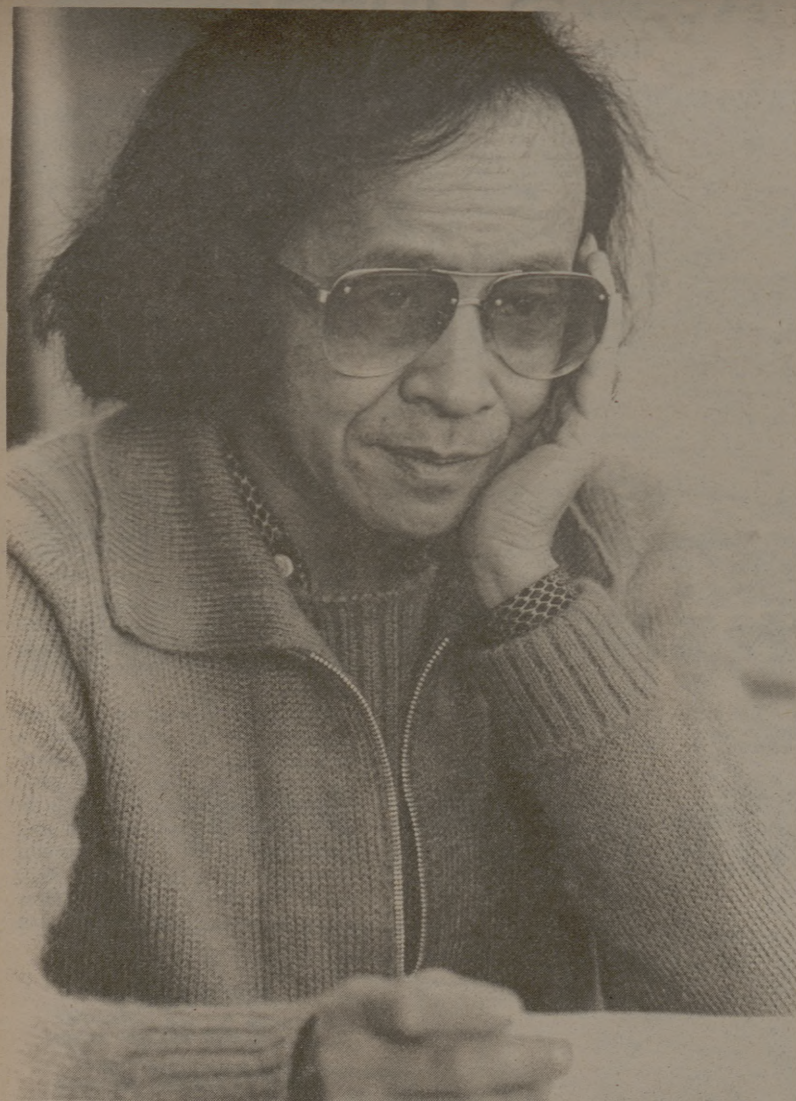


Chan interviews 200 A&M women . . .



Chan compares a girl with her application.

(continued from page 3)

floor, the T-shirts hung on the hotel walls (Two from A&M, two from the University of Texas, and one reading "Property of Playboy Photo Staff").

"David," the television reporter calls from across the room, "can you come over here? Have you got time for a short interview."

"Oh, sure," he says.

The mini-cam rolls.

"Well, David," the reporter begins, "You've been in this business for some time. Just how long have you worked for *Playboy*?"

"Well," Chan says, settling his hands into his lap, "I've worked for *Playboy* for 15 years and 23 days and I've loved all of it. But, you know, it took me a long time to decide to work there. They asked me at the beginning of December, so you see it took me almost a month to accept, and I've never regretted it because I really enjoy shooting beautiful . . ."

II. Sex, Censorship and the Ivy League

I first met David Chan that morning.

At 5 foot 2, with long, thin black hair that probably looked the same way when he got out of bed, I figured he was some physics professor who'd come to complain that we'd run a wire story misquoting the quantum theory, or some such nonsense. But once I heard his voice, the halting English with a hint of a "w" in the "r's" (wabbit, probably, Polawoid), I knew who he was.

I'd spoken to him on the phone just the day before, trying to corner him for a news story, a story another reporter eventually got and that was running in that day's issue.

"I've been trying to get a hold of you. . ."

He waved one of his tiny hands. "I'm sorry. I got lost in Houston." He'd spent Tuesday in Houston, scouting for a place to conduct interviews there. "God," he said, "it was terrible. People drive crazy there, you know?"

We wandered into the Printing Center and looked over the front page carrying Chan's photo and the

story I didn't get.

"Hah," Chan said when he saw his three-column mug laying on the cutter's table. "I wish I could do what your photographer does. I mean, I'm sitting there talking and he says he needs a picture and he takes about five shots and walks off. And I say, 'That's it?' and he says, 'That should do it.' Do you have any idea how many pictures we take of just one subject? About 200. And if she's a *Playmate*, we take about 400. We don't just drive somewhere for the weekend and get it over with. We take our time. We do it right."

A few minutes later we're bound for the second floor. I decided to attempt something vaguely resembling an interview. I remembered a two part series *Esquire* had published a few months ago, "The Erotic History of Hugh Hefner" by Gay Talese. It was an excerpt from Talese's forthcoming book on sex in America, "Thy Neighbor's Wife."

"What was the reaction at *Playboy* to the *Esquire* articles?" I asked.

Chan looked puzzled. "Which *Esquire* article was that?"

"Oh, you know," I said. "The one about Hefner."

Chan gave a look that I interpreted to mean *What in the name of Hopalong Cassidy are you talking about?* I was losing him.

Finally I said, "You didn't see that series Gay Talese did?"

"No. What was it about?"

I choked. "Well . . . to be frank . . . It concerned Hugh Hefner's sex life."

He gave a small chuckle. "Oh year? Well, tell me, how is Hefner's sex life?"

"Apparently very good, judging from *Esquire*."

He put a hand to his thick but fashionable glasses. "I'm afraid I don't pay much attention to that stuff. I don't think Hefner does either. Too much to do, too much to do."

By then we'd returned to the office. He settled onto our large tan couch and I pulled up a chair. For the next half-hour, we discussed the ins and outs of shooting America's best.

"I love photographing beautiful women. It's just so great. You know, people think the girls have to pose with a bunch of people there. But that's not true. It's all very private. Just me and my assistant and the girl."

This is art, you know. Some magazines just print anything. But we're very conscious of what we are doing and how we are doing it . . .

"You can work around anything, you know. But a girl has to have good breasts with a nice face that goes with them. Anything else you can take care of."

If the thighs are too big, you can cover it with a cloth. If the breasts are a bit flabby, you just have her pick up her arm. But you can't do that if she's a *Playmate*.

To be a *Playmate*, she has to be almost perfect. Her entire body has to be in proportion, because you're taking shots from every angle. You can't fool the camera then . . .

Finally it was time for Chan to return to his hotel suite and wait for the women to appear.

"How many do you expect?" I asked.

"Oh," he said. "I don't really know. But they will show up. They always do, even when there is pressure not to."

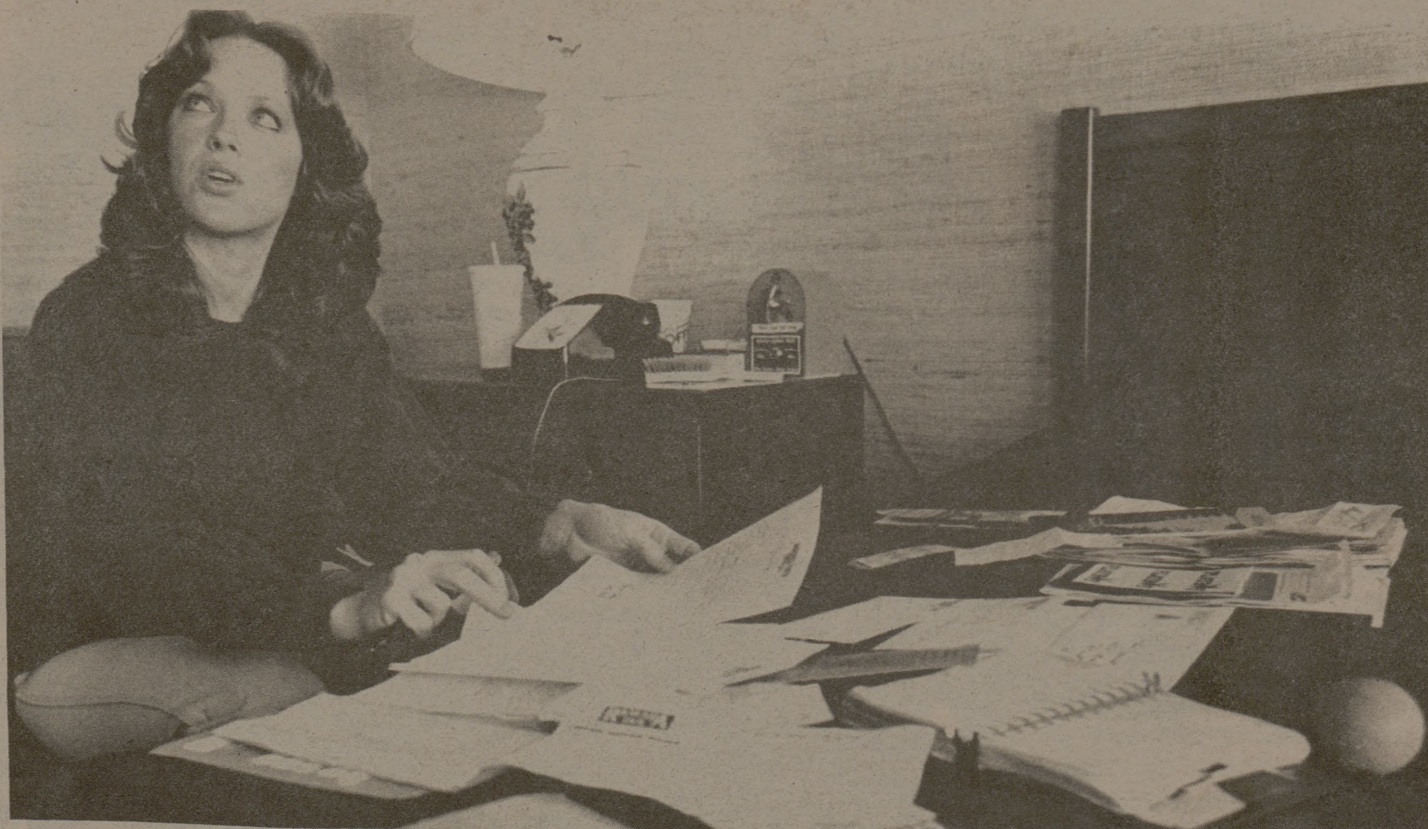
"Like at Harvard?"

"Yeah."

David Chan made national news last year, when he traveled to the East Coast to begin work on a spread entitled, "Girls of the Ivy League." *Time* magazine detailed what happened in an article headlined, "All the Nudes Fit to Print."

In November, 1978, Chan placed the *Playboy* ad, virtually the same one that appeared in *The Battalion* last week, in the *Harvard Crimson*. The next day, the editorial staff voted to reject the ad, on the grounds that *Playboy* has played a major role in America's degradation of women."

That decision ignited a debate between those who believed the ad should be censored and those who did not. When the *Boston Globe* asked Chan for his opinion, and he said he was disappointed to find such narrow-minded attitudes in the



As Chan's assistant, Sherral Snow does everything from screen applicants for photo projects to adjust the lights for photography sessions. At right, Chan poses Dawn

Tengg for the snapshot he takes to accompany each application.

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