

10 Questions.

She's a Harvard grad, an acclaimed actress and a humanitarian, but she says she's no role model. Her new movie is *The Other Boleyn Girl*. **Natalie Portman will now take your questions**

What have you learned about yourself by portraying powerful women?

Dani Araya, TORONTO

It has encouraged me to say things authoritatively. Often women preface what they say with "I know this might sound stupid" or "I don't mean to be aggressive, but..." I tend to do that, so it is great to have the opportunity to play a leader.

You take on a period piece in *The Other Boleyn Girl*. What is your favorite time in history?

Nikki Barrett, YORK, PA.

I'm really interested in 1920s Berlin. I read this great book by Amos Elon called *The Pity of It All*. It's about Jewish life in Berlin right before the war. The whole environment of the salons and all this culture—there was a real openness and freedom. It's scary to think the response to that was this incredible fascism.

Does knowing you are a role model affect what parts you choose to play?

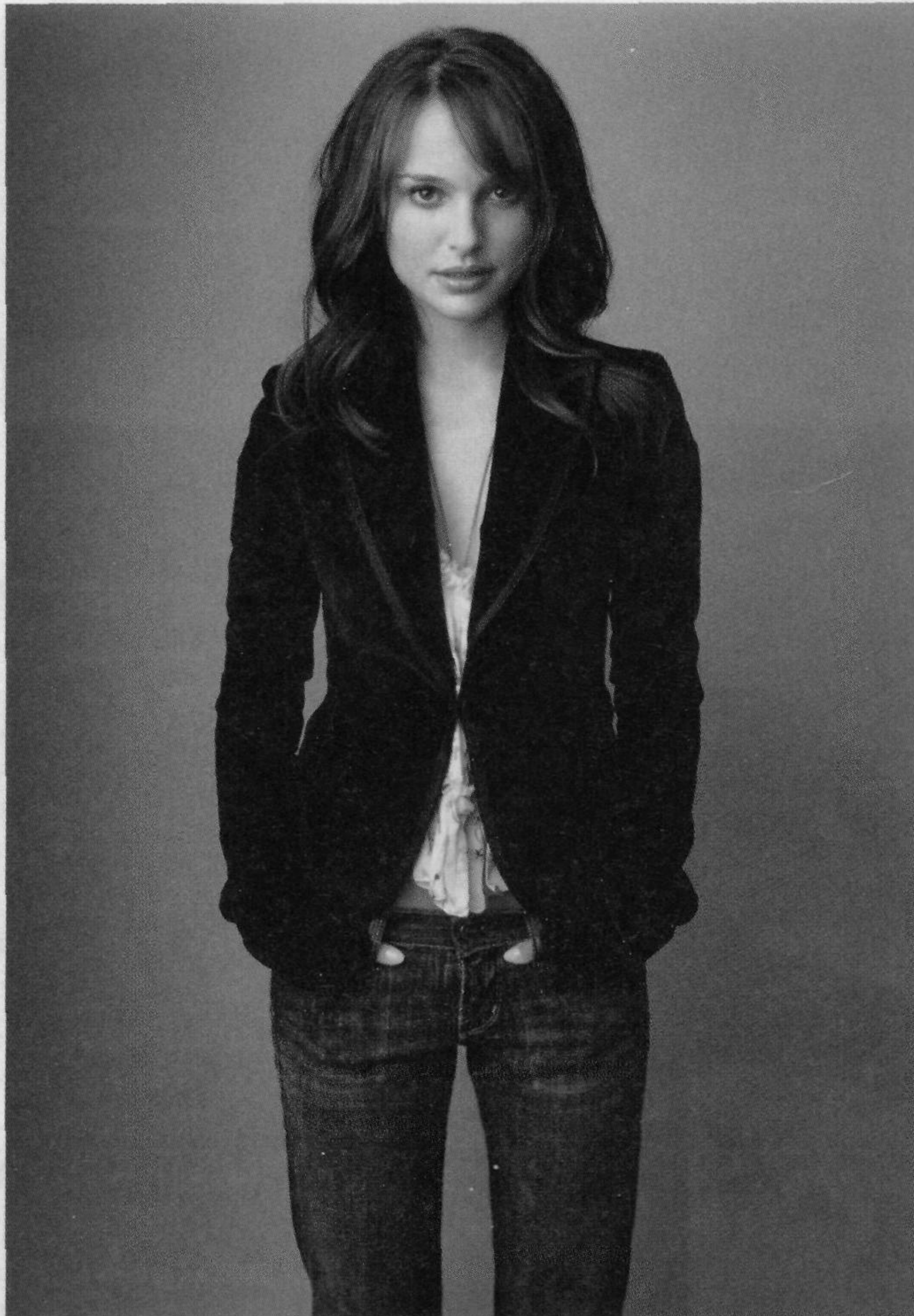
Nina Chung

HERMOSA BEACH, CALIF.

I don't consider myself a role model—I make mistakes all the time. It's more about how I want to portray women and myself. I played a stripper in *Closer*, and now it sickens me how many scripts I get where the woman is a stripper or a prostitute. I also have this sort of good-girl image—it's such a virgin-whore thing with female roles.

You once shaved your head for a role. Would you do it again?

Will Kooi, EDMOND, OKLA.



I don't know. I loved having a shaved head, but the growing-out process is really sketchy. I had some odd haircuts.

Most of your movies are very serious. Would you consider working on more comedies?

Mariana Córdova

CALEXICO, CALIF.

I would love to, but it is difficult to find something where the woman is funny without endorsing frivolous girlhood. I love chick flicks, but I hate the

fashion obsession and always wanting to get married at the end—that really bugs me.

How do you feel about the missteps of today's young stars?

Ryan Youell, WILLIAMSBURG, VA.

You're never going to change the fact that it's hard for some people to deal with their lives, but you can change your reaction. Give them their space and privacy. The worst thing about our society is that it reveals in people's difficult times.

As a native of Israel, what role do you think the U.S. government should play in its affairs?

Amy Lucio, RIVERSIDE, CALIF.

I would love to see a government that made demands on Israel and the Palestinians to reach an agreement. Ultimately, it has to come from the people themselves, though. No one is going to like an externally imposed solution.

You work with the Foundation for International Community Assistance. How can micro-finance help change women's lives?

Henry Zakumumpa

KAMPALA, UGANDA

Microfinance is part of the solution. It is an incredible way to give capital to the world's poorest people, mainly women. With these loans women are able to take agency in their own lives. They don't need to wait around for someone to come help them. We really take that for granted here.

Should celebrities use their stardom to influence voters?

Sofia Canbolat

ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

Sure. People can listen to a host of influences and still make their own decisions. I'm always interested to hear who the people I respect are voting for. Gloria Steinem wrote this Op-Ed in the *New York Times* that influenced me toward Senator Hillary Clinton.

Would you ever consider running for office?

Dan Walton, CANTON, OHIO

I never really considered it, but it's not a bad idea. I'm not going to be getting parts in the next five to 10 years—I'll be over the hill. *[Laughs.]* Maybe I can go into politics once I'm too ugly for Hollywood. ■



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