

Ruff Ryder. Sitcom star. Designing diva. We're feeling this chameleon

Blonde Ambition

At just 25, Philly-born Eve Jihan Jeffers is the go-to homegirl for all your entertainment needs. She stars in her own self-titled TV show, has recorded three chart-topping hip-hop albums, and last year launched her own clothing line, Fetish. Last month she reprised the role of feisty Terri in *Barbershop 2: Back in Business* and this winter will star opposite Kevin Bacon in *The Woodsman*. Her role was originally written for a middle-aged White woman. "It's a good part for me," Eve says, laughing. "I get to play a bitch." The résumé's impressive. But if you want things to get interesting, you have to ask Eve about the good stuff: men, relationships and weird sexual predilections. C'mon, Eve, it's just us girls. Let's *really* talk. ▶

BY JEANNINE AMBER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLO DALLA CHIESA

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JEANNINE AMBER: Have you ever dated a guy with a fetish?

EVE: I was with a man who had a foot fetish and a guy who liked to role-play. [Looking at the tape recorder] Oh, I don't know if I should say this! My mother's going to read it.

JEANNINE: Let's talk about the foot-fetish guy.

EVE: It's the weirdest thing.

JEANNINE: Weird, but in a good way?

EVE: It was, you know, fun [giggling].

JEANNINE: Hmm, you seem very open-minded. What kind of teenager were you?

EVE: I got punished a lot. I got in trouble for cutting school, staying out late, lying about detention and lying about homework. I hated high school. I always knew there was something else.

JEANNINE: Are you dating anyone now?

EVE: Yes. I met him in Los Angeles, but he's from another country. It's so weird because I haven't been in a relationship for two years, and my last one was so crazy! So I'm moving like a snail right now. I need to be able to breathe, focus, take my time and figure things out. We've been together six months, but only for the last two weeks have I been able to say "boyfriend." When I said it, my girlfriend was like, "You said it! You said it!"

JEANNINE: Does he have an accent?

EVE: Yes. He speaks three languages and he's a businessman. But he's not in the entertainment industry, which I love.

JEANNINE: And he's a brother?

EVE: Yep.

JEANNINE: Does he *have* a brother?

EVE: You know! Believe me, I am so happy. It's good. He's not talking to me about beefs between rappers or the next track I'm gonna do. He talks about my work as far as business goes, but it's interesting.

JEANNINE: Speaking of interesting. I can't help but notice you're not wearing a bra. Are you making a statement?

EVE: Sometimes I just find them restrictive, so I don't wear them. If you were a man, I would have worn one. And I wear bras around my mother. It's disrespectful not to.

JEANNINE: I understand that before you had a record deal you worked as a stripper. Does it take a lot of courage to [CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]





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take off your clothes like that?

EVE: It takes a lot of drinks.

JEANNINE: Do you regret it?

EVE: I don't. I only did it for a little while, but that helped me realize that this was not where I was supposed to be. This was not my life. I did it because I was trying to be grown. That was my rebellion. I was out of high school and I needed money. That was it. There were girls there who enjoyed it, though. Then there were girls who had to do it because they had kids. Some girls were so strung out on drugs they didn't know what they were doing. I just pray to God I never have to go back to that. Ever.

JEANNINE: Your mother married your stepfather when you were 14. Do you ever hear from your biological father?

EVE: On my first album [*Ruff Ryders' First Lady*], I wrote in my liner notes: "To my biological father, I get my hip-hop from you." I haven't seen him since I was 12, but I remember he used to deejay in basements. And I wrote to my brothers, my father's sons, "It's not our fault we're not close." My father called me and was like, "I understand." I was 21 then, and I haven't heard from him since.

JEANNINE: I don't understand how a man turns his back on his own child.

EVE: If he called my mother and wanted my number, I would tell her to give it to him. But he'll never do that because what can he say to me? There are too many questions I have for him. I'm not trying to be rude, but it's like, "You owe me an explanation. What were you thinking?" I remember crying when I was a kid because I was so angry. But my mother was really good at saying, "It's his loss. You're good." I don't know what she said to him behind closed doors, but my mother was very encouraging to me.

JEANNINE: What's the best present you've ever given your mom?

EVE: My mother is really classy. She likes sweaters, loafers and nice bags. But she won't let me buy her things. I have to sneak her stuff. But I did take her to the Grammys when I won. I never got awards in high school. So when they called my name, it was like, "Mommy!" It was an incredible moment. □

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