

BitChin' & Moaning

Tabloid Terrorism

By Judith A. Habert

Okay, I admit it, I am a tabloid junkie. Part of it is an occupational hazard: I love magazines of all kinds. I am as likely to pick up a Time magazine as I am a People magazine. I don't only read them, I study them. I look at the advertisers, I look at the design and layout, and of course I look at the content.

I have picked up magazines while waiting for a haircut that took me until page 107 before there was any editorial content at all. Part of me is envious due to the high incomes these magazines must be receiving. The other part is appalled that a magazine would have its readers ruffle through 107 pages of advertising before they get anything to read. No matter what town I am in, or what neighborhood, my first impulse is to find the local newspaper and magazine to keep abreast of what is going on around me. I do suppose butchers are very cognoscente of the steaks they are served at restaurants, and hairstylists can't help but comment on the hairdos of those they meet, so for a magazine publisher to read every magazine she comes in contact with appears somewhat normal. At least that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it!

It has happened though, something I feared over the years: I have become an addict. What am I addicted to? Magazines in general, tabloids to be specific. My trip to the supermarket is not complete unless I pick up one of these magazines. I think it is the headlines that attract my attention, or perhaps the desire to find out how the publishers could have the sheer audacity to print such obvious lies. When you stand there and read about the hottest stars on two different magazines and on one they are on the brink of divorce, while on the other they are suggesting that a baby bump is visible and they are happily awaiting their love child. So which is it? Oh,

and while I am on this topic, have you seen what they are referring to as a baby bump these days? If a Hollywood starlet has internal organs it is suggested that she is in a family way. The obvious arrow that they point at the tiny non-existent bump is supposed to make you see something that is not

there. I have stared at the bump and studied it like a Rorschach test, but to no avail. There is nothing there!

Okay, so the lies do bother me and in many cases they have terrorized my children. I can remember my oldest daughter who was about 5 at the time, staring up at a tabloid at the newsstand which claimed in large green letters, "Eating too many vegetables makes girl turn green" It took me months to get her to consume a single green vegetable again. One of my other favorites was when a famous politician's wife was accused of carrying on an illicit affair with an alien. I must admit things have calmed down a bit and I rarely see the alien or green people on the tabloid covers these days, but the ones with conflicting reports about celebrity love lives

continue to thrive. Yet, I continue to buy them. I continue to read about every celebrity marriage, love affair or baby. Whose dress looked best at the Golden Globes, what designers did they wear and what were they thinking? I know a lot of it, or I correct myself, most of it is fabricated, but yet I continue reading. So I have concluded that it is truly tabloid terrorism which focuses on the fear to not be totally informed about everyone who is famous. What diet are they on, how do they stay so slim and what exercises they do is never far from my consciousness. They have taken control of me and I fear I may never pass through the supermarket lines again without a tabloid in hand. I suppose as long as I know that what is on the pages of these tabloids isn't all true I am okay to continue with my addiction without making apologies. I guess it could be worse. My career related addiction could be a lot more uncomfortable if I was a funeral director.

