

# The Average American Male

(2007)

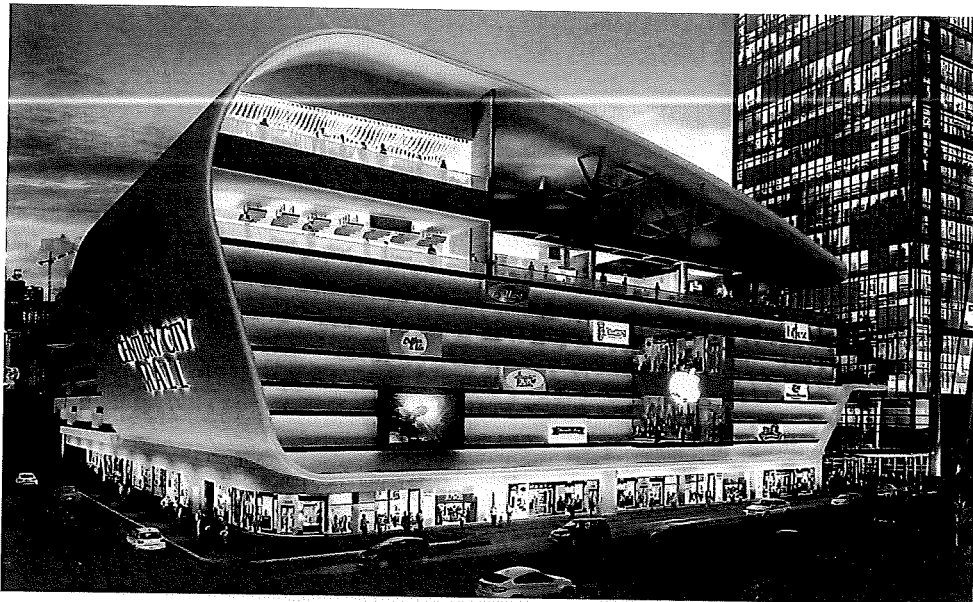
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## CHAPTER THREE, "CENTURY FUCKING CITY"

The one good thing you can always count on at Century City, and any place in this fucking city for that matter, is that there will always be a shitload of hot bitches with perfect bodies walking around. As chance would have it, I'm staring at one when my girlfriend says, "Do you wish I looked like that?"

I wonder if the three hours I've spent looking at shoes and other gay shit could possibly earn me one second of honesty with Casey. Probably not. Instead of answering her, I just look up at nothing in particular and say, "Do you smell pizza? I'm hungry."

On our way to the food court we pass a bookstore with a big line of middle-aged women, housewives mostly, some with kids, snaking out the front door. None of them are hot. They all seem like they're from the Valley or maybe Pasadena. I hate myself for being able to make the distinction. The window advertises that Marie Osmond is inside signing copies of her book *Behind the Smile: My Journey Out of Postpartum Depression*. I turn my head to ask Casey if she wants pizza, too, but she's already in line behind a woman who has a fat ass similar to her own and could easily be Casey's future self.



Many Americans have a love/hate relationship with their gigantic shopping malls.

**count on** regne med  
**Century City** stort indkøbscenter i Los Angeles  
**as chance would have it** som skæbnen ville det  
**food court** område med mange spisesteder  
**snaking out** at snige sig ud  
**the Valley** San Fernando Valley, bydel i Los Angeles blandt andet berøgt for sine såkaldte Valley girls som fremstilles karikeret som uintelligente, overfladiske, rige, hvide piger  
**Pasadena** by udenfor Los Angeles præget både af bandekriminalitet og af en meget rig, overvejende hvid overklasse  
**Marie Osmond** amerikansk sanger, skuespiller og sanger, 1959-  
**postpartum depression** fødselsdepression

**insult to injury** spot til skade  
**regular** regelmæssig  
**unsolicited** uopfordrede  
**testifies** afgiver vidneforklaring  
**accusatory stare** anklagende blik  
*O* Oprah Winfreys dameblad  
**Oprah** Oprah Winfrey, afroamerikansk talkshowvært og skuespiller, 1954-  
**hammers home** slår fast med syvtommersøm / understreger kraftigt  
**Dr. Phil** Phil McGraw, amerikansk psykolog og talkshowvært ofte associeret med Oprah Winfrey, 1950-  
**poorly veiled** slet skjult  
**condescension** nedladdenhed  
**uneasiness** ubehag  
**vastly** langt / meget

I'm pretty sure Casey knew about this and actually wanted to come to Century City just to see Marie Osmond, which means the fucking hours of looking at stupid shit were just **insult to injury**. Because of this, I kind of want to disappear into the food court and spend the rest of the day changing my phone number, but I decide it's not worth the effort of finding someone else to have **regular** sex with and get in line with my girlfriend.

Future Casey turns around and begins the following **unsolicited** conversation:

"Are you fans of Marie?"

Casey says, "I love her. I think it took so much courage to write about what she went through."

Future Casey says, "You know, a lot of women go through postpartum depression." She holds up her right hand like she's swearing on a Bible before she **testifies**, then she testifies, "Speaking from experience here. And I think this book is really going to help a lot of us. I mean it just makes me feel better to know that even somebody as important as Marie Osmond has felt what I felt."

I then end the conversation with this: "Maybe that woman in Houston who drowned all five of her kids should have read it." Future Casey turns around and buries her nose in the latest issue of *Women's Health* magazine. Casey gives me an **accusatory stare**. I respond by saying, "I guess Marie can't help everyone." Casey responds by rolling her eyes and picking up the most recent issue of *O* from the magazine rack, which the bookstore has conveniently moved outside and stocked only with *O* and *Us Weekly*.

She reads it for the next fifteen minutes while we wait. I read it over her shoulder and these are the results:

Pictures of **Oprah**: Twenty-two (including her standard cover appearance).

"Articles" "written" by Oprah: Six (including the *O* magazine staple "What I Know for Sure," in which Oprah lies about how hard her life is and **hammers home** how much more spiritual she is than the average person).

Uses of the phrase "Self-realization": Ninety-four (in thirteen different "articles").

Ads for Oprah-related products: Seven (including one for Dr. Phil's show).

Paragraphs containing **poorly veiled condescension**: Four hundred sixty-three.

Impulses to ram the magazine up Oprah's cunt: One (that lasts for the entire fifteen minutes I stare at *O*).

The other conversations around us might as well be the same as the one Future Casey started with Casey, the main difference being that I can't stop any of the others with the **uneasiness** of honesty. I try to keep myself entertained by explaining to Casey the importance of the Nintendo Wii as a next-gen console actually being able to compete in the marketplace against the vastly more powerful Xbox 360 and PS3. She reopens *O*. So I decide to just stand there and not listen to the cackling around me.

This is what I hear: "Marie Osmond has amazing courage. ... Marie Osmond is a genius writer. ... This book should win an Oscar, or whatever the writing Oscar is.... The writing Oscar is the Nobel Prize. ... She's a hero. ... Yesterday Dr. Phil was giving

women the courage to leave abusive relationships and lose weight at the same time. ... Today I think the Dr. Phil show is about teaching women how to be independent. ... Dr. Phil is probably a great husband. ... Cloning and **stem cell research** is evil because they have to murder babies to do it. ... If Oprah was sick or dying, it would be worth **sacrificing** one child to save her, though. ... **Carney Wilson** wrote a courageous book about her lifelong battle with weight. ... It took amazing courage to have her stomach surgically reduced to the size of a thumb."

The uneasy **rage** all of this creates in me starts out as something general, shapeless. But as it continues and we move up in line, Marie Osmond becomes the focus of everything I feel and the reason I feel it. I **leer** at her.

She smiles the same smile every few minutes. She sips from the same lipstick-smearred Diet Coke can every few minutes. She gives the same genuinely concerned expression every few minutes. She checks the same clock on the back wall every few minutes. She makes the same \$150 every few minutes.

I try to calm myself by thinking about the fact that someday this woman will die, when she says, "Who should I make this out to?" and we're standing a foot away from the courageous Marie Osmond.

Casey says, "Casey Childress, please," and continues with, "I really love your work and I'm a huge fan."

Osmond follows up with a concerned face and, "Well, I just hope this book has helped at least a few women out there."

I want to say something mean, something wrong, something that will make me feel like this entire day isn't a complete waste, but I know if I do Casey won't suck my dick until tomorrow at least, maybe even the next day. So I shut up and steal a quick **peek** down Osmond's shirt while she's signing the book. Not bad for an older bitch.

She looks back up at Casey, smiles, and says, "There you go, thanks." I picture myself behind her, pushing her head down on the table right in the middle of all her books and fucking her until she goes **catatonic**. I smile and say, "Thank you, Ms. Osmond." Then we leave.

Back at Casey's place, I kiss her and take off her shirt. "Aren't we **frisky**?" she says.

"No, I'm fucking horny and I want to fuck you right now," I whisper, knowing after a year of being in this relationship that whispering "fuck" in her ear makes her feel naughty enough to let me do anything I want to her. She unzips my pants as I sit down on her couch. She jerks me off a little before I push on her head and she gets the hint to stop fucking around and suck my cock. While she does, I look over at Marie Osmond's smiling face on the cover of Casey's new book. I pretend Casey's mouth is Osmond's cunt and I try to hear Casey **sturping** as Osmond **sobbing**. Aside from Casey spitting my semen all over my stomach, which she always fucking does, it ends up ranking in my top five blow jobs of all time.

**stem cell research** stamcelleforskning  
**sacrificing** at ofre  
**Carney Wilson** amerikansk sanger og tv-vært, 1968-  
**rage** vrede / raseri  
**leer** kigger lystent  
**peek** skjult blik  
**catatonic** stum og ude af stand til at bevæge sig  
**frisky** kåd  
**sturping** slubren  
**sobbing** hulken

**ANALYSIS:**

Comment and answer the following questions about the narrator:

- 1) The narrator's relationship to Casey:
  - a. "I wonder if the three hours I've spent looking at shoes and other gay shit could possibly earn me one second of honesty with Casey. Probably not." Comment on this.
  - b. "Because of this, I kind of want to disappear into the food court and spend the rest of the day changing my phone number, but I decide it's not worth the effort of finding someone else to have regular sex with." Comment on this.
- 2) Celebrity culture:
  - a. How is *O* presented?
  - b. How is Marie Osmond presented in the narrator's narration?
  - c. How is Marie Osmond presented in the narrator's fantasies?
- 3) What is the significance of the narrator talking about game consoles?
- 4) Comment on the conversation between Casey, Future Casey and the other women in the bookstore bearing in mind that it is recounted from the point of view of the narrator.
- 5) Would you categorize the narrator as the apathetic, the aggressive and/or the libidinous male? Substantiate your answer.