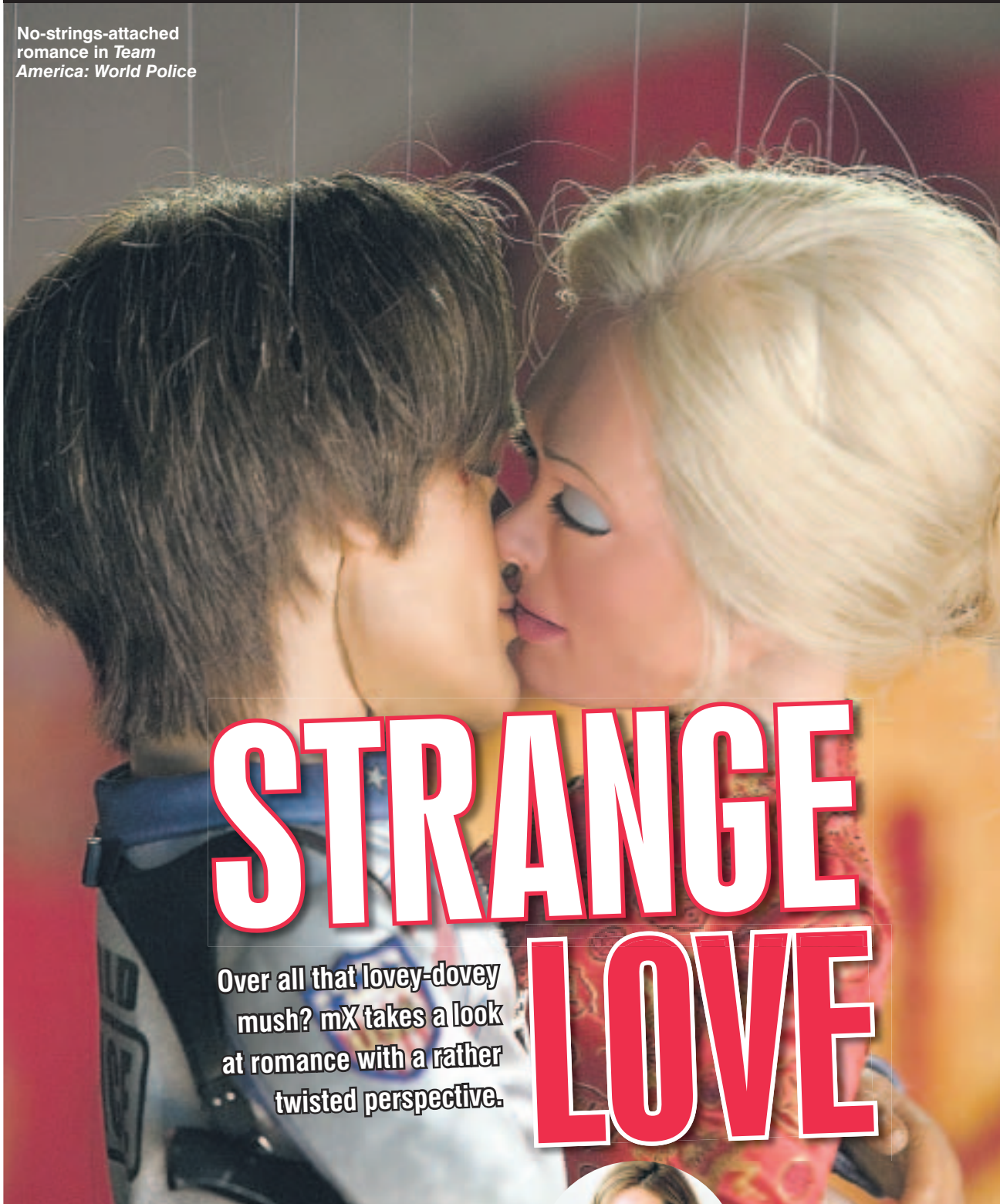


mXFlirt



No-strings-attached romance in *Team America: World Police*



STRANGE LOVE

Over all that lovey-dovey mush? mX takes a look at romance with a rather twisted perspective.

He may have had you at hello, but the goodbye – and everything in between – can make for a much more interesting movie.

We know it's just past Valentine's Day, but if you're still in the mood for love and you're looking for inspiration amid the shelves of your local video store, try one of the more unusual suggestions. At least it'll be a change from the usual rom-com boredom.

Blue Velvet (1986). Nothing is more romantic than a pair of scissors and a tank of nitrous oxide. Look at it as a great make-or-break date movie: If you can sit together and enjoy David Lynch's twisted classic about strange love and a severed ear, anything is possible.

Team America: World Police (2004). If you missed it on Pay-TV last week, this is a spoof of bombastic action movies from the genius minds of *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone – and puppets are the stars.

See it for the sex scene alone. Maybe you'll get some ideas.

Something Wild (1986). It starts out fun, sexy and slightly dangerous, with Melanie Griffith kidnapping Jeff Daniels for a weekend adventure. But it eventually turns darker with the arrival of her ex-con husband, played with chilling menace by Ray Liotta.

American Splendor (2003). Comic-book writer Harvey Pekar (Paul Giamatti) is a miserable human being. And he's not very attractive, and he's constantly kvetching. But in the nerdy Joyce Brabner (Hope Davis) he's found a friend and soul mate. An extremely creative film.

Kissing Jessica Stein (2001). When boys are no fun anymore, why not try girls? That's what Jennifer Westfeldt does, with great neurosis and analysis, in the title role of this unexpected, unconventional romantic comedy.



Kissing Jessica Stein is no hardship for Jennifer Westfeldt (top, middle) a far preferable fate to finding yourself in *Blue Velvet*, as Isabella Rossellini (below) did.



Bride of Chucky (1998). The tagline is "Chucky gets lucky," which is a sort of steamy notion except Chucky is a homicidal doll who spews one-liners. In this fourth film in the series, he goes on a murder spree with Tiffany, a doll dressed in a wedding gown (voiced by Jennifer Tilly).

Misery (1990). Kathy Bates undoubtedly loves James Caan – after all, she keeps telling him she's his No. 1 fan. She just has an enthusiastic way of showing it. (If this one's checked out, try *Fatal Attraction* or *Play Misty For Me* instead for psycho obsessions.)

The Girl on the Bridge (1999). He's a knife thrower looking for a target. She's a suicidal French waif.

But when Daniel Auteuil stops Vanessa Paradis from ending it all by jumping into the Seine, they discover they share a psychic connection.

And they get to form a new circus act.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

Dr Bella



“Why would we ask the class hottie if he felt like a ‘private study session’ if we knew he was still in love with his ex?”

Throughout history human beings have adopted colourful ways to indicate their readiness for love or their status as off limits.

In some parts of India for example, the sindhur, a red mark in the centre part of a Hindu woman's hair, is the perennial “can't touch this” signifying that a woman is married.

You could argue that this is a time-efficient method. No wasting your time chatting up the sari babe if she's wearing the red sindhur.

Come to think of it, if we were to more overtly signify our relationship status, picking up would be miles easier. There would be no need to approach the pretty waitress and ask if she wanted to grab a drink after her shift, if we knew she was in fact happily sleeping with an AFL player. Why would we ask the class hottie if he felt like a “private study session” if we knew he was still unfathomably in love with his ex? To know where people were romantically at would save time, embarrassment and unnecessary rejection.

The cultural manifestations of expressing sexual availability are unique. Have you heard of those parties? The one's that use the Traffic Light System? Here's how it works. People rock up to a party wearing clothes which reflect their availability. Colours correspond to one's interest – or lack of interest – in hooking up.

Red, for example, signifies taken, green means keen, and amber indicates maybe.

All and all, the red-yellow-green dating scheme is pretty lame. Agreed. And surely when it comes to love, there are numerous other categories which could be much more useful...

The Virgin or Sexual Novice could wear white. The Bisexual, pink.

Gays: perhaps paisley. Blue for those Seeking Companionship. Gold those Seeking Marriage (with or without a necklace to indicate marriage with or without children).

Purple for People Needing Saving. Black to indicate Drunks/Neurotics. Affair-Seekers: scarlet. Bitter People Already Destroyed by Love: could wear grey, obviously. Absolutely nothing for those Seeking a Veritable Bonk Fest. And Players of course could be wearing all of the above.

How much easier would this make things? Little lighthouses in the murky world of romance.

Well, young Swedish designers of Singleringen have taken the theme of status signification to storm. Responding to the trend of prolonged singlehood, they've fashioned a “single ring” for singles who want their availability beacons.

And guess which It-girl has one on her pretty finger? The delightful Miss Natalie Portman. Single, as Carrie Bradshaw taught us, is the new sexy.

Singleringen's founder, Johan Walback, says that unlike those who are engaged or married, there's nothing for single people to announce their status. To let the world know they're looking. With the ring on sale in more than 20 countries though, expect to spy more ringing singles around.

Each ring has an azure layer covering a silver band and a half-moon shape clipped out of it. If one wearer finds another, the two rings will complete the other's circle. Ah shucks. Ain't love sweet.

Best of luck in love

BTW

Questions, thoughts, sexual tips?
Email me at dearbella@mxnet.com.au
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● SOURCE: Associated Press