

IMPOSSIBLE INTERVIEW

Sigmund

He was the father of psychoanalysis, the mother of invention, the only child of Laius and Jocasta—and he had the chutzpah to tell the world that evil was all in the family. What kind of a guy was Sigmund Freud, anyway? Here, the Incredible Shrinking Man tells TRACY YOUNG what's bugging him

Q: Omigod, I just can't believe I'm talking to Sigmund Freud—I mean, you've been dead for fifty years!

A: That is your perception, nu?

Q: You mean in psychoanalysis these things happen. Isn't this what they call projection?

A: Oy, why did I bother? You stupid Americans are obsessed with celebrities, but you can never remember whether they are dead or alive. For example: Wilhelm Reich, dead or alive? D. M. Thomas? Pavlov's dog?

Q: I'm sorry if I annoyed you. Please don't be angry.

A: *I'm not angry!* Just don't be so damn ingratiating. Why, if it weren't for that hideous nail polish, I'd swear you were Phil Donahue.

Q: I wish you could be more supportive. Then I could be open with you. As it is, I have the feeling you can see right through me.

A: I'm sure I could if you turned your head to the side and put your hair behind your ear.

Q: Oh, you have a wild sense of humor. You know, I've read your book on jokes. *Loved* it. I've written a number of psychology books myself.

A: How interesting. Today, everyone's a writer. Everyone's a big-shot expert on my theories!

Q: *Salt and Psychosis*, my first book, didn't do badly. But the one I'm proudest of is *When Good Things Happen to Bad People*.

A: (*Tape unintelligible*)

Q: Did you say Marsha Mason?

A: No, I said Jeffrey Masson. The little pup.

Q: I understand just how you feel.

A: My father told me I was a damn

fool not to become a lawyer. I should have listened to him. I'm sorry, Papa.

Q: Please don't cry.

A: *Ach*, now I've got a nosebleed.

Q: Sir, your theories were couched in classical myths and such. How would you explain yourself today, when the only Greek people read is Arianna Stassinopoulos?

A: I would rely on popular magazines. They describe, for instance, the Electra-lux Complex.

Q: What's that?

A: People who vacuum after sex. And there's the Interiority Complex, which concerns penthouse envy.

Q: This may sound trivial, but I think people, particularly young people, are fascinated by your use of cocaine. Why did you fool around with such a dangerous drug?

A: We didn't have cable in Vienna.

Q: It must have been very dull.

A: It was. I tried to amuse myself by writing letters—thousands of them. Unfortunately, I gave them all to Anna to mail, but I hear she kept them.

Q: Nevertheless, along with Marx and Einstein, you totally changed the way we look at the world.

A: *Feh*. I just cast swine before Perls.

Q: Don't say that. Why, you helped us to understand how important dreams are—so long as we don't repeat them at dinner parties.

A: I get the impression you are trying to humor me.

Q: Oh, no! People are terribly dependent on their therapists. Why, now that it's August and all the shrinks are on Martha's Vineyard, everyone is going nuts! Where did you spend August?

A: Transylvania.

Q: Is that so? Bucks County is lovely, isn't it?

A: I was kidding. I never knew what a vacation was. If you think I could have left the Wolf-Man alone for one minute, you're crazy.

Q: Well, yes. After all, with patients like the Wolf-Man, Anna O.—

A: And don't forget Little Glans.

Q: Little Glans? Surely you mean Little Hans.

A: *Ja*, vell... in fact, his *hands* were enormous. But his member lost something in translation.

Q: You must find today's cases rather tame.

A: In a word, boring. And I'm not talking what I don't know about. I've read the *Village Voice*. I've seen the films of Woody Allen.

Q: Don't you *adore* Woody Allen—his films rely so much on your work.

A: When he grows hair out of his palms I'll take him seriously. I hate Woody Allen and his *Interiors*. Now, the Marx Brothers, that's funny! None of this caca about relationships.

Q: You sound angry again.

A: *Scheisskopf*.

Q: Maybe we should talk about it. Why don't you put out that cigar and lie down.

A: Wee-wee.

Q: Feeling a little better?

A: Pee-pee. Doo-doo. Ef-word.

Q: I get the feeling that there's something on your mind you might want to get off your chest.

A: All right, there is.

Q: Well, then, let it out. After all, no pain, no gain.

A: You promise you won't tell Jung?

Q: On my honor, Dr. Freud. What is it?

A: Can I try on your dress? □

