn me—she just did it. She said we needed to save some money, and this was the only way she could do it. Besides, as I was so agitated about other things anyway, she might just as well get everything over with together. Despite all the sense I knew it made, I still flipped.

Anonymous begs his wife to delay quitting until after all their other problems had subsided. He tells her he will find some means of ridding himself of his fetish, perhaps through hypnotherapy, when they could afford it. He endures three weeks of her not smoking, the longest she had ever abstained.

But it didn't last. Her addiction was too great and she gave in, but no way did I ask or persuade her to start again. Things were different now. She banned smoking in all upstairs rooms, and included our bedroom as her smoking there would encourage my fetish, and that was no good, so she said. But she continues to smoke in the lounge and kitchen. She is back to the same level of smoking as before, but there is going to be no return to the way things used to be.

I feel hurt and rejected by this action. O.K., if she had totally given up, that would be one thing and I would at least know where I stood. But she still smokes, and although she knows I miss it, she is standing her ground. We haven't made love since. Not because I couldn't do it without her smoking. I thought she understood when I came clean a year ago, but she can't really have, and that's what hurts.

So let's face it, this fetish is now hell to live with. I don't have any others, but I tell you it is agony to live with someone who said she was happy to indulge it, and then withdraw the indulgence without warning, yet I still have to see her smoking. Wouldn't life be so much simpler without it? I could encourage her in giving up like I know I should without any of the feelings of rejection and resentment that I have experienced for the last 3 months.

The marriage is beginning to creak as a result of this. I have realized that ridding myself of the fetish may possibly be the only way to pull things round. But what can I try? And will it work? Remember, we are talking 30 years experience here! And what about the other extreme? Supposing I am to totally remove the fetish and I then find my wife's continuing to smoke repulsive?

I hope some of you have persevered this far. For those that have, I am sorry that this is such a negative thing to post in a group that primarily wishes to enjoy the smoking fetish. Many of you will be like I was 20 years ago and you feel excited to see women smoking and even more so when you start dating a smoker. You will feel you want to explore your interest with her, and to those I say good luck, but tread carefully! Others may feel that the fetish is more of a burden than a pleasure to live with. Well, what do you do about it, and how do you cope?

Despite the recent events, I still love my wife and don't want this to be the start of us breaking up. But the situation will need to be resolved. Constructive replies especially welcome!"

Anonymous's appeal elicited several sympathetic responses to alt.sex.fetish.smoking. For example, the following from "huh@where.com (RJ)," who, even though he has the fetish, says his wife's smoking is actually a turn-off for him. He finds his satisfaction from the newsgroup and from girl-watching. He tells Anonymous:

What you describe is a tragedy in the making . . . however, there is a way around the trouble . . . I love my wife for what she is and not what she does. We have shared my fetish in other ways. For instance, she keeps an eye out for gorgeous women smokers when we are out on the town and calls my attention to them. Later, if I'm in the mood, she will assist me in creating [a] fantasy of words and we will stimulate each other. I've been married 14 years and have done this with my wife from the beginning. Don't be afraid to move the fetish in the direction of fantasy. Fantasy can help [you] survive reality . . . Good luck. Our prayers are with you.

From "kfenske@fast.net (Ken)," whom we met previously:

I read your post and was immediately concerned about your plight. In a way you have a [smoking fetishist's] worst nightmare, you've come out of the closet to the most important person in your life and now her knowledge of it had [*sic*] become a negative between you . . . You need to understand your wife's motives to understand that she still loves you. You can make love to your wife without cigarettes as soon as you realize that she's not doing this to you. It's the anger that's keeping you apart, not cigarettes . . . Your marriage sounds strong but she needs to understand how deeply your fetish goes and you have to understand how strong her desire to quit is. People who decide to quit are almost religious about it because it requires a complete redefinition of your self image and

a lot of will power, which our society sees as a virtue. You cannot rid yourself of a fetish.

Ken goes on to say that he is 36, has smoked since he was 14 and has had the fetish since he was younger than 8.

I have no intention of quitting smoking but that doesn't mean I'll always feel that way. A person can have and enjoy the fetish without smoking themselves, it's just harder. The health aspect of our fetish does concern me but not enough to give it up yet. I smoke a pack a day and don't feel that that is excessive . . . My wife [is] older than me and smokes 1+ pack a day of light 100s. Again, I don't feel that this is excessive and she shows no signs of harm from it. She quit for a 10 year period so today it's like she's only been smoking for about 8 years. She loves smoking as much as I do and has enjoyed our explorations of smoking and the fetish over the last year. She is also concerned about the long-term health effects. She'd like to quit but doesn't feel too strongly that she must quit now, that could change. For now it can wait and that's OK with me. I'll love her just as much if she smokes or doesn't smoke. I do love to watch her smoke. Sometimes I just stand behind her and watch her put the cigarette in her mouth, then watch the plume of smoke that rises above her head. If she came to me tomorrow and said, "Ken, it's time for me to quit and I want you to quit with me," I don't know what I'd do . . .

We tried twice together about a year ago but once she gave in and once I did and we know that we have to quit together if we're ever going to be successful. Problem is that since discovering ASFS [alt.sex.fetish.smoking] I've really gotten into the fetish community and the resources available and I love it too much to quit now. I even set up the first ASFS gathering in NYC where 11 of us got together last September and for the first time we were all in a situation where our smoking and fetish were positive. It gave me a whole new outlook on life. We're having another in May if you're interested, perhaps your wife would find it interesting too. My wife enjoyed it and really liked some of the people we met. Best of luck to you and please write.

In a somewhat less sympathetic response, "mkohary@u.washington.edu (Mike)" addresses Anonymous's problem from a "tough-love" approach (all emphases in original):

At the end of this post, you welcome constructive replies. I assume that means that you're asking for advice. I have some for you; any psychology I engage in here is amateur (I'm a biologist,

not a psychologist), but it is educated as I have done research in psychological issues (not pseudoscientific, though; no parapsychology or repressed memories here!) and a great deal of research into fetishism in particular, since I have a vested interest in that subject . . .

Let me start by saying that much of what you say makes sense, but you clearly need a paradigm shift because much of what you say is also nonsense. Please don't take that personally; I'm simply trying to be frank . . . [Y]our statement that it [the fetish] is "something that I have never felt entirely comfortable with" is *key* . . . Also, your fetish, believe it or not, is *not* the fundamental problem in your marriage. Furthermore, you can't choose to have it or not . . .

Let's clear up one fantasy that I think most of us entertain. While it is true that many smokers claim to truly enjoy smoking and the like (and I'm sure many are telling the truth), the fact is that most smokers do not smoke because they enjoy it. They smoke because they are addicted to the nicotine contained in tobacco, and because it has become a habit, and they thus far lack the discipline or "willpower" to quit . . . Chances are your wife smokes out of habit and not because she enjoys it. Disengage your selective thinking (you *want* to believe she smokes because she enjoys it) and perhaps you'll see this.

Mike seems to have forgotten that Anonymous said he knew his wife smoked only because she was "addicted." Continuing, he refers to the five years Anonymous speaks of during which his wife would often smoke while they made love, and "at long last I had achieved what I had always wanted" and his wife said she was quite happy doing it—some of the time:

This is a little unclear. Did she like it or not? Doesn't matter; your sex life at this point became dependent on the satisfaction of your fetish, which was bad news, as you now know. This is why masturbation and fetishism can be a problem for some; some let them replace the intimacy that provides for a good relationship. Suddenly, the pleasure of sex has little to do with the partner you're having it with, and more to do with the inanimate object that comprises your fetish. It's ok to have sex that involves a fetish, but if you begin to require it then it's all downhill from there.

He tells Anonymous that his job problems are irrelevant: "You will always have other problems, and you were using this as an excuse for her to wait to quit. If it hadn't been that particular problem, it would have been another. Remember it's her body, and for you to want her to smoke for your sake is selfish. Sorry."

He also advises Anonymous not to waste his money on hypnotherapy.

You cannot “rid” yourself of the fetish, and the sooner you accept that, the better off you’ll be. You are who are, and you are not responsible for your feelings, only your behavior. Again, your statement that you’re not comfortable with this is key. Are you starting to figure out what your *real* problem is yet? I can tell you that it has little to do with your wife . . .

Instead of focusing on something you can’t control, why don’t you focus on something you can? That something would be your *behavior*, or the way you act on your fetish. There is more than one way to satisfy it, you know. Most of us thrive on pictures, stories, our imagination, you name it. But the more you beat yourself up for having something you can’t get rid of anyway, the less productive your nonproductivity becomes. Stop focusing your energies on something that can’t be helped, and focus your energy instead where it can be put to good use . . . I would bet my life savings (a high five figures!) that you have other problems in your marriage besides this one, and I’d bet my house that most of them are more immediately threatening than this one. Look to those things first, because your fetish problem is just that: YOURS. It is not your wife’s problem, and it’s not something she can deal with or help you to deal with. . . You are creating nonexistent problems for yourself, probably in order to avoid or deny the real problems that you’re having. The key is to practice some critical thinking, and discard the garbage that’s clouding the issue.

Mike’s analysis is at least as useful as Anonymous would get if he paid a therapist 200 dollars an hour to listen to his story. (Any right-thinking psychologist would surely second the assertion that smoking is an addiction and that nobody *really* enjoys it—more’s the pity). The sympathetic advice from his fellow fetishists is in fact probably even more helpful to Anonymous than that which a professional shrink could give him because they share and understand his fetish. They have “been there.”

IS THIS FETISH something new under the sun? That is, has it emerged only in the past 30 or so years since the surgeon general’s report and the ensuing onslaught of antismoking propaganda? Or did it exist back in “the old days” too? If it did, was it as “secret” and as guilt-inducing as it is today? It would be interesting to know.

To end this subject, one last letter from *Smoke Signals*, from “Kevin”:

I would also like to offer a comment on the current anti-smoking movement and how it relates to my own smoking fetish. It seems that every time I hear of some new plan or law whose ultimate purpose is to eradicate smoking from society altogether, I experience a very uncomfortable emotional mix of resentment and anger, and then guilt for feeling that way in the first place. I think that we smoking fetishists are in the unique and somewhat unfortunate position of having as our primary source of sexual excitement something which at one time society indicated was perfectly acceptable and “good” but is now deemed to be unacceptable and “bad” . . .

I often wonder what it would be like if even half of the adult male population had a smoking fetish. I wonder where that would put our contingent of anti-smoking fascists. I wonder what it would be like if *I* didn’t have a smoking fetish.

Well, Kevin, I share your resentment of and anger toward the anti-smoking movement. But unlike you, I don’t feel guilty about my anger. I just get angrier, and feel only sadness that young people like you today have no memory of how it used to be, when smoking, if not necessarily deemed to be “good,” was a perfectly normal and socially acceptable thing.

The emotional confusion that many of the smoking fetishists seem to suffer is another consequence of the demonizing of tobacco and smoking. How much better off everyone would be if people could simply enjoy smoking—without guilt, without shame, without health worries, with or without fetishes.