



## LIZ SMITH

# Gender Bender Turner

**T**HAT LOVE is all there is / Is all we know of love," wrote Emily Dickinson.

New York's most beautiful and touching sight is its newest Valentine, George Stephanopoulos, gleaming with love for Alexandra Wentworth and having a fine romance in the Jerome Kern-Dorothy Fields music manner.

George is, of course, ABC's most successful political commentator, having wisely dropped out of the Clinton administration back before it became fashionable to be separated from those particular Democrats. And Ms. Wentworth is the divine actress-comedienne. You've probably seen her nights on Jay Leno. Her mother, Muffy Brandon, was one of Nancy Reagan's social secretaries. This couple met only three weeks ago, but already they are ablaze.

It made Clint Eastwood's day for the "perp" to make a move for his gun. It makes my day to get a scoop about love and romance. I'm funny that way.

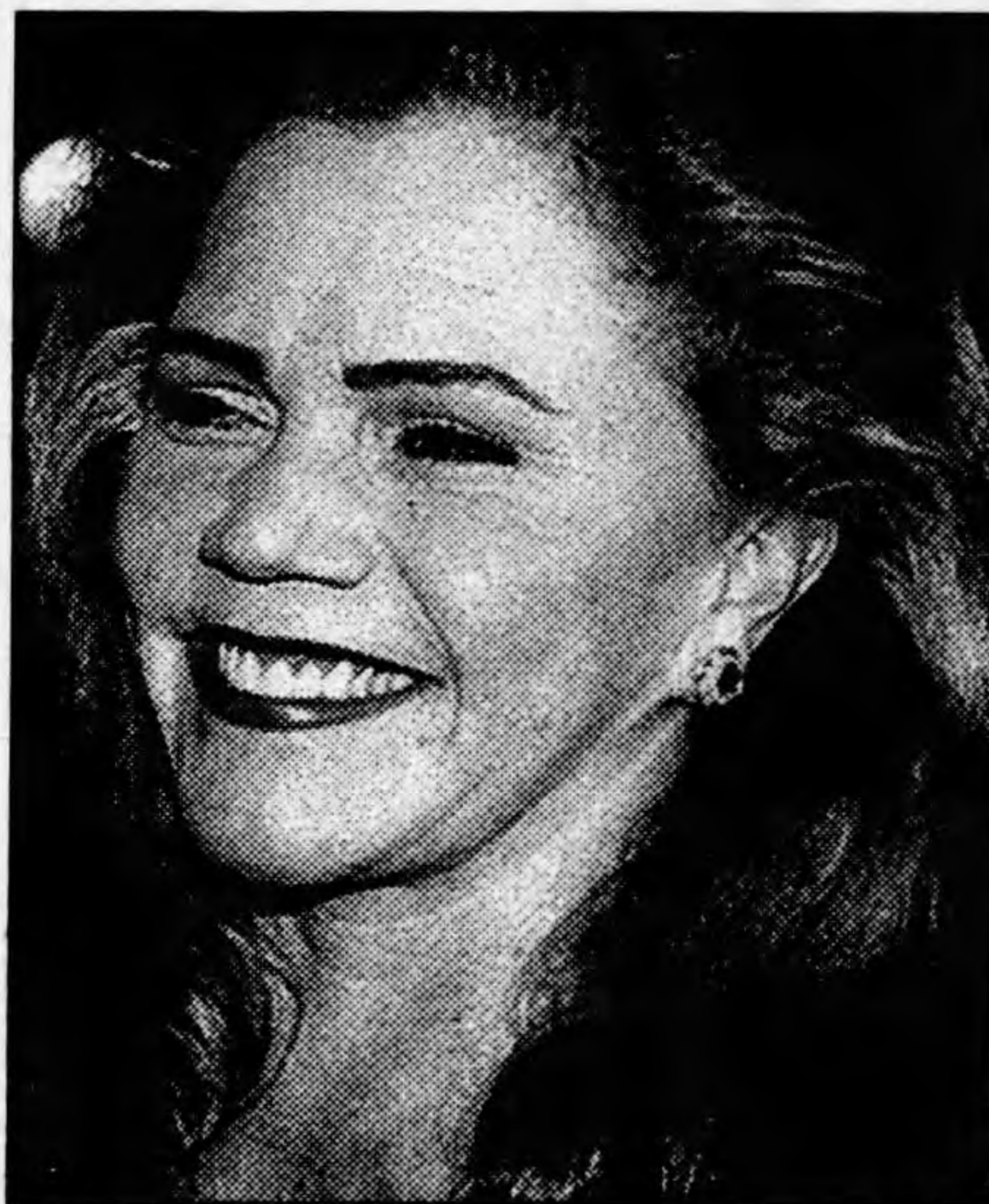
**"FRIENDS"** — the TV series will do it again, making waves and maybe headlines, with May's potential ratings winner in which the sultry Kathleen Turner plays the father of Matthew Perry's character. Yes, "father" is correct. Miss Turner will portray a male who is into cross-dressing.

Monday night at the GLAAD Awards in New York City, Miss Turner introduced me with great and grand enthusiasm. She told me backstage: "I have played a woman playing a man playing a woman playing — oh, what the hell! I enjoyed it. I like challenges." I asked Kathleen: "And to whom in this TV outing are you married?" Kathleen smirked: "The lovely Morgan Fairchild! She is my wife; she plays Chandler's mother! Is that great, or what?" In the sequence we'll see on TV, Turner turns up because her/his son, Chandler, is marrying Monica, the real-life Courteney Cox-Arquette.

We thought it might be fun to ask Courteney's brother-in-law, Alexis Arquette, for his take on Kathleen's performance? (Alexis is the brother of David Arquette and is a real-life cross-dresser. He has a bit part as a cocktail waitress in this episode.) He told us: "Kathleen nails this role, gorgeous, in head-to-toe vintage Bob Mackie. Mackie is every cross-dresser's dream designer."

We asked Alexis for cross-dressing fashion tips. He says, "Well, for authenticity, one would wear a choker to hide the Adam's apple and definitely gloves to disguise manly hands." This one-hour special airs May 17 and includes a scene where Monica finds her soon-to-be father-in-law (Turner) in drag, perched on a nightclub piano, singing "It's Raining Men" in her husky voice. Matthew Perry chortles to Courteney: "That's my dad!" At the wedding, various smart lines are tossed around, such as Turner to Fairchild: "Don't you think you're a little old to be wearing a dress like that?" Fairchild answers, "Don't you think you have a little too much of a penis for that get-up?"

Everyone involved seems to feel that Kathleen Turner was the perfect casting choice to play a male cross-dresser. She is tall and has the shoulders and the deep voice. Miss Turner already made her very sexy female mark in



AP Photo

### KATHLEEN TURNER

Behind a great man, there's a great woman.

movies. She scored in "Body Heat," "House of Cards," "Romancing the Stone," "The War of the Roses" and, on the Broadway stage, she did "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." Next, she'll be seen as Tallulah Bankhead in a one-woman stage show.

Her great admirer, Alexis Arquette, adds: "She made the part on 'Friends' sing. There is a fine line of being vampy and campy without coming off schmaltzy. She is still in the realm of femininity. Nobody could have played this part better in my opinion." And remember, Alexis is an expert.

**THE GLAAD AWARDS** boasted such worthies as Vanessa Redgrave, Gina Gershon, John Ritter, Judith Light, Sharon Gless, Alan Cumming, Natasha Richardson, Michele Lee, Tom Wopat, Mo'Nique, David LaChapelle, Harvey Fierstein, Susan Lucci and the beautiful Joan Collins.

Joan has a new romance with 32-year-old Percy Gibson, whom she met while doing a tour with the play "Love Letters." (Gibson is the same age as Joan's daughter, Katy.) These lovebirds, making their first public appearance, are looking for a Manhattan apartment.

**HOLLYWOOD'S** Walk of Fame gets a brand new star today bearing the name of Bernie Brillstein, the dynamic mentor-manager of many a star.

Speaking at the ceremony will be Lorne Michaels, Martin Short, Brad Grey, Rob Lowe and George Schlatter. Only yesterday, Bernie brought out his bestselling memoir, "Where Did I Go Right?" Today, he has his star!

**PUT THEM** all together — Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Robert Redford, Steven Spielberg, Sydney Pollack — and they spell the Film Foundation, which restores deteriorating film stock, so all of our movies won't fall to dust and disappear.

This week, the Film Foundation is \$140,000 richer because of **Norby Walters'** financial savvy: The former New York R & B music agent helped raise that amount to help out. He also chairs "The Night of 100 Stars Oscar Gala" at the Beverly Hills Hotel each year. So, **Norby**, what'll you do for an encore next March?

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