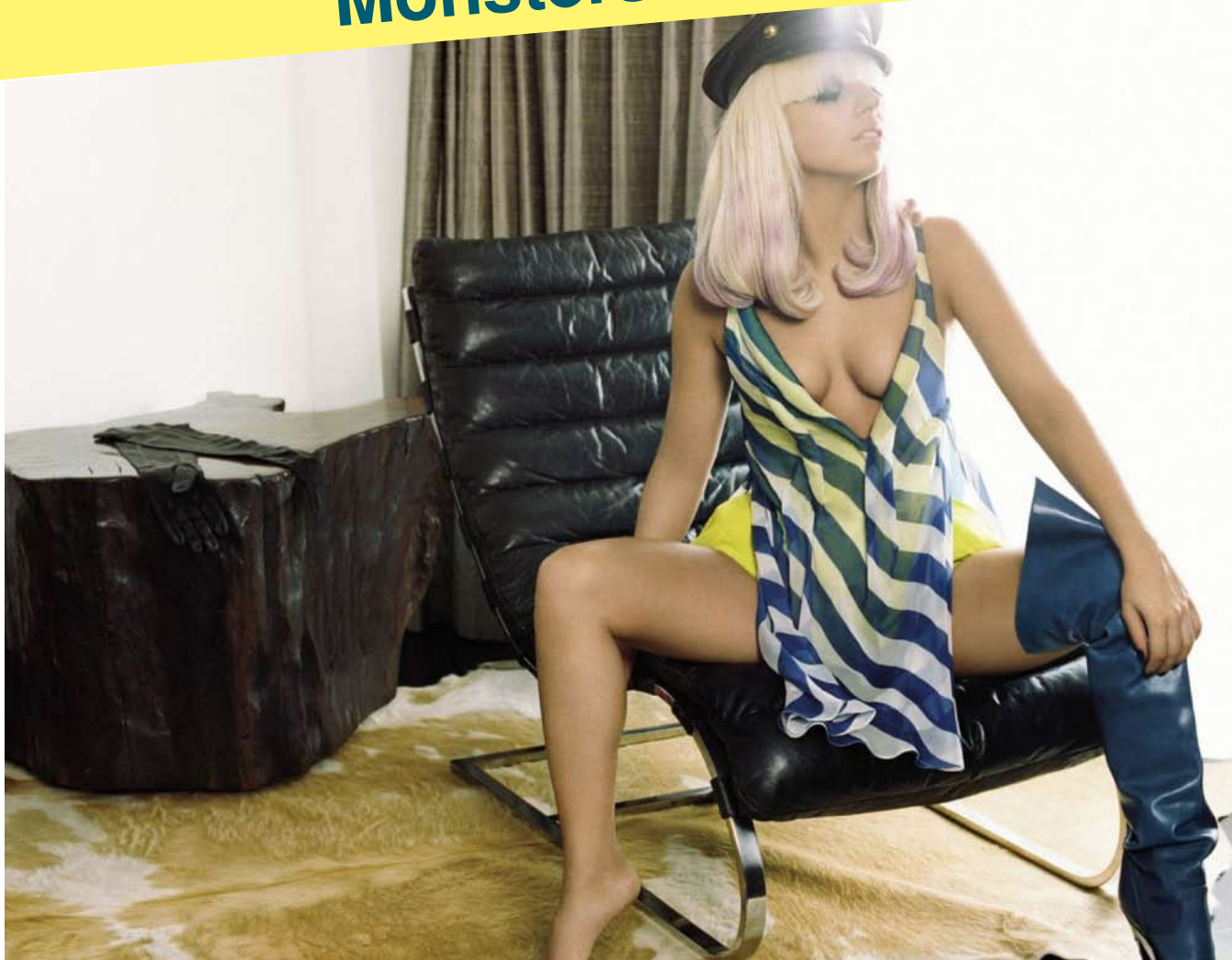


# LADY | GAGA

## Monsters Attack!



By: Gil Kaufman

Aside from her meteoric rise to worldwide fame from seemingly nowhere, one of the most fascinating aspects of Lady Gaga's ascension to the pop stratosphere is how formerly unknown New York rock-club singer Stefani Germanotta seems to have known all along that this was her destiny. A just-published profile in New York magazine, written by Vanessa Grigoriadis and including an interview conducted in March 2009 — supplemented by recent quotes from people she knew during her early days, including songwriter/producer Rob Fusari, who sued Gaga earlier this year — the self-assured singer is depicted as already carrying herself like the pop icon she would soon become today.

"I don't like Los Angeles," she told the reporter, insisting that she be addressed by her stage name and recoiling from the camera flashes of tourists taking pictures of each other that she assumed were meant for her. "The people are awful and terribly shallow, and everybody wants to be famous but nobody wants to play the game. I'm from New York. I will kill to get what I need."

Though her path to seven #1 singles, millions of album sales and a massive stage show appears to have happened in a blink of an eye, Gaga, 24, said the process took longer than it appears. "I went through a great deal of creative and artistic revelation, learning, and marination to become who I am," she said in the article. "Tiny little lie? I wanted to become the artist I am today, and it took years."

“Even as a kid I always had eyes on me, like bees on honey. I was always outrageous and I was always very smart.”

It began on the Upper West Side of New York, where she grew up in a duplex with her dad, whose company installed Wi-Fi systems in hotels, her mother, who was a vice president at Verizon for a time and younger sister Natali, now 18, who has a cameo in the “Telephone” video. The sisters attended the small Sacred Heart Catholic girls school near the Guggenheim museum, where the Germanottas were a solidly middle-class pair mixed in with the outrageously wealthy and those attending on scholarships. She began taking day-long acting classes on Saturdays at age 11 and by eighth grade was landing the leads in shows such as “Guys and Dolls” and “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum” at Sacred Heart’s brother school, Regis High. Friends told New York that she insisted on being called by her characters’ names even then, refusing to answer to Stefani backstage during rehearsals and performances.

Gaga also held down a job as a waitress at a diner on the Upper West Side during her school years, using one of her first paychecks to buy a \$600 Gucci purse, a preview of her later dive into high fashion. Though some jealous older girls sometimes referred to her as “the Germ,” the article says, most classmates remember her as being popular and not the awkward outcast she has painted herself to be in interviews.

In addition to being a theater nerd, Gaga began her musical experimentation, starting a classic-rock cover band, performing at open-mic songwriter nights and cutting a demo tape of love ballads that her parents gave out as party favors at her sweet-16 party at a New York club.

“Everyone was playing her demo, like, ‘Whoa, she’s going to be a star,’” Justin Rodriguez, who attended Regis, told the magazine. “She was by far the most talented person in high school, but she’d do so many random acts of kindness, like saying, ‘Your singing has gotten so much better, you’re working hard and I’ve noticed.’ She wasn’t a diva at all.”

Like many of her peers, the article says Gaga had obtained a fake ID by the time she was 15, around the time she started dating a 26-year-old waiter and got her first tattoo, a musical G clef on her lower back. About 15-20 pounds heavier at the

