

WAX ON, WAX OFF

BOX OFFERS MEN-AND WOMEN-THE CHANCE TO FEEL LIKE A KID AGAIN

Empathy. That's why I did it. Women have been waxing their under-parts for decades, so when my girlfriend said to me, "I hope you appreciate what I do," I felt obliged to give it a go, if only to see what all the fuss is for.

For years, my friend Jackie—an aesthetician—tried convincing me to let her wax me. But she's married to a good buddy of mine, and I just couldn't come to peace with my knob in the attractive hands of my pal's missus.

Box, a body-waxing boutique, seemed like a good place to go. I thought the name was clever. Was it a melding of "body" and "waxing," I wondered?

"Nope," said Owner and Operator Bree Goldwater. "It's what you think it is."

Still, clever.

I'm normally a fairly trimmed guy. Call it metro if you want; I call it considerate. I don't want to floss with her pubes; why should she have to with mine? But I allowed three weeks of growth and made my appointment for the middle of the afternoon.

"Take two Advil an hour before your appointment," my girlfriend warned me. I took two Advil and two glasses of scotch. I came to find that Box offers wine to its customers to help dull the teensy bit of pain waxing induces. But I was actually drinking to numb any chance of arousal—I heard it could happen.

Box has a welcoming, earthy feel to its space, replete with hardwood floors. Dark shelves with beauty magazines and products line the wall across from the reception desk. The shocker was the tube of first aid ointment for sale called *Brave Soldier*.

I wasn't offered any wine because they were all out. My scotch buzz hadn't kicked in yet, and I asked Vanessa Rocchio, the girl at the greeting desk, if she wouldn't mind

running to Vons and getting some more.

"Here, I'll give you money. Just grab a box or two," I said.

Rocchio is an aesthetician and uses her boyfriend as a test subject. (The guy's got balls—hairless maybe—but balls.) I stood chatting with her for a few minutes while Goldwater finished up with another client.

"The more you wax, the more your hair will get used to it," Rocchio said. Then the phone rang. It was a woman asking for a couple's Brazilian appointment. Foreplay by pain—they must have been German.

Goldwater greeted me and handed me a baby wipe of sorts: "OK, take off your pants; use this and wipe everything, front to back. You may want to take your shirt off, too. It gets hot in here." She left the room.

I glanced at the small menu Rocchio gave me. The industry term for what I was about to have done is a Male Brazilian. Box's menu lists it as "Sac & Crack." And yeah, that's trademarked.

Pants off, shirt unbuttoned, pen and paper in hand for notes and the scotch making its course, I was ready. Goldwater came in with a gentle fury, and as we started talking about the business of hair, she started ripping away.

"Oh!" I said. "We've begun then, haven't we? How long have you been in this business?"

RIP!

"I've been doing it for seven years," Goldwater said.

"OK, what pointed you to this interest?"

TEAR!

"Acne, actually. I had acne and did a chemical peel and it took care of everything."

"So, you wanted to give back and help others."

"Yep, you could say that. OK, the hard part is over, I'm going to do your balls now."

SHRED!

My note pad had gone from a writing tool to a biting guard. To her credit, Bree was fast. She would slather the green wax on, let it dry for a few seconds and then yank it right off. It's called a hard wax (speaking of, there was nothing else hard in the room. Thank you, whiskey dick). Soft wax requires cloth strips, similar to what you likely saw in the movie *40 Year Old Virgin*.

"My arms are just about out of skin," Goldwater said. "We're in the process of developing our own wax and we have to test it on someone. I was just in London working with a scientist trying to find the right chemicals to put together. There are about 10 ingredients that go into a wax. And you have to try each combination out on someone."

Goldwater and her husband Steve, who works on the business end of things, want to formulate a better wax that goes on smoother, comes off faster and leaves less redness after the procedure.

"This wax is fine, but see how I have to make two or three pulls to get it off of your skin," Bree Goldwater asks. "I don't want to have to do that."

"Funny, me either."

RIP! TEAR! SHRED!

"OK, flip over, on your knees and elbows, arch your back," Goldwater said.

As she spread the wax along my, um—oh screw it, she put wax on my ass—I heard a yelp from another room. Then another one. It sounded like someone, or something was in dire pain. I panicked.

"Now relax and arch your back," Goldwater said again.

"What's that yelping," I asked, clenching even more.

"Oh, we have a puppy here. It's my daughter's fifth birthday, and my husband and