

# PLAYBOY INTERVIEW: DOCTOR Z

*a candid conversation with hollywood icon, raconteur and true renaissance ape, doctor z*

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**DOCTOR Z:** I guess the big difference between now and before I was famous would be the hair. You wouldn't know it but I was born with naturally curly hair. They used to compare me to a young Leo Sayer. But with fame comes money and the ability to afford hairstylist to the stars, Jose Ebert, who, as you can see, does a beautiful blowout.

**PLAYBOY:** What was the first thing you bought when you finally had enough money to buy anything you wanted?

**DOCTOR Z:** A Tony Curtis clown painting. I felt bad and tried to do him a solid. He was down on his luck because he had sunk all his money into Tony Toupees. I told him, "At least make the chin straps skin color", but he wouldn't listen. To show his appreciation he did a portrait of me after which he said the hardest thing to capture was my child bearing hips. Needless to say we never spoke again.

**PLAYBOY:** What's in your pockets now?

**DOCTOR Z:** I grew up very poor and as a result I always feel I need to have as much survival gear on me as possible. So right now it would be like Opie emptying his pockets on the The Andy Griffith Show. Oh look, a slingshot, some jacks, a Little Orphan Annie decoder ring and a live frog. And that's just the left pocket. Right pocket, cherry chapstick. Did you know LA is actually a

desert? It's dryer than the goddamn forbidden zone.

**PLAYBOY:** Mick Jagger used to say he didn't want to be doing what he was doing when he was 40. How about yourself?

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No one knows how old I am and we're going to keep it that way. But Jagger, come on. Don't we all wish he had stuck to his word? Seeing him perform now is like watching a bag full of pool cues blow around in the wind. And I swear I can hear his bones clanking together every time we hike Fryman. It's all I can do to stop myself from yelling "Yahtzee!"

**PLAYBOY:** Is it possible nowadays to be a Renaissance ape—someone who's equally at home in the arts and the sciences?

**DOCTOR Z:** Let me clear something up so there's no confusion. A podiatrist is a real doctor. And I'm a damn good one. In fact, I did such a good corn removal on William Conrad that he was able to complete two extra seasons of Cannon. And let me tell you, a William Conrad corn ain't no joke. I first thought it was an unborn twin. But I don't really practice medicine anymore. Showbiz has been my main patient for years now and let me tell you she's got a healthy heartbeat!

**PLAYBOY:** Are there any figures in American history you identify with?

**DOCTOR Z:** Whenever I find myself vexed or faced with a hard decision or in a conundrum, if you will, and

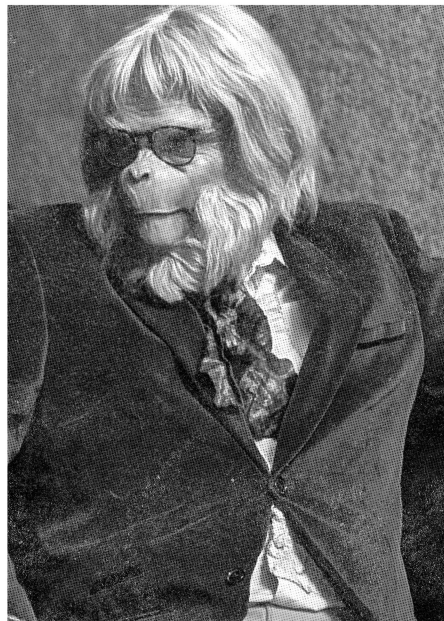
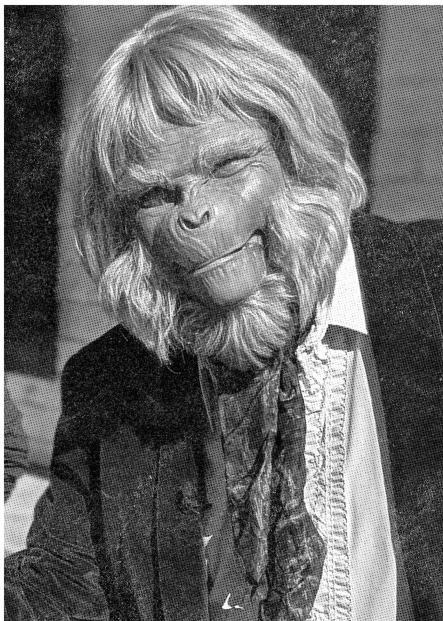
I know that whatever I decide will have huge ramifications, not just for myself but for all the people in my life, I always ask myself the same thing. What would Klaus Von Bulow do?

**PLAYBOY:** You've met many of the great men and women of your time. Is there any living person you'd still like to meet?

**DOCTOR Z:** I can name a whole bunch of people I wish I'd never met. Would that be good for your little interview? Like a very drunk Gene Rayburn who kept following me around trying feed me a banana at Gavin McCloud's Love Boat-themed BBQ back in '78. I tried to shake him but he wouldn't get the message so I pushed him in the pool. Turns out swimming's not his thing. He was legally dead for 19 minutes before Doc aka Bernie Kopell, yes he's a real doctor, revived him. First thing Gene says when he comes to? "Banana make fart!" Obviously a touch of brain damage. Didn't affect his hosting though. Side note. Gavin's party turned out to be a giant time share pitch. He was trying to start a cult outside Reno and wanted everyone to buy their own yurts. Took me 3 years to unload that thing.

**PLAYBOY:** How would you like the world to remember you?

**DOCTOR Z:** That I was just regular ape who made it big through a combination of perseverance, luck and talent. But most of all, that I had almost nothing to do with the Kennedy assassination.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF BRIDGES

1968. Bill Buckley and I go tit for tat, toe to toe, face to face. It would change the face of politics on television, and almost changed the face of Bill Buckley when he made an ill-advised crack about Elke Summer, who, at that time, was finding some rather familiar orange shower cookies in her master bath. I was coming off a three day Drinamyl binge and the Buckster was one arched eyebrow away from having me on him faster than the Yale swim team on a keg at one of Bill's no-faculty pool soirees. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, and Capt Thesaurus and I parted friends.

My producers warned me about two things when Lucy came on. 1) she'd be drunker than Irish firemen on St. Paddy's Day, and 2) she'd laugh like a jackal if she didn't understand a question. This photo was taken after I asked when her birthday was. Fun fact! The only time the Saturday Evening Post rejected a Rockwell cover was when Norm painted Desi Arnaz chasing three hookers down Hollywood Boulevard while a tow-headed newsie looked on, whistling merrily.

1977. I was in New York prepping a musical version of Equus called Harmony In The Barn when I got a call to host SNL. I had auditioned for the original cast in 1975 but wasn't selected. On show night I took the wine glass out of Lorne's hand, drank it in one shot and told him, "I guess you feel pretty silly right now, eh?" I walked onstage and killed the monologue, which I wrote at 4am on a Benzedrine fueled bender with former Sen. Al Franken (D-MN). At the after-party, Lorne came up to me with tears in his eyes, said it was the greatest show he'd ever seen ...

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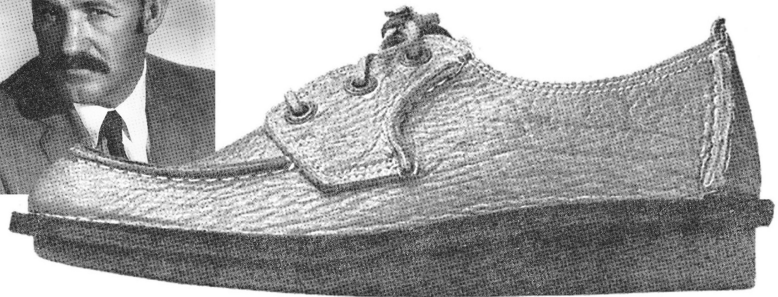
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# FOOTWEAR

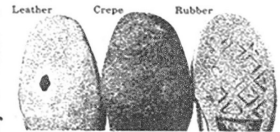
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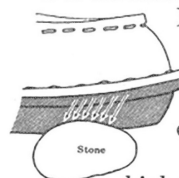
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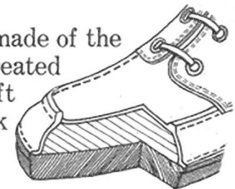


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