

**C**HICAGO-BASED attorney Corri Fetman is known in the US as one of the most aggressive attorneys in divorce law. After battling with inequality in the workplace, she decided to open her own all-female firm, Fetman, Garland & Associates, Ltd. Proud of her pneumatic body, Fetman put her curves to work in an advertising campaign for her law firm that made international headlines. The billboards featured photos of Fetman and her personal trainer, Chuck Sanow in their underwear and bore the caption 'Life's Short. Get a divorce.' In January 2008, in conjunction with her controversial *Playboy* magazine photo spread, Fetman released an edgier ad featuring her cast as a dominatrix and her trainer as a master, with the tag line 'Take Control. Get a Divorce.'

**What made you open your own firm?**

I always wanted to start my own firm. I started working when I was 11 years old and I always knew I wanted to have my own business someday. I also have a somewhat defiant, independent personality and knew that I would not survive in a typically stodgy firm environment for very long. After litigating in various practice areas, I worked as an associate in a boutique matrimonial law firm. At this point, I realised that I had finally found an area of the law that was exciting and allowed me to utilise my litigation and transactional skills simultaneously. I started saving money so I would have enough funds to start my practice without taking out loans. I am a fairly conservative person when it comes to money and I abhor loans. I also wanted to ensure that I had my own identity in the close-knit divorce law community and achieve enough experience in

“MY ATTORNEY IS A CENTREFOLD”



*It's not often that a top-ranking divorce lawyer moonlights as a 'Playboy' pin-up. But Corri Fetman is famous – notorious, even – as the brief in briefs.* BY AMBER MARKS



this area of law prior to starting my own firm. So after gaining almost two years' experience at the family law firm, I left and started a law firm called Chicago Women At Law, Ltd. in 1995. I believe in reinvention of one's self every so often or when it feels like things are becoming stale.

To that end, the name of the firm changed in 2007 when Kelly Garland became my partner. I also wanted to change the name of the firm prior to launching the controversial advertising campaigns in *Playboy* magazine. We renamed the firm Fetman, Garland & Associates, Ltd.

Women lawyers are by far more detail-oriented and more prepared in general. Most women lawyers had to overcome barriers that male lawyers did not face. As a result, women lawyers are generally well-rounded and can relate to clients in a special way that male lawyers cannot. I also believe that each lawyer in a firm must be different and bring

*'TIS PITY SHE DOES LAW: Corri Fetman and personal trainer Chuck Sanow in the controversial ad campaign*

advocate. Women clients flock to Kelly for legal guidance and empathy. Kelly's strengths are negotiating and oral argument.

I, on the other hand, appeal to the male clients. I have a very strong, no-nonsense personality. I can relate to men because I think and conduct myself more like a man. I am very logical, rational and business-oriented. I am also very street-smart and understand both the male and female psyche very well. I can comprehend my male client and the woman he married thereby relating to both my own client and to his spouse or paramour. Additionally, I believe the key to settlement of any case is leverage so I attempt to find this in the beginning of the case and utilise it wisely. My strengths are litigating and forming unique strategies in order to provoke settlement or win at trial.

**How did you come up with the idea for your advertising campaign?**

Business was very slow. I became concerned and decided it was time to advertise more effectively. Kelly and I frequently brainstorm about advertising and we decided that we wanted to do something creative and different. We believed law-firm advertising was boring and blended because it was all the same, namely, a group of lawyers sitting in the library in suits.

Our firm has a reputation for being highly aggressive, creative, ballsy, non-judgmental, outcome-oriented and knowledgeable. We wanted the ad campaign to showcase these very traits. One of my favorite sayings is 'Life's Short'. Slowly, the campaign evolved. We wanted the ad to show our sense of humour, which is also appreciated by our clients when going through such a tough time. So we then came up with the photo/fantasy idea. We searched through stock photos but they were not erotic enough. So, I called upon my personal trainer, Chuck Sanow of USA Gym to do a photo shoot for the male. I then posed for the female photos. We selected photos and layouts and then hired a graphic arts firm to put the ad together in a final layout.

We launched the first billboard in May of 2007. After it was ripped down by the City of Chicago, we launched the second billboard on mobile trucks in June 2007 (the 'butt shot') that roamed different neighbourhoods of Chicago during the summer of 2007. The third ad campaign, with the tagline "Take Control. Get a Divorce", featuring a bondage theme with a dominatrix (me) and master (Chuck) in the photos, was launched in January 2008 on *playboy.com/corri* in conjunction with my pictorial and legal advice column.

**Was the campaign successful?**

The first purpose of the ad campaign was to deliver a positive message, namely, that a person should be able to take stock of their life, have



**“WE LAUNCHED THE FIRST BILLBOARD IN MAY 2007. WHEN THE CITY OF CHICAGO RIPPED IT DOWN, WE LAUNCHED THE SECOND — A BUTT SHOT — ON MOBILE TRUCKS”**

**Why did you decide to only employ only women lawyers?**

Necessity is the mother of invention. I believed there was a need in the divorce legal community for an aggressive, empowering, all-women's law firm.

certain distinct and unique strengths to the firm. By way of example and without generalising too much, I believe women clients want an empathetic woman lawyer who will champion their case. Kelly Garland, my partner, is a very nurturing and compassionate



**COURTING CONTROVERSY:** Corri Fetman sees no contradiction between glamour modelling and the law

**“I WAS EXTREMELY FLATTERED TO BE ASKED TO POSE NUDE IN PLAYBOY. TO BE IN THE COMPANY OF SUCH BEAUTIFUL WOMEN AS MARILYN MONROE, CINDY CRAWFORD AND PAMELA ANDERSON WAS THE ULTIMATE COMPLIMENT”**

personal integrity and not be judged for not wanting to stay in an unhappy marriage. The ad campaign was also about making personal choices that lead to happiness. It is about living your best life since life is so very short. The second purpose of the ad campaign was to get our law firm to be a household name in conjunction with divorce. The ad campaign can be defined as a success because it accomplished both of these purposes.

**What sort of debates did your advertising campaign provoke?**

The question should really be —what debate didn't it provoke? The ad campaign was controversial, to say the least. We received international media coverage in a very short period of time. People either loved the ad and understood the light-hearted message or hated it and thought we were satanic home-wreckers causing divorce. There was no grey area.

**Do you have any other advertising campaigns planned?**

Haha! Wouldn't you like to know? We have various projects in the works so stay tuned....

**How did you feel when Playboy asked you to pose in the nude?**

I was extremely flattered. To be considered in the company of such beautiful women as Marilyn Monroe, Cindy Crawford, Pamela Anderson, Rachel Hunter, Bo Derek and Brooke Burke was the ultimate compliment.

**How has having your photos in Playboy affected your professional reputation among colleagues and judges?**

It really has not. The *Playboy* spread gave the lawyers and judges that disliked me one more issue to complain about and to further fuel their own insecurities. Most of lawyers and judges that valued and liked me before the *Playboy* photos actually applauded my courage and respected me even more. I am still the same hard-driving lawyer — only now you can see more of me...

**How has it affected your relationships with your clients?**

The clients loved it and respected my personal decision to pose for *Playboy*. We did not receive any negative comments from clients.

**What is your response to critics who argue that your advertising campaign denigrates women?**

First, that statement is a conclusion so show me

the facts that support such a ridiculous conclusion. Second, no one has accused our firm of denigrating men even though the ad portrays a scantily clad male. I question why there is a double standard. The advertisement does not denigrate anyone. A person who claims that the ad denigrates women obviously has insecurities and other latent self-esteem issues. A secure person who is happy in their relationship or marriage would not be affected by the advertisement.

**What is your response to critics who argue that your Playboy photos denigrate women legal professionals?**

Does a Victoria's Secret or Calvin Klein underwear advertisement denigrate women? I don't think so. I think this is the most ridiculous and narcissistic argument I have ever encountered. I often hear this from other women lawyers and cannot believe anyone with a law degree would actually believe this or say it to me. I really fail to see how photos of my naked body affect any other woman lawyer in America or the world, for that matter. It is *my* body in the photos — not anyone else's. The photos simply do not involve or portray anyone but *me*. This statement is tantamount to a female movie star complaining about Pamela Anderson posing nude in *Playboy*. Moreover, the photos are tasteful and are no different than going to a museum and viewing naked paintings by such renowned artists as Titian. I would also think that women lawyers would support the First Amendment and champion our right to freedom of speech and expression.

**You recently wrote a 'lawyer of love' advice column on celebrity divorces, relationships and legal issues for playboy.com. Do you plan to do more writing?**

Yes, yes, yes! My contract at *Playboy* is over so I am searching for another column opportunity. I love writing. The advice column has been a dream of mine for a long time. The column allows me to express my creativity and distinctive writing style while also educating people about the law. I am a bit of a nerd. I love to research and learn, especially about out-of-the-ordinary celebrity and current event cases with fascinating legal issues. I then infuse my own wicked and sarcastic sense of humour to entertain and amuse the reader. The reader then looks forward to reading my unique slant on cases.

**What other ambitions do you have?**

Too many to list! I have been training with my personal trainer, Chuck Sanow to compete in a figure bodybuilding competition early next year. I hope to continue my career as a successful lawyer. I also want an exciting and rewarding opportunity as a columnist and writer. Did I mention a wax figure of me at Madame Tussaud's? **B-M**