



Men's Underwear The Fruit of His Loom

What would you think if a guy phoned his partner and said, "I start to get hard when I think about the new briefs I'm wearing." Contrast this with a woman who calls her partner and says, "My nipples start to get hard when I think about the new bra and panties that I'm wearing."

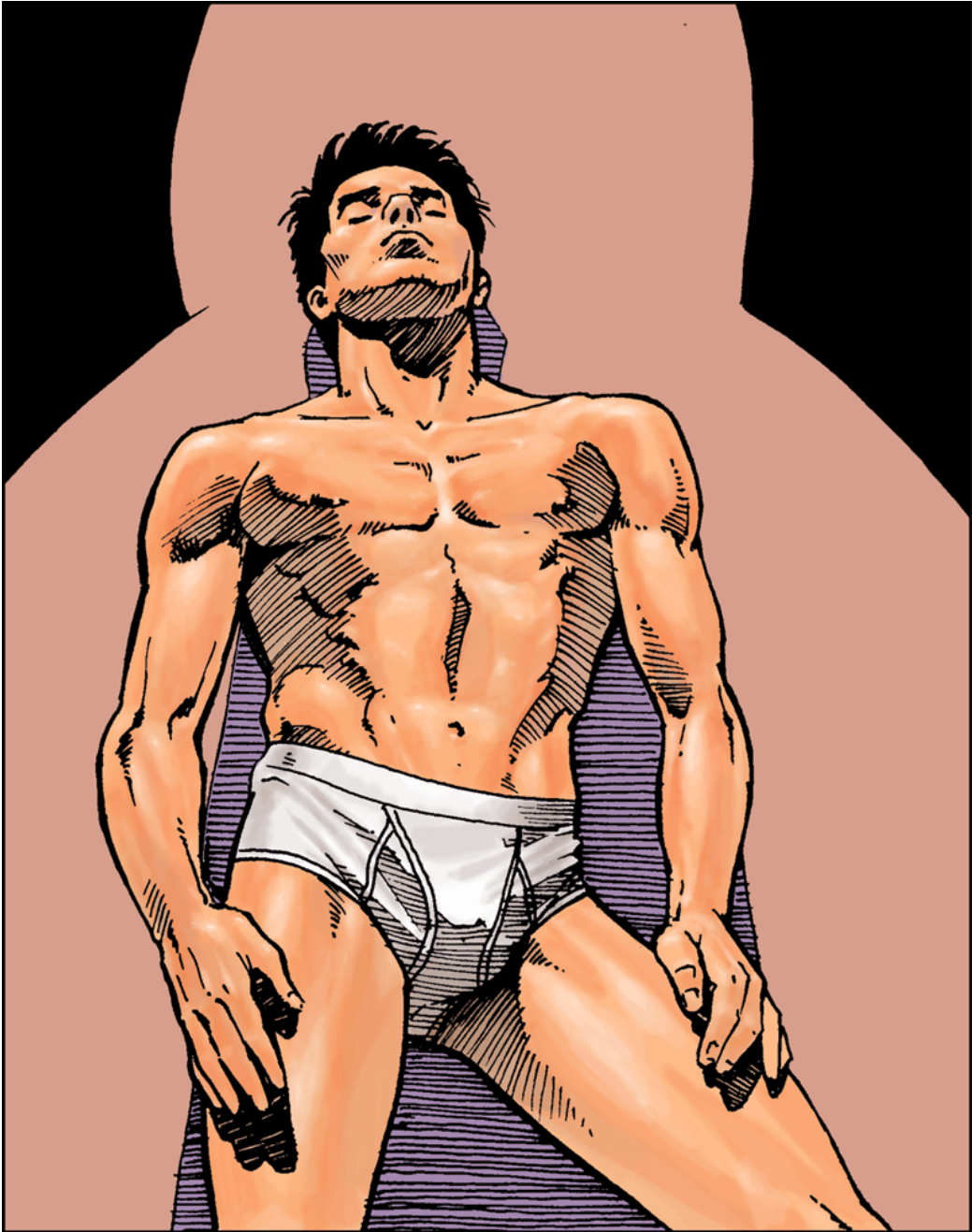
In our culture, it's cool for a woman to get excited about her lingerie, but we would consider a man who talked this way about his own briefs to be strange. Then again, if he'd just spent \$20 for a pair of tightie-whities with a designer name on the waistband, maybe they would give him a rise.

Calvin Klein in Your Underwear Drawer

In the early 1980s, manufacturers like Calvin Klein teamed up with famous homoerotic photographers like Bruce Weber to help make men look sexy in their boring white briefs. Then again, the male models they used in their photo shoots would have looked sexy wearing a loincloth made of cornhusks. Along with ads for magazines, they created huge billboards that drew your eye to the bulge in the crotch of the hot looking male models. (The illustration on the next page was made from one of the first Calvin Klein billboard ads.)

The Calvin ads had two primary targets: gay men and straight women who buy underwear for their husbands and boyfriends. Nail these two groups, and straight guys are putty in the corporate hand.

In these underwear ads, the hazy image of a penis behind the fly was sexier than if the guy had been naked. The model was able to give attitude in a way that a man who is buck naked can't. So while all roads led to the bulge in the briefs, these ads were far more effective than if the guy's briefs had been pulled down to his knees. The combination of attitude and mystery about what's inside the briefs was fuel for many a fantasy.



Subliminal Messages?

Wouldn't it be something if a woman could buy a pair of Calvin briefs for her partner and have him suddenly look like the models in the Calvin ads? And wouldn't it be amazing if a man could slip on designer briefs and suddenly feel like Captain America.

But the reality is, if one of the models in the early Calvin ads had been homeless or wearing \$2 briefs from Walmart, he still would have had no shortage of willing sex partners. The allure of these guys had nothing to do with the name on the waistband of their underwear.

Contemporary Girl Underwear—A Fly for Your Clitoris!

There have been a few interesting changes in the underwear scene during the past few decades. For one, manufacturers have started making men's underwear for women. This has been perceived as massively cool. The boy brief as worn by women even has a fly or the suggestion of a fly in the front.

If you are in gender studies, you might assume that women enjoy wearing boy briefs because it's a woman's way of taking the patriarchy's penis and making it her own. But the real reason some women wear boy briefs is because they are fun and comfortable, and they help with pantyines.

Also, women in our culture receive far more encouragement to explore and experiment with fashion than men do. For many women, fashion is an adventure. Women have adopted zillions of styles throughout the ages—some being really cool, others being truly hideous. Few of these had anything to do with trying to assume dimensions of masculinity; much of women's fashion is designed to make a woman feel good when wearing it, as well as to win the awe and envy of her female friends.

Men with Bikini Briefs, Trimmed Pubes, and Waxed Backs

Over the last decade, males in university settings have started teaching courses on men's studies. Of the many things these men worry about, trying to define masculinity is near the top of their list. They often say that a defining hallmark of masculinity is that it tries to be the opposite of anything that's feminine.

Perhaps these scholars haven't noticed that straight guys have

been doing a lot of girly things lately, such as wearing earrings and having the hair on their upper bodies waxed or lasered. Some even shave their legs and armpits, and plenty of men have taken to trimming their pubes and wearing underwear that's like a woman's bikini bottom or sometimes a thong.

So let's look at some of the factors that have made it safe for men to wear women's bikini bottoms.

The Speedo Coefficient Generations of incredible-looking male swimmers and water-polo players have worn nothing but Speedos, which are basically G-strings on steroids. Hard as you might try to keep looking straight ahead, Speedos have a built-in device that forces your eyes to stare at a guy's crotch and butt, sometimes in awe, other times in horror. The Speedo Coefficient has made it safer for guys who aren't swimmers to wear what have traditionally been women's bikini bottoms.

Pro Athletes-Wearing Bikini Briefs: It didn't hurt the cause of the male bikini when professional male athletes were hired as models to wear bikini briefs in magazine ads and on posters. These half-naked athletes had women swooning, and they reassured straight men that they could wear women's bikini bottoms and not risk being called gay.

A Wife or GF's Influence A guy would have less resistance to wearing girls' bikini bottoms if his girlfriend or wife said, "Honey, I think you'll look sexy in these." This fact wasn't lost on the underwear manufacturers, as the ads with the male athletes in their bikini briefs were clearly aimed at women.

Penis-Over-The-Top Factor The transition to bikini underwear for men has had practical significance. That's because when men pee, a lot of us don't pull our penis through the fly in the front of briefs or boxers. Instead, we yank the elastic waistband down and pull the penis over the top. So the fly is totally useless for a lot of men. Having the lower waistband of low rise or bikini briefs makes the process of peeing easier.

Competitive Swimming's Darkest Hour: As a spectator sport, swimming at the Olympics took it in the shorts when the traditional men's Speedos were replaced by a cross between bicycle shorts and a wetsuit. The women of Goofy Foot Press want the new suits banned. Fortunately, the men's Speedo still rules in water polo.

Briefs and Bras in Perspective

A hundred years ago, no one would have been able to predict that the bra would ever be sexy. And as little as fifty years ago, no one would have been able to predict that guys would feel manly wearing women's bikini bottoms.

Think of all the effort that went into weaving these otherwise ordinary pieces of cloth into the sexual fabric of our culture. The same can be said about many of the other things we consider to be sexy today.

End of Chapter Notes

Different Water Cultures: Most male surfers wouldn't be caught dead in Speedos. The only commonality between many male swimmers and surfers seems to be water, with the water of the swimmers smelling like chlorine and the water of the surfers tasting like salt.

Athletic Supporters: Athletic supporters used to be called "Jock Straps" and male athletes used to be called "jocks." Strangely enough, the origin of athletic supporters or jock straps had nothing to do with athletes who play sports. Instead, it comes from "bicycle jockeys" who the supporters were invented for in 1874 by the Bike Web Company. Bicycle jockeys were bike-riding messenger boys who rode over the cobblestone streets of Boston. The cobblestones made their testicles jiggle furiously. The Bike Web Company looked opportunity in the eye and the athletic supporter was born.

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