

your marriage at a bus stop with 30 people listening in.

PB: In *Yellow Dog*, a character named Clint is a tabloid journalist who goes to great lengths to deal with a big problem -- his small penis. What is it about the male psyche that makes that such a central issue?

MA: Ha, go figure. But this book, and all of my books, are about the terrible vulnerability of the male ego and how this is connected to violence eventually. About the desperate situation of the male who has to keep proving himself and develops so much anxiety on that front. And sex has become much more competitive, with the girls becoming sort of predators as well. It's ferocious.

PB: Who are some other writers whose handling of sex impresses you?

MA: It's a subject like no other, and very difficult to negotiate. John Updike does it as specifically as anyone. I think he gives it a very good try, but he takes it too far. It's too literal. It's too close-up. There's no actual, specific sex in *Yellow Dog*. I think it's better to skirt around it and suggest what's going on by other means. It's like dreams. It's perhaps the one thing that fiction can't do. And film can only do it through pornography, which is a yellow genre. Video pornography is like propaganda; it's very far from being art.

PB: You were called the "Mick Jagger of literature" in your younger days. What was that period of your life like, when you were the rock-and-roll writer?

MA: Oh, that was all bullshit. And why isn't Mick Jagger called the Martin Amis of the rock world? That's what I want to know.

PB: Any lessons from your youthful indiscretions our readers should know?

MA: I can't say, because it was such a different world then. It was still hippiedom when I was in my 20s. And I was just average. It was free love. It was a time when girls went to bed with you whether

they liked you or not, out of sheer peer group pressure and fear of being thought anti-peace. I'm sure there's a whole new range of complications out there now and I'm not really in a good position to advise on it.

PB: Last question. Are writers in general good in bed?

MA: Yeah, I should think so. Because empathy is their thing.



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