

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Book Review: The Game

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Reporter

While sifting through paperwork and Cadre issues older than myself in our office I stumbled across a black book resembling a bible. Intrigued, I realized I was looking at a book I had heard a lot about in the summer:

The Game: Penetrating the Secret Society of Pickup Artists, by Neil Strauss. It was a long, hard Monday due to a longer and harder weekend, but my mind was still lucid enough to put the implication together: looks like a Bible. It's about pickup artists. The lightbulb flicks on. It's a pickup Bible. My eyebrows curled maniacally.

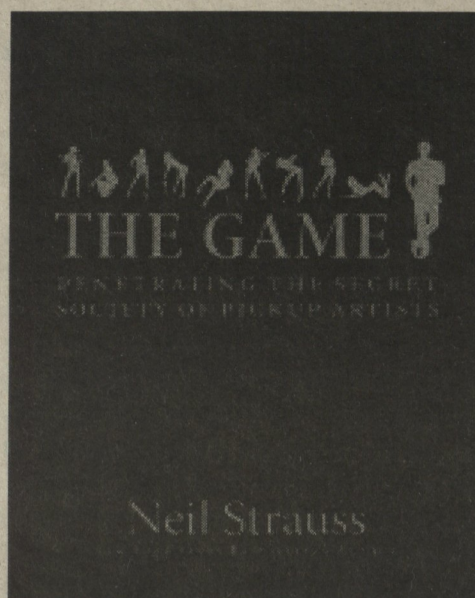
And so began the most enjoyable Cadre research I've undertaken since the Magic Mushroom article.

I'm kidding, completely in the case of illicit drugs as well as - almost unfortunately - the case of *The Game*. While "techniques" and "routines" are discussed, as I read I realized the black cover with gold lettering, gilded pages and red ribbon page marker (for those of you who don't attend mass daily, that's what Bibles usually look like) were all misleading. Instead of a guide, *The Game* is much more so a narrative - albeit a fascinating one.

Several years ago, a internet community appeared. It consisted of men all over the world looking to increase their confidence and success with women and/or pick up like a madman. In private forums, tips, games and techniques were shared and put to the test. Names like Mystery, Sin and Style (although less self-promoting ones like Grimble and Extramask also popped up) posted their trials and errors. Live seminars started becoming commonplace so would be PUAs (Pick-up artists (I swear the glossary is an awesome read on its own)) would pay hundreds of dollars to be taught by the best and taken out on the town.

I do want to mention that the term pick up is used liberally and loosely throughout this book. The subjects in the book aren't pure evil, and the term pick-up frequently refers to simply getting phone numbers and dating girls. However, it seems it should also be mentioned that their form of dating is occasionally MLTR - multiple long-term relationships. Style had 10 girlfriends at one point, and they all knew he had them.

Anyway, when Style - the author - enters the scene, he's genuinely interested in becoming successful with women. His first step is Mystery's (who mentions the fact that he's slept with over 100



women as his "credentials") seminar and the Mystery Method, which "manipulates social dynamics" to get girls. If you see a guy in a club doing magic tricks for a table of women, he might just love magic, but he might be playing Mystery's game.

The story that Style finds himself living changes rapidly. The online com-

munity formed starts hanging out and sarging - going out to pick up - together. The most successful pickup artists, giving seminars, start competing. Mystery is matched by Ross Jeffries' Speed Seduction and neuro-linguistic programming, which subconsciously manipulates feeling and thoughts through words and gestures. Jeffries, apparently, can essentially make a girl get butterflies in her stomach anytime he wants. David D'Angelo, who you may have heard of, taught Double Your Dating which attracts girls through a cocky/funny attitude.

Style gets a call from Mystery for a sarging trip, who sees potential in his young padawan. Star Wars reference, get over it. The author finds himself, from that starting point, inadvertently mixed up in this strange lifestyle, which plays out like an absurd sitcom. The book takes us through East European pickup missions, community infighting, mental breakdowns and success stories such as getting the phone numbers of the Playmate of the Year and Paris Hilton, and

dating Courtney Love's guitarist.

The lives they lead are genuinely fascinating, and unlike anything else. As well, the book is littered (only littered, not full) of tremendously interesting insights into social dynamics and forays into ways to get women. Some approaches are more reasonable than others - some borderline creepy, others questionably ethical, others fun.

While periodically a little over honest and graphic (Extramask is a strange man), *The Game* is a phenomenally interesting read. I would recommend you read it like a novel instead of a self-help book (It sure didn't help me). The potential for interesting ideas, however, add nicely to the need to find out how Style's experience plays out.

Leaving, then, with the dedication:

Dedicated to the thousands of people I talked to in bars, clubs, malls, airports, grocery stores, subways, and elevators over the last two years.

If you are reading this, I want you to know that I wasn't running game on you. I was being sincere. Really. You were different.

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