

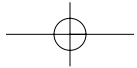
I'm a Sad Clown

ANNA NICOLE SMITH (Nov. 28, 1967–Feb. 8, 2007)

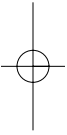
HER FAME: Anna Nicole Smith made her fame as the 1993 *Playboy* Playmate of the Year, then went on to become something of a one-woman carnival sideshow for the next decade and a half, a luminary of the golden age of public confessional and reality television. Her highly publicized marriage to dying octogenarian billionaire J. Howard Marshall and the subsequent U.S. Supreme Court battle over his money, as well as her fluctuating weight, was public fodder, and led to her appear in her own reality show.



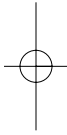
HER PERSON: Born Vickie Lynn Hogan in Houston, Texas, Anna Nicole's father abandoned the family shortly after her birth. She was raised by various family members, and after failing ninth grade, she dropped out of school. She was soon working as a waitress at Jim's Krispy Fried Chicken in Texas. At seventeen she married the sixteen-year-old cook, Billy Wayne Smith. Her son Daniel Wayne Smith was born the next year; the couple was separated shortly after. To support herself and Daniel, Anna Nicole worked at Wal-Mart, Red Lobster, and as an exotic dancer. It was while dancing at a strip club that she met oil billionaire J. Howard Marshall, 63 years her senior. After auditioning for *Playboy*, she was chosen by Hugh Hefner to appear on the cover of the March 1992 issue, under the name Vickie Smith. Many, including Anna Nicole, attributed her immediate popularity to her resemblance to Marilyn Monroe. Anna Nicole was one of many women who reinforced the trend for massive surgical breast enhancement. Anna Nicole finally settled on the name Anna Nicole Smith by the time of her election as the 1993 Playmate of the Year. She then married Marshall, who died 13 months later, initiating a bitter legal battle between Anna Nicole and Marshall's disowned son James Howard Marshall III (technically Smith's stepson) for the oil magnate's \$1.6 billion estate. She returned to widespread fame as the public face of the TrimSpa diet method (before going on a diet, the grossly overweight Smith had been asked by Conan O'Brien what her "playmate diet" was, to which she immediately replied "fried chicken"), as well as with her own reality TV show, *The Anna Nicole Smith Show*, which largely put her and her close relations on display like prescription-drugged zoo animals.



It was announced on June 1, 2006 that she was pregnant again and the apparent father was her lawyer Howard K. Stern. Her daughter Dannielynn Hope Marshall Stern was born in September 2006. Her first child, 20-year-old Daniel Smith, died shortly after the new birth, while visiting his mother and Dannielynn in the hospital; an autopsy showed that he had died of a lethal combination of Zoloft, Lexapro and methadone, likely obtained from his mother. Smith herself was found comatose a few short months later in a Hollywood, Florida hotel room and pronounced DOA at the emergency room of an apparently lethal combination of sleeping pills and large numbers of other prescription drugs in her system, many of them prescribed to Howard K. Stern.



LOVE AND SEX LIFE: Anna Nicole's life is significant not for the sexual debauch but for the depths of misery and isolation she felt about her behavior. A bizarre psychosexual symbol, Smith was paid lucratively to be the object of 13-year-olds' masturbatory fantasies, and paid even more to be the kept woman of an ancient billionaire—the phrase “gold-digger” was frequently volleyed in the media. Despite Anna Nicole's profuse claims of love, the couple never lived together. During and after her second pregnancy, a string of men came forward claiming paternity after affairs with Smith, including Zsa Zsa Gabor's husband Frédéric Prinz von Anhalt, former bodyguard Alexander Denk, and ex-boyfriend Mark “Hollywood” Hatten. It was also rumored that she had used Marshall's frozen sperm to conceive the child. DNA tests after Smith's death confirmed that another ex-boyfriend, entertainment photojournalist Larry Birkhead, was the actual father.



In the year before her death, Anna Nicole told *Entertainment Tonight* that she had been physically and sexually abused as a child, and raped by multiple male family members, which her mother—who also beat her until she left home—knew about but did nothing to stop. Much of her adult behavior is textbook for survivors of sexual abuse. Diaries from the early nineties released after Smith's death—and subsequently sold on eBay for over \$500,000 to a German businessman—opened an insightful window into her private life: she wrote often of her great love for Marshall as well as her disdain for sex—“I hate for men to want sex all the time... I hate sex.”

In her controversial exploitative book *Blonde Ambition*, television host Rita Cosby suggests that Anna Nicole most enjoyed lesbian liaisons and obsessively watched a videotape of attorney Howard K. Stern having oral sex with Larry Birkhead. In turn, Stern filed a \$60 million lawsuit against Cosby and her book's claims.

HER THOUGHTS: In a video released after her death, Howard K. Stern follows a drugged and pregnant Anna Nicole—who is inexplicably wearing full clown make-up around the house—goading her with the camera, until, cornered, she wails “Iiii'm a saaad cloooown.”

—J.L.