



darling Nikki

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL: NIKKI ZENO

BY JOEL MARASIGAN

OK, it's noon on Tuesday, the day before I take off for my two week vacation to the Philippines. I get the call asking if I could do an interview with Nikki Zeno that afternoon. Damn, what timing! Not that I didn't want to do the interview. I mean who wouldn't want to talk to a beautiful model, especially Ms. Zeno? I'd seen her website and I'd be stupid not to do this, but I have to leave for San Diego at 8 p.m. the next day and I haven't even started packing. Nikki Zeno. Pack mosquito repellent. Nikki Zeno. Pack your tightie-whities. Guess what I chose? Look's like I'll be the mosquito buffet with dirty underwear. She's gonna owe me a new set of Fruit of the Looms and owe me a rubdown with some ointment. I figure it'll be a good deal!

I gave Nikki a call from the celly on the way to San Diego around 9:30, telling her that I'm running late. She sounded a little hurried as well: She's at a Bikini contest in Orange County. She said she'll give a call back around 11 p.m. Its now midnight. This will never get done on time.

2NR: So where are you at now?

NZ: I'm just about to grab a bite to eat. I don't know where to go yet.

2NR: Two taco's for 99 cents at Jack in the Box!

NZ: Exactly! I'm pretty sure that's where I'll end up at.

2NR: So how was the bikini contest in Orange County?

NZ: Well it ended up being a topless contest.

2NR: Look, you don't have to try and get my attention. I've seen your website. I'm looking at your pictures from the site...is that a real tattoo?

NZ: Yeah. I have two. A heart on my belly and an angel on my back that says "90% Angel"

2NR: What would the other 10 percent be?

NZ: That's my naughty side.

2NR: 10 percent is not a lot of naughty...

NZ: (Laughs) I'm still a good girl for now.

2NR: What's your nationality?

NZ: Italian and Puerto Rican.

2NR: Tonight it's tacos but which foods do you like more?

NZ: Italian. I like pasta but Puerto Rican food is good too. Rice and sausage...

2NR: My man Bart loves sausages. What's your favorite type of music?

NZ: I'm a hip hop and R&B girl. I would say J-Lo but I don't think she can sing. But she's just got herself into



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everything—movies, music and clothing. I think my favorite artist right now is Beyoncé.

2NR: Mmmm. Bootylicious. Her new video gives me seizures. I've seen your resume. No music videos but as far as contests...I have to say I think you've won too many times. Give another girl a chance.

NZ: It's not even updated! I've won 3 competitions since May.

2NR: How's it feel to win first place?

NZ: It is an amazing feeling. You feel so beautiful. It's unbelievable. I don't even think a guy could make you feel that way. It's beyond what a guy can give you.

2NR: You haven't met me in person yet...

NZ: What's that? My phone cut out.

2NR: Nothing. At NOPI Nationals you got fourth place.

NZ: That was a great feeling too. I represented California and I was fourth out of all these other girls.

2NR: What does a person have to do to win?

NZ: I work hard on my body. I work out 6 days a week: kick boxing, basketball, stair machine. I really try to look my best. Although, I think I'd like to improve my legs. I want them a little more ripped. Sometimes it's who you know. Sometimes it's the crowd that chooses. Sometimes it's legit. Sometimes you sleep with the judge! (laughs)

2NR: So how do I get to judge the competitions you're at?

NZ: What's that? My phone cut out again.

2NR: Nothing. So an easy wink and smile could get you higher in the rankings. You won second at Miss Asian Model Expo.

NZ: Yeah! That was the best one I ever won! I got Second Hottest Asian Girl.

2NR: How did you even get on the board? You're not Asian.

NZ: I know! (laughs) There were these ballot boxes at each model's booth where voters drop their raffle tickets...I guess they liked me!

2NR: You are an honorary Asian now. By the looks of your resume it seems you've trained yourself for, at least, television acting.

NZ: Yeah. I just finished doing a hidden camera show called "Oblivious." Tomorrow I'm shooting "The Man Show." I think I'm doing Playboy's "Girl Next Door."

2NR: What's the best part of being hired for a show?

NZ: Stability! You hope that they like you enough to make it a regular part. It's a little more stable than getting the occasional call to be on a magazine cover.

2NR: Which pays better?

NZ: Right now it's the modeling. I can do calendar,

magazine, or contest work and can get \$3000 in one day...like NOPI; the one we were just talking about.

2NR: You've been singing since you were three. You've got all this formal training for entertainment. You're hot...I mean smoking hot. What's your focus?

NZ: That's the thing I don't like about me. I do so many things that I haven't really focused on one particular thing. It's generally entertainment. I want to put my heart into one thing and reach that higher goal. I can't make up my mind in exactly what I want to be doing. Everything is going well and I'll take whatever falls in my lap.

2NR: Well you graduated from CSUN then got a real estate license. How's real estate?

NZ: Well my modeling has been doing so well that it's kept me out of the office for the past five months. I'm still a loan officer but I just lost my desk at the office.

2NR: They weren't too quick to lose you huh? I don't blame them. You're like a work incentive; a perk, if you will. Did you ever have a problem getting a job?

NZ: I think that looks are important and that people treat you a certain way based on how you look. I didn't have a hard time finding a job. I've never kept a job for more than seven months either! This loan officer thing...it's so flexible...I'm like my own boss.

2NR: Hey boss, did you ever have to work holidays?

NZ: Well every St. Patrick's Day for the past three years I've done stuff with Miller or Budweiser.

2NR: St. Paddy's day is not a holiday. It's a good excuse to drink. Or burn a car.

NZ: On Halloween I did a Naughty Strippers Ball at the Century Club in L.A. It's like a lingerie party or a bikini contest. It's a "Wild on E!" type of thing.

2NR: How did you get your start in modeling?

NZ: I was a Hawaiian Tropic girl. Everything grew from there.

2NR: Did you get a years supply of product?

NZ: Actually I got \$1500 for winning the contest, prizes

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like free professional photos, flowers and a week-long trip to the nationals—which was in Vegas that year—representing California.

2NR: What's your relationship status as of today?

NZ: I've been with someone for three and a half years. Let's just say we're still together.

2NR: I know you've got a three-and-a-half year speed bump and everything but what turns you on about a guy?

NZ: Humor. A person that inspires me and doesn't hold me back.

2NR: You want someone supportive. Oh that's totally me. Matter of fact let me just get this out of the way now (clears throat). G'wan girl, go and do what you need to do. You can do it! Wait, are you even a trust-worthy girl? I don't need another broken heart.

NZ: Yes.

2NR: Of course you have to say that. Give me the dirt. What's the 10 percent?

NZ: Awww. It's just 10 percent.

2NR: How bout turn offs?

NZ: Long nails, bad breath...

2NR: How bout something not obvious.

NZ: The real muscular type. You know the ones that can't even put their arms down because they work out so much. (*I found myself imitating one as she was describing. Go ahead. You wanna do it.*) Oh, and also guys that have a certain diet. They just can't go out and

eat something and enjoy it. Sometimes I want to pig out. That's why I'm at the gym six days a week.

She tells me to hold on. She's at a drive through window ordering a Number 8 with a medium Coke. That's the chicken strips at "J to the Box"...believe me I know.

2NR: What would you choose between money or happiness?

NZ: Happiness.

2NR: Ultimate happiness would be?

NZ: Hmmm...MONEY!!! Just kidding! Really, it's the man of my dreams and a real comfortable life. My Viper! A nice house in the Hollywood Hills.

2NR: The Dodge Viper huh?

NZ: It's gotta be Automatic because no one's taught me stick yet.

2NR: How bout me and you...oh never mind. (*Too easy. I just let her go on.*)

NZ: I'm looking for people to teach me how to drive stick.

2NR: You're boyfriend can do that.

NZ: He hasn't though. It's been three years.

2NR: I think someone should see a therapist or take some medication.

NZ: What's that? I'm so sorry my phone cut out again.

2NR: Nothing. It was good. Seems you need a rich guy. What would your dream man be doing to give you a Viper?

NZ: Well the ones that could afford one don't look that good. I'd like a fireman.

2NR: That's funny. That's what I do on the weekends. Except that my car isn't exactly on fire...just dirty. We should go out for drinks!

NZ: I don't drink. I'm already crazy. If I drink I'll end up in Hustler.

2NR: We should go out for drinks! What would you're ultimate ambition be?

NZ: Well for one, I want to be a broker and have 20 loan officers working under me and I wanna do Playboy. Being a playmate surrounded by gorgeous women. I think that it's the top.

2NR: You'd have to go dancing with good 'ol Hugh Hef! (*C'mon fall for it.*)

NZ: That's cool. I love Hugh!

2NR: (*Yes!*) I love you too, sweetie.

Her phone cut and died for the final time. During some parts of the interview it was a blessing. I still hate AT&T's service. It's 1: 30 in the morning and I have to still write the interview. She's really got a great personality and not a bad looker...I'm not calling back. We're through. Although I hate that they banned me from the photo studio, I figure it doesn't matter—I'll be out of town anyway. I do regret tying my shoes so close to the other model's body the last time. It's OK. All I know is I got her number and Hugh don't!

STATS

MODEL: NIKKI ZENO

NATIONALITY: PUERTO RICAN / ITALIAN

DOB: MARCH 25

HEIGHT: 5'5"

WEIGHT: 110

MEASUREMENTS: 34D / 24 / 34

TURN ONS: SUPPORTIVE MEN, ATHLETIC-TYPE BODIES

TURN OFFS: MUSCULAR BODIES AND PICKY DIETS

DROP A LINE: NIKKIZENO.COM