

At the height of 1970s rock'n'roll bloat, Fleetwood Mac's **Stevie Nicks** was the O.D.—the Original Diva. Dressed head-to-toe in flowing black, singing songs about Welsh witches, bouncing between rock-star boyfriends (bandmates, no less), snorting drugs all the while, she wrote the book on feminine excess, and one young reader was a girl named **Courtney Love**. On the eve of Fleetwood Mac's reunion album and tour, the two Goth blondes gathered for an historic meeting of the muses.

COURTNEY LOVE: I was watching your new MTV special, and "Silver Springs" sent chills down my spine. It was like great opera, or like *A Streetcar Named Desire*. It was an absolute war between the sexes. And one of the things that struck me was how you epitomized the ideal gorgeous, California, in-your-convertible girlfriend. *Almost*. You can see the schism in your performance, where you check yourself and say, I am so much more than that. You filled that stage so much with your archetype, it was incredible. I just can't imagine you as a 21-year-old waitress in San Jose supporting Lindsey Buckingham. It freaks me out. Hey, can I say what I'm drinking my coffee out of?

STEVIE NICKS: Yes, you can.

I'm drinking my coffee out of a mug from the Betty Ford Center. It says BETTY FORD on it. I think that's super chic.

[Laughs]

I wish my rehab had sold souvenirs. They did, actually. They had sweatshirts, but I didn't buy one because I had no money and they didn't take credit cards.

I think at Betty Ford they give you a cup.

I bet they have lots of cool stuff there. So anyway, when I was very young I thought of you as the most pampered child of California. But then I heard "Dreams" and "Rhiannon," and I thought, Is she this thing or is she this other thing, this poet?

You have to understand. I didn't want to be a waitress, but I believed that Lindsey shouldn't have to work, that he should just lay on the floor and practice his guitar and become more brilliant every day. And as I watched him become more brilliant every day, I felt very gratified. I was totally devoted to making it happen for him. I never worried about not being successful; I wanted to make it possible for *him* to be successful. And when you really feel that way about somebody, it's very easy to take your own personality and quiet it way down. I knew my career was going to work out fine. I knew I wasn't going to lose myself.

How did you two meet?

I met Lindsey in high school in San Francisco. We had gone to some party and he was sitting in the middle of this gorgeous living room playing a song. I walked over and stood next to him, and the song was "California Dreaming," and I just started singing with him. He was playing "California Dreaming"? *Oh my God!* And so I just threw in my Michelle Phillips harmony,

and...he was so beautiful. And then I didn't really see him again until two years later, when he called me and asked me if I wanted to be in his rock'n'roll band, which I didn't even know existed. And within two or three months we were opening for Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, all the San Francisco bands. Two years later, we packed up and moved to Los Angeles with about 12 demos.

When you and Lindsey joined Fleetwood Mac in 1974, it sounded like you were really coming into your own. I mean, songs like "Rhiannon" and "Landslide." Those are profound. But here was a band that had been together a thousand years, right? They originally came from this time and place—Yardbirds, Zeppelin, etc.—and while everyone had made it out of there, they were the dog with fleas. *John Mayall* was bigger than them. I mean, everybody. And then what happens? They get you and Lindsey, and here you are, this world-class beauty with a voice from heaven and these amazing songs, and it makes them huge. And you huger. And you're just the girlfriend, the silent supporter of the tortured genius. That must have made everyone crazy.

Well...my success was not easy for Lindsey, not easy for *any* of them. And I knew that, and I felt *terrible* about it. There's a part of me that would have said, Let's tell everybody to stop talking about Stevie. Stop giving Stevie all this attention, because, guess what, it's making Stevie miserable. Because I have to live with these other four people who know it's not my fault, but they can't help but blame me a little, and it's killing me.

But I also remember getting very upset with Lindsey one night when I realized that he and Christine [McVie] had written "World Turning." I had been with Lindsey all those years and we had never written a song together. Plus, I walked into the studio and they were singing it together...

You never wrote songs together?

No, no. I would sit down and play him "Gold Dust Woman" on the guitar, my simple little version, and two days later it would be recorded, and it would be recorded *really well*. He could take my songs and do what I would do if I had his musical talent. When he wasn't angry with me, that is. That's why there's seven or eight great songs, and there's 50 more where he wasn't happy with me and didn't help me. **One thing you've always done, I realized recently, is write about these muses, these other females,**

these goddesses. These parts of yourself. You don't write big, sexy love ballads about men. I wondered why that was for you? Because I do the same thing. I was listening to a song of Billy Corgan's yesterday called "I Need a Lover." It's sexy, okay. But I'm listening and I'm going, I can't write like this.

You know who else asked me that same question a long time ago: Prince. We were really close for a while—we never went to bed together, but we had something that was very, very special. And he always said, Why don't you write songs that are more sexual? And I said, Well, because that's not the way I am in my real life. I am not a person who walks naked through the house. I will always have something beautiful on. It will be beautiful, and it will enhance me.

Maybe what Prince was trying to say is you should be more, "I want to fuck you, baby."

But I believe that there is a certain amount of mysticism that *all* women should have, that you should never tell all your secrets, that you should *never* tell everybody all about you. I never have.

Speaking of secrets, I've heard that you've kept a diary the entire course of your career.

I have. It's all written down.

If you were ever to let those things out, I imagine that empires would fall.

But you know what? Even in my journals, I don't ever write about sex. I write around it, so that I know what I meant, but if somebody else read it, they might not understand. Nobody could ever get the real story unless I chose to share it with them.

Tell me more about your love life.

Well, when Lindsey and I broke up during *Rumours*, I started going out with Don Henley. And you know, I was like the biggest Eagles fan of life.

"Warm smell of colitas...."

[Laughing] Totally. And we went out, off and on, for about two years.

That's a perfect couple right there. I mean, that's the California, the San Andreas Fault couple. He was really cute, too.

He was *really* cute, and he was elegant. Don taught me to spend money.

How did he teach you to spend money? I've never had a guy do that for me.

Well, I just watched him, that's how. He didn't visibly set out to do that. I just watched him. He was okay with, say, buying a house like that [snaps her fingers], or sending a Learjet to pick you up.

I had a Learjet phase for a little bit, but I couldn't really afford it. While we're on the subject, tell me about your rose Porsche.

Me and a bunch of my friends were in my house in Phoenix, we were up all night doing lots of cocaine and watching that movie *Risky Business*. That's one of my favorites. And I just made a call and that Porsche was delivered.

You said, "I want a rose Porsche"?

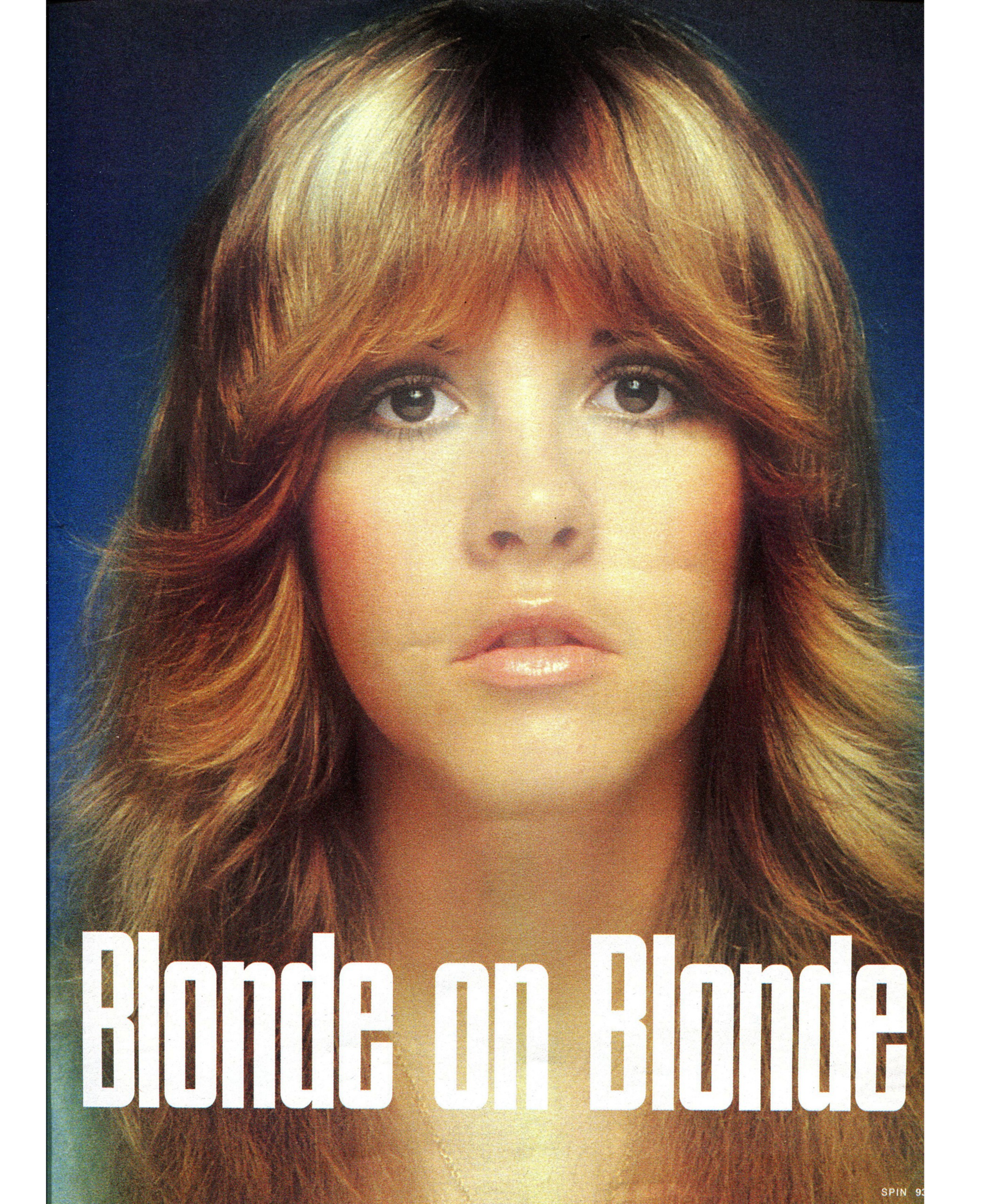
I said, I want the same Porsche that's in *Risky Business*.

There's a rose Porsche in *Risky Business*?

Yes, there is. And I bought it. That morning.

Wow. You know, I still think Don Henley is sexy.

He is sexy. He's such an interesting guy. Here's one thing that Don did that freaked my band out so much. We're all in Miami, Fleetwood Mac and the Eagles. They're recording at this gorgeous house they'd rented on the water. It's totally romantic.



Blonde on Blonde



Is it pink?

It's pink.

Of course it's pink.

It's like Mar-a-Lago. Anyway, he sends a limousine driver over to our hotel with a box of presents for me, and they're delivered right into the breakfast room where everyone's eating. There's a stereo, a bunch of fabulous records. There's incredible flowers and fruits, beautiful...

Pomegranates and figs and dates, of course.

Yes. And...

Oh, I love him!

The limousine driver is taking all this out onto the table and I'm going, Oh, please, please, this is not going to go down well. And they want to know who it's from. And Lindsey is not happy.

Gardenias?

Yeah. So I started going out with him. And this is not popular. Sure, Lindsey and I are totally broken up, I have every right in the world to go out with people, but... I spend most of my time with the band, and it's not real conducive to having a relationship. So I went out with Don for a while, I went out with [Eagles songwriter] J.D. Souther for a while. We had an incredible time.

But he wasn't as famous as you. It must have been a lot more fun going out with somebody just as famous.

Well, all those Eagles were an interesting group of guys. They were such good songwriters. I was blown away. I was totally awestruck. I mean, I was very, very famous, but it didn't make me less awestruck with these men than anybody else. I

was just as big of a fan.



And then.... We're just doing a condensed version of what happened with me. And then I fell in love with Mick [Fleetwood]. And that went on for two years. Never in a million years could you have told me that would happen. That was the biggest surprise. Mick is definitely one of my great, great loves.

How was that between Lindsey and Mick?

That was not good. That was not good for anybody else in the band. Everybody was so angry, because Mick was married. To a wonderful girl and he had two wonderful children, and I was horrified. I loved these people. I loved his family. So it couldn't possibly work out. And it didn't. It just couldn't.

And the drugs?

The drugs didn't help, needless to say. We did a lot of blow. I don't remember how much we did; we spent an awful lot of money on it. You know, we were constantly on the road—the tour for the first album was almost a year long, *Rumours* was a year, and *Tusk* was a solid year. We never stopped, never took vacations. And with coke you can stay up way too late, you don't sleep for three days.

Did you keep your drug habits secret from each

other? Like, in my band, when someone's had a problem, it's always been a secret from everyone else. We would never do it together, communally. Oh, no. No, no, no. It was much more of a family thing. And it wasn't just us.

Well, that's in the spirit of the era.

If this was 20 years ago, we would have sat here and done a gram of cocaine while we did this interview. I wouldn't have known you previously, and we still would have done it together. It was just the friendly, fun thing to do. I swear to God, that's how it was.

I think the intriguing thing to a lot of people is that there's never been a period in rock as debauched as the period after *Rumours*.

Nobody's touched it. I'm sure other people have done more drugs, other people have lived better, but no one, for one thing, was dressed as great. No one has ever looked as fabulous during their flushed-with-success period—not the Beatles, maybe not even the Rolling Stones. Somebody gave me a poster for my birthday; it's a famous picture of you guys standing outside a chicken coop. And you all look amazing. You had such great hair. You still do. And back then, rock divas didn't have high-end colorists.

No.

And you didn't get free clothes from Dolce & Gabbana.

No.

You had to make your own clothes. You had to create your own divadom. Like wearing black, which was a very fashion-forward choice for the '70s. Why'd you start doing that?

Because as a blonde I looked better in all black. Plus it made things a lot easier; you could just have a bunch of pieces.

But nobody wore all black in the '70s. You were just like Johnny Cash.





Yeah. And I loved that. I still love that. It's different now, 'cause it's very Bar-

neys, but back then it was pretty fucking bold. What kind of clothes did, like, the Eagles wear? Did they wear real expensive turquoise belt buckles and...

No. They were very cool. They just wore beautiful jeans and silk shirts.

Was Henley, like, rocking the Armani?

You know what? When I was hanging around with them, I had no idea what kind of clothes they wore, except that they always looked good.

I remember reading one description of you finishing "Gold Dust Woman" in the middle of the night wrapped in your black shawl. Was all that witchy, Gothic stuff completely your thing yet?

Oh yeah. Ever since I moved out of Mom and Dad's. But in Fleetwood Mac I had to really calm that part of me down. I mean, they put up with my incense, let me do a little lighting, but I couldn't bring a lot of my stuff in there.

There's a song of yours, what is it? It's about—oh my God, it's about...

"Gypsy"?

"Gypsy"! Right, "Gypsy." About putting a scarf over a lamp. I was like, yeah. Even in rehab I put the scarf over the lamp.

Me too, you know.

So the band didn't put up with that stuff?

Well, I just have to be very careful and tasteful with them. I can't be quite as Gypsy as I'd like.

The downside of being in a band is that you can't have everything you want.

But the upside, the upside is incredible. The team/gang thing.

It's great. When I walk with my band up to the stage, I feel like an astronaut. [Laughing] I feel like we should be in slow motion, and the wind should be blowing.

Being a movie star is pretty cool, but being a rock star is just better. Especially a lady rock star. I'm really grateful for it.

So am I. Every day. And that's something I don't think goes away. It's like, I totally appreciate being able to buy, say, this thousand-dollar cashmere blanket.

I do. Because if I couldn't, I would hate the fact that I would have to go back to real, regular blankets.

At Penney's.

At Penney's. [Laughing] And I never wanted to go to Penney's even when I was a little girl.

I didn't want to go to Penney's, either. I knew, when I was in there, I knew I shouldn't be in there. I am not in the right store, Mom.

There's something wrong. This is wrong.

Take me to the good store.

Exactly. [Laughs] I want to ask about when you put out your first solo record, *Bella Donna*, in 1981. Were the guys pissed off?

Well, it was a big deal, obviously. Going away to another record company at the peak of Fleetwood Mac was not a real popular thing.

People should understand that at the time you made *Bella Donna*, you were one of the biggest stars on the planet. Certainly the biggest female in rock. It must have been so much harder back then being a famous woman in rock. You were entering this field almost by yourself. I mean, I

always thought that Janis Joplin had a really hard

road, because no one had ever been down it.

And she didn't make it down.

But you did. You went *much* further than her. You were a pioneer. You were dealing with all these sexual politics, being a feminine woman who was doing this thing. I'm really surprised that you're less schizophrenic than you are. Because you were right out in front, with the projections of the entire world put upon you. I mean, heavily. I had *Bella Donna* when I was in Japan, stripping. I was 15, I think. It was the year that Charles and Diana got married. And that's what I listened to all the time to keep me sane. But you must have been feeling so many things then, because of your fame: the energy of young girls and older women using you, men using you. Did you start to feel a sense of magic about yourself? It's hard to control the ego sometimes. I know. It's hard to stay grounded.

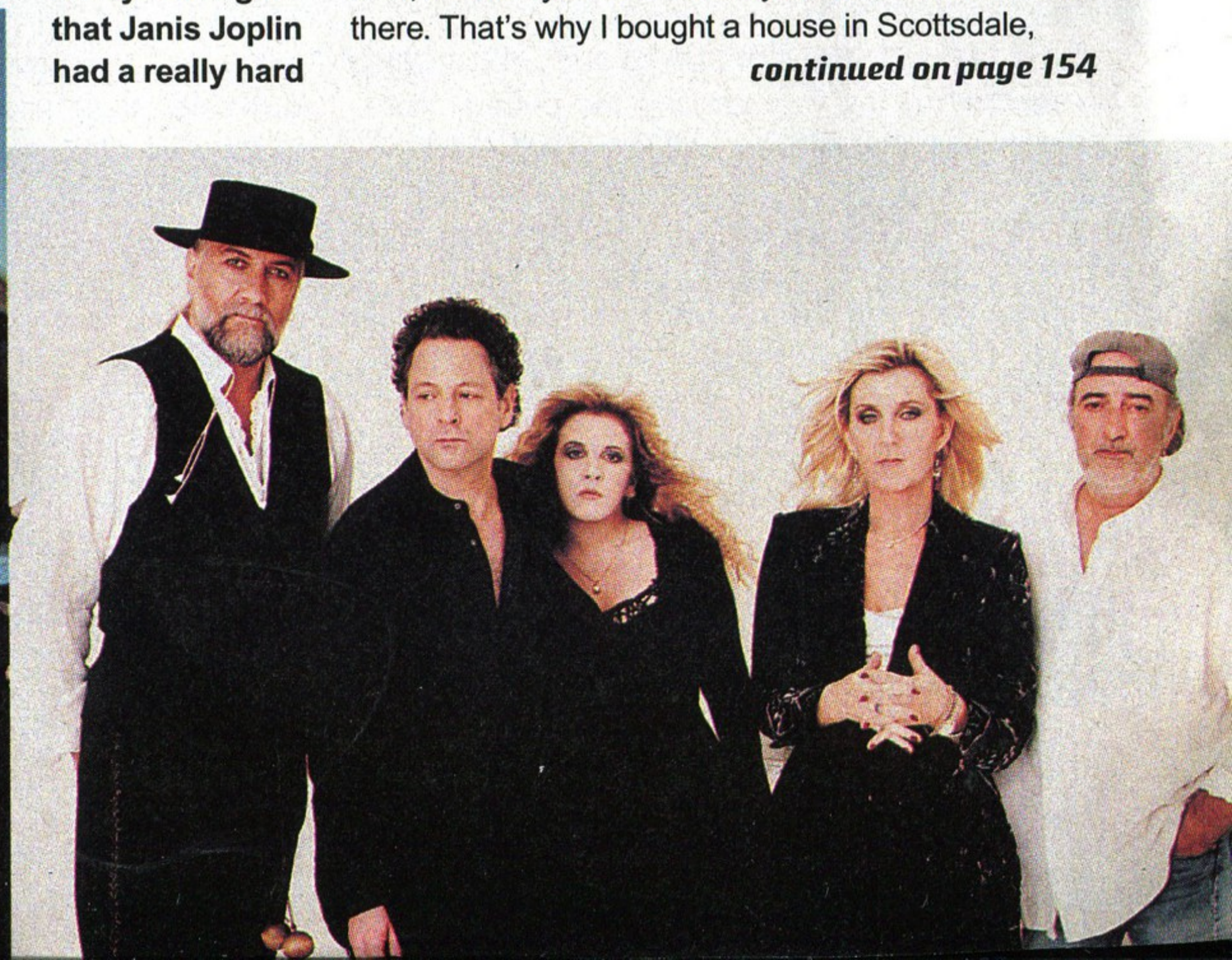
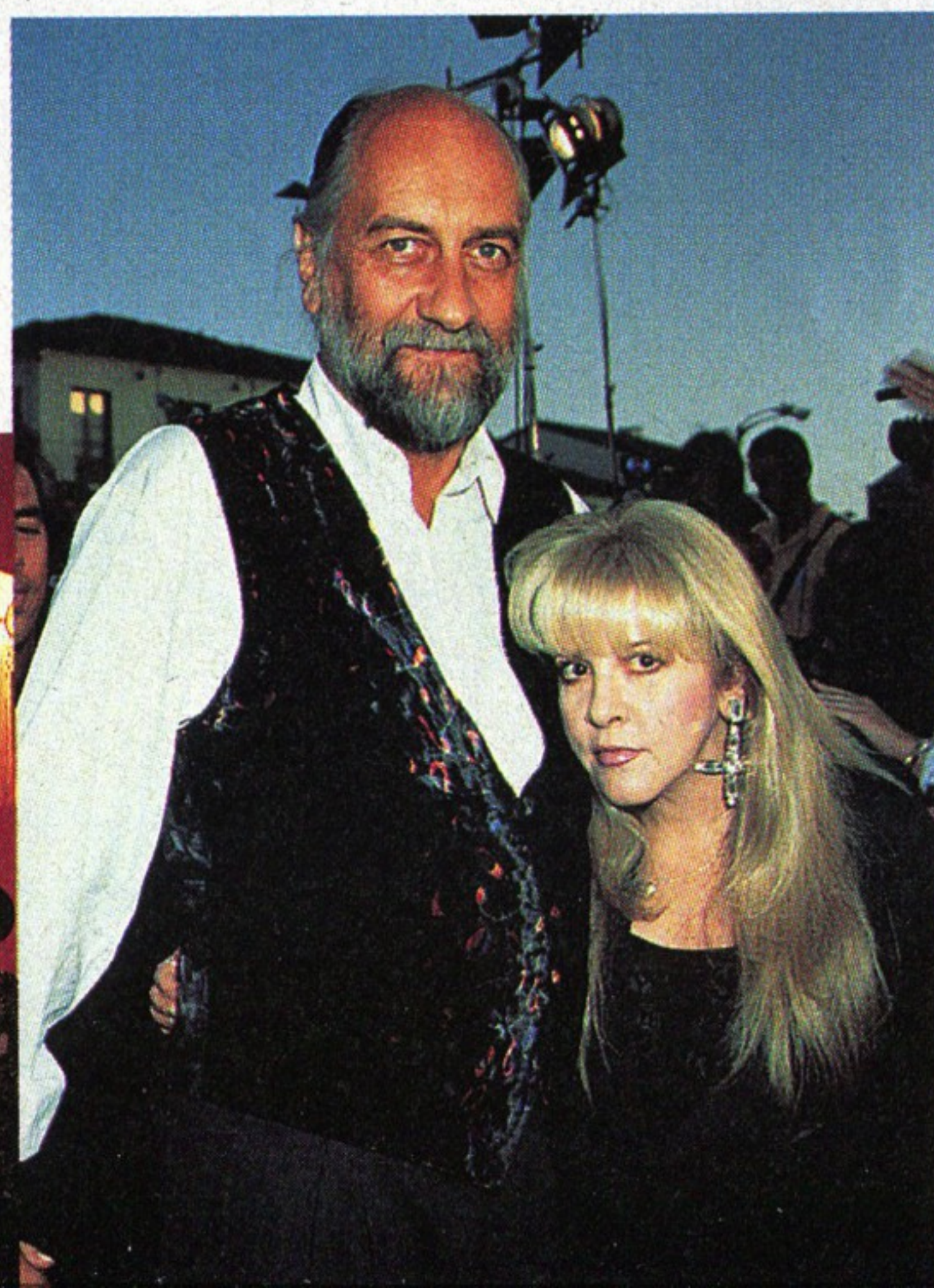
I think if I had just done my solo career and had been able just to be me, I probably would have been a lot more ego'd out than I was. Being in a group of five really does keep your ego in place. It's not as easy to get totally conceited when you're in a band.

It's not even conceit, though. I believe that it's a product of energy being projected on you. I'm sorry, there's a psychic transference that you have when you go to the bookstore and you get recognized, and they treat you as your Steviness or your Jim Carreyness or your Courtney-ness or whatever it is they expect from you *all* the time. It must have been insane to be one of the first women out there in this art form. It must have been a battlefield. Is that one of the reasons you moved to the desert?

Well, I've always lived there. My mom and dad are from there. That's why I bought a house in Scottsdale,

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Portraits of a lady: top left, cover of *Buckingham/Nicks*, 1973; second from left, Fleetwood Mac, 1974; clockwise from left, Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, John McVie, Mick Fleetwood, Christine McVie; far right, a crystal vision, circa *Rumours*; bottom right, Mac version '97.



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near Phoenix, so I could be close to them. Otherwise, I would have never gone to see my parents during those years; the cocaine years. I was too nerved out to sit and talk to my mom and dad; they were the last people that I would talk to.

So, talk to me about "Gold Dust Woman." What's it about?

Well, the gold dust refers to cocaine, but it's not completely about that, because there wasn't that much cocaine around then. Everybody was doing a little bit—you know, we never bought it or anything, it was just around—and I think I had a real serious flash of what this stuff could be, of what it could do to you. The whole thing about how we all love the ritual of it, the little bottle, the little diamond-studded spoons, the fabulous velvet bags. For me, it fit right into the incense and candles and that stuff. And I really imagined that it could overtake everything, never thinking in a million years that it would overtake me. I must have met a couple of people that I thought did too much coke, and I must have been impressed by that. Because I made it into a whole story.

But it seems more like a sexual identity song or a romantic identity song. There's some amazing lines

in the song. Like, "Rulers make bad lovers / You better put your kingdom up for sale."

I was definitely swept away by how big Fleetwood Mac was and how famous I suddenly was. Me, who couldn't buy anything before, could now go in any store and buy anything I wanted. And I wondered what that would do to me on down the line. I might be a ruler, but maybe I'd be a lousy lover.

I love the imagery in the song, when she's a dragon, and a black widow.

That just means an anger. The black widow, the dragon thing, is all about being scary and angry.

But I think it's more powerful than that. A dragon is the most potent and virile symbol you can use. So applying that to a woman, or to yourself, or to an archetypal alter-ego self is like this power, especially if you wrote it when you were frail and frightened and maybe not as powerful as you became later.

You know what, Courtney? I don't really know what "Gold Dust Woman" is about. I know there was cocaine there and that I fancied it gold dust, somehow. I'm going to have to go back to my journals and see if I can pull something out about "Gold Dust Woman." Because I don't really know. It's weird that I'm not quite sure. It *can't* be *all* about cocaine.

No, I think you're bigger than that. ☺