

I'm Hot, My Wife's Not

Becoming a father made me a superstud.

by [Jon Papernick](#), April 26, 2007



It might come as no surprise that I spent the better part of my twenties trying, with limited success, to get laid. Sure, there were flashes of passion, excitement, the humming thrill in my private places; a drunken kiss in a dim stairwell, a feverish grope in the back of a northbound bus, making out with a woman twice my age who called herself "Jane Smith." Mostly though, when it came to women, I was the Invisible Man.

Now, smiling women are stopping me on the street, as they gurgle and coo at the



adorable baby strapped to my chest. **Brad had the right idea:**
Then again, it's not like he needed the extra help

At first, I thought it was just my newborn son that drew their interest, but I soon realized from their light touches and lingering looks that they were also interested in the man schlepping him around and taking care of his every need.

My wife first noticed this sea-change at a reading I gave at Smith College when she was eight months pregnant. Afterwards, she was mobbed by a group of coeds, who, upon finding out that she was my wife, dreamily intoned, "You're so lucky."

I laughed at this novelty, because I'd been greeted by silence at dozens of readings and had gone to graduate school at a certain small liberal arts college where the female student body had shunned me.

This changing dynamic only accelerated after my wife gave birth. At the pediatrician's office, a receptionist admiring our urban sleek diaper bag said, "Nice bag. Does that dad come with it?" With my son in tow, waitresses flirt with me, laugh at my jokes and make sure to get my order exactly right. Then, turning to my wife, they ask: "And what does *mom* want?"

We all know that motherhood can be sexy. It sure hasn't hurt Angelina Jolie or Madonna. But my wife feels she faces an uphill battle on the road to Milf-dom, and a return to that sex kitten she was before giving birth. She has not been hit on since she started showing in her fifth month of pregnancy. What was once an annoyance, she looks at with a sort of nostalgia as younger men speak to her with a deference usually reserved for schoolteachers of a bygone era.



The Ultimate MILF: Post-pregnancy, looking this good is harder than it appears. Colleagues, acquaintances and even some strangers publicly ask my wife whether her nipples are sore, if she feels like a Holstein when she pumps, and how much weight she has gained. Then there are the uncouth ones; they feel entitled to know whether she suffers from hemorrhoids. Motherhood has brought my wife to a land beyond etiquette and manners where people are unafraid to tell her how tired and pale she looks.

Fatherhood, on the other hand, has restored my long-lost boyishness and a new playfulness has re-emerged after years on ice. I can go days without shaving, forget to put on deodorant, dress in tattered jean-shorts, and my wife's coworkers suddenly tell me how cute and adorable I look, as long as the baby is strapped to my chest. For a father, a baby is a wonderful accessory, with or without his black CBGB onesie. Case in point: spit-up stains on a father's T-shirt are viewed as a sign of dedication, a mark of providing

loving care for a helpless infant; the same stain on a mother suggests she has given up the ghost, beaten a haggard retreat from her youth, when she held the whip hand, dictating which suitor would have the privilege of buying her a drink.

It is ironic: now that I have started a family, I find that doors are opening for me that I could not have kicked down before. If only I had had a baby to tote around with me when I was single; it is the ultimate ice-breaker to initiate conversation, and I would not even have had to break a sweat crossing the bar. But of course, a baby was the last thing I wanted when I was single.

Perhaps it is the sheer virility of helping bring life into this world that now makes me attractive, or maybe it is the fact that I am now called "Dad," with all of its comforting, homey connotations. Or maybe it is simply the ass-backward reality that I am obviously unavailable, and therefore not prone to misread signals sent out across the battlefield of the war of the sexes. I think it is no coincidence that my upstairs neighbor now speaks to me at length when meeting me in the stairwell, while previously she had barely uttered a curt hello.

The fact is: I am safe.



Sharing Time: Oedipal anxiety runs both ways

People tell my wife that she "looks good for having just given birth." That statement is meant to be a compliment, but my wife collapses into a jelly of insecurity, a perpetual reminder that she is no longer the same person she once was even if she is wearing her stiletto heels.

And that is the problem. In our household, it sometimes feels that my star is in its ascendancy, while my wife's is burning out, that she has lost a part of herself and I have gained an heir. We have had our moments and I can't wait for the doctor to give us the green light to start slamming again, simply for the fun of it this time with no other agendas, no counting days, no pillows propped awkwardly to facilitate a better drip. Problem is my newfound hotness is going to waste; when I roll over in bed ready to go, we hear our son's unsexy little voice over the monitor, reminding me, that for now, when it comes to my wife's body, I have to share, like it or not.