

Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43

EMILY Ratajkowski *by* MARIO Testino

The real star of the 'Blurred Lines' video has become the toast of fashion and Hollywood, taking on her first lead role in this month's We Are Your Friends after shining in Gone Girl. So why is she so restless? GQ meets a woman dealing with the flipside of fame and in search of herself...

Styled for British GQ by **KATIE GRAND**

STORY BY **CHARLIE BURTON**

Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



Emily Ratajkowski is frustrated. Recently, she went for two film roles that she coveted – and didn't get either of them. Not that she's short of job offers, of course: Hollywood's queuing up to cast her as commercial "hot girl" characters, but they don't excite her. "I have some serious criteria for what I'm looking for in a role, which has really f***ed me," she says. "The ones that I really want have to be a really interesting script and story and usually the girl is ugly." First there was the part of Masha ("I love her, she's the original badass") in a new adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*. The feedback? "Too pretty for the role." The other was a supporting part in the upcoming film of Philip Roth's novel *American Pastoral*. "Again, I think I did a great job in the audition and they were very interested, but again – not weird-looking enough." The problem she faces, she says, is that Hollywood loves to pigeon-hole. "When people google my name they see this bikini-sex-symbol kind of thing and they're scared to cast me as anything but that. So I'm taking a long and, I hope, high road of basically waiting for the parts that I'm most excited about, which can be really... annoying."

We're eating at Mark Sargeant's *Plum & Spilt Milk* restaurant in London's King's Cross, not far from where Ratajkowski lived during her early childhood. Her flight from Los Angeles, the city she now calls home, landed around midday, so we're here during the no-man's-land between lunch and dinner, when the almost total emptiness affords her a rare break from the furtive glances and outright gawping that often accompany her being out in public. It's not only her breakthrough appearance in Pharrell Williams' and Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines" video (more than 450 million web views and counting) that normally gets her recognised. There's also her turn as Ben Affleck's mistress in David Fincher's Oscar-nominated *Gone Girl*. And then there's her career as an increasingly-super model, racking up 2.6 million Instagram followers and campaigns for the likes of Marc Jacobs, which has made her face so familiar that she plays herself in the new *Entourage* film. But aside from all that,

there's also the simple fact that Ratajkowski is adjective-defyingly attractive. She's the kind of woman you'd draw: curves like a cola bottle, lips like a sphinx. Hell, even your girlfriend thinks she's hot.

By any standards, her career is going gang-busters. What's more, she's about to hit the big screen again in her first lead role and it is one that meets her "serious criteria". In *We Are Your Friends*, the first feature from short film, television and documentary director Max Joseph, she plays Sophie, a woman who drags a would-be dance music superstar, played by Zac Efron, into a conflict between his career and his heart. Yet today, on a cloudy spring afternoon, the 24-year-old seems restless. It's not just the casting gripes. Dig deeper, and you find a larger, existential dissonance. Her greatest fear, she will later say, is "not making anything of life and not doing anything that's important". "And actually," she'll add, "I'm really scared of that. Especially because I chose *this* as my career, this superficial thing."

'People are afraid to cast me as anything other than a sex symbol'

Emily Ratajkowski, pronounced Rat-a-kow-ski, was born in London but raised in San Diego, where her childhood compared with her friends' was, as she puts it, "very specific". Both her parents worked in the arts, her father as a painting teacher and her mother an English professor. They led a bohemian lifestyle; they didn't own a television and her father would cut all the labels off his clothes, even the tag on his Levi's, because he didn't like brands. She often chose to hang out with them instead of people her own age. "I spent most of my time with adults because although my parents were older when they had me, they're really like teenagers," she says. "I sort of became the third musketeer."

At school, she had always been out of joint with her classmates: she recalls in elementary classes dressing in a cape-like black sweater with black eyeliner and Princess Leia buns. "It was my way of saying, 'I don't fit.'" As she got older, that disconnect was exacerbated because she developed physically much earlier than her peers. "When I was eleven years old, I basically looked the same as I do now," she says. "I used to get hit on a lot more as a minor. It's pretty f***ed up." By sixth grade it had "driven a wedge" between her and one of her friends whose father had started acting odd around Ratajkowski. "I started to feel really uncomfortable, and I started to get invited round less and we stopped being friends."

Later, Ratajkowski moved to the high school where her father worked. Word had got out

that she had started modelling. "I didn't know anyone when I came to my new school, so they were like, 'The cool painting teacher's hot daughter is here!' And it was this terrible bomb that dropped on me. I was like, f***: they all just know me as this thing. It was kind of like Hollywood: I was getting pigeonholed."

Even with all the attention, her parents allowed her to keep her independence, not requiring her to come home on school nights. Still, they made their feelings clear about some of her exploits. When she was 15 she started dating one of her father's former students: he was five years her senior and therefore deemed unsuitable. One day she was joining her parents on a trip to the theatre and they had arranged to have dinner first. She turned up late, frowned-upon boyfriend in tow. "They looked at me like, 'Are you f***ing kidding me?'. I was also stoned and it was one of my first times smoking weed. I remember my mum coming really close to my face and being like, 'Your eyes look really small...' I went to the play and immediately passed out." She says it was the worst thing she ever did, not least because her parents didn't tolerate her smoking marijuana back then. "I had friends whose parents would smoke weed with them, but that was not the case with mine," she says. These days, however, they're more relaxed. "Now it's fine."

After high school, Ratajkowski went to UCLA to study art – she still paints and draws today – but, just like in her early teens, she was an outsider. The problem was twofold: she was disappointed to find out that the contemporary art world was "insanely elitist and full of bullshit", and she wasn't surrounded by typical arts students. "All of my roommates were these blonde sorority girls." She left after a year.

The late afternoon light is streaming into Plum & Spilt Milk and the rosé is flowing. Over our main courses, I can't help thinking that for a girl who hates being pigeonholed as "hot", starring in "Blurred Lines" seems like a curious choice.

Ratajkowski admits she wasn't sure to begin with. She was working full-time as a model, and when she was approached for the "Blurred Lines" job, the synopsis of the video turned her off. "It was so bad," she says. "I was like, 'There is absolutely no way they could pay me enough money.'" Even though Pharrell Williams was attached? "I didn't give a shit, because it's me, so I don't care who's attached to it." When she met the director, Diane Martel, however, she was persuaded. "We just connected personally, she's smart, she's really culturally sensitive, and she talked to me about her ideas and how the women would be in the video."

Of course, the video proved highly controversial. Thicke and Williams, fully clothed, singing "You know you want it" at Ratajkowski and two other semi-naked women led to >



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



⊕ accusations that it was “rapey”; the song was banned by around 20 UK student unions. Ratajkowski has had to answer for it. “It’s important to take responsibility because I signed on for that job; I was a part of it.”

Still, she’s weary of being associated with the song. “I actually just took a meeting with someone who brought up ‘Blurred Lines’ and I was like, ‘You’ve got to be kidding me. I don’t want to talk about that – come on!’” When it plays in a bar, her instinct is to run away.

She insists she doesn’t have any regrets but, talking to her, you sense she could be conflicted. After all, she is a feminist. Not hard-core, sure, but she doesn’t align herself with tokenistic pop feminism, either: “Like Beyoncé saying, ‘I’m a feminist’, or Nicki Minaj, or all these popular figures who maybe don’t have so much to say.” Her message, she says, is about sexual empowerment. Which means? “Making sure you get what you want in sex. And feeling sexual without feeling like it’s for someone else.”

She’s happy to clarify some particulars of her position. She disagrees, for instance, with the view of some other feminists that giving men oral sex is demeaning. “I had a male friend who said, ‘I don’t get blow jobs because I think it’s offensive [to women].’ That view is disgusting – it’s empowering! Being in love and acting sexually on it in a million different ways is empowering.” And she thinks men need to realise that women check them out, too. “I love men’s butts. I shouldn’t have to feel embarrassed of that.”

Her attitudes spring from experiences in her teens when she was made to feel guilty about her body. “I remember a vice principal snapping my bra strap in seventh grade – when I had just turned 13 – because it was against the dress code.” Ratajkowski also recalls an intimidating moment when a friend’s father took her aside to say she needed to be careful because she had a wise mouth and was too pretty. “As if I need to apologise for my sexuality.”

She makes no apology for her sexuality in “Blurred Lines”: “The girls make eye contact with the camera, which I think is really important because in a lot of shoots you have the women looking off, which makes it voyeuristic and weirdly sexist,” she says, in defence of the video. “And [“Blurred Lines”] is fun! I didn’t feel objectified when I was making it. I felt like I was having a lot of fun as a sexual person.”

The more recent controversy surrounding the track, though, is a legal one. In 2013 Marvin Gaye’s estate claimed that “Blurred Lines” stole from Gaye’s 1977 hit “Got To Give It Up”. Last March, Williams and Thicke were found liable for copyright infringement, and Gaye’s family was later awarded \$5.3m (£3.4m) in damages. Papers filed at court by Williams and Thicke’s lawyer in 2014 asserted that: “There is no substantial similarity in the melody, harmony, rhythm, structure, or lyrics of BLURRED and GIVE.” Ratajkowski, however, says she often mistakes one track for the other. “I have to say, from someone who

really knows the beginning of ‘Blurred Lines’, when it comes on, half the time it’s the Marvin Gaye song but I’ve already tried to leave the place or hide, and then it’s like, ‘Oh it’s the Marvin Gaye one, what the f*** was I stressing about?’,” she says. “They’re that similar.”

Later, I ask her a hypothetical question. Suppose she had become famous through a different avenue. Would she have done that video? “Of course not,” she says, “I wouldn’t have done it. No.” Nor would she revisit that genre. “I think I’ve done enough nudity now that I don’t really need to do “Blurred Lines” again. Like, if someone asked me to do it now, I’d probably say no.”

We walk to nearby Bloomsbury, to see the house where Ratajkowski lived as a young child. Wearing a cream-coloured coat and beige heels, she looks very put-together – although she confesses that behind closed doors she’s a “goober”, which she translates as “a total mess” – and with her leopard-print sunglasses, her 5ft 7in frame slips hassle-free through the crowd.

‘You just surrender. I’ve got over the fact I’ve got no privacy’

En route, talking in her big-town folksy Californian voice, she recalls her mother taking her to the theatre every week when she lived in London. It should be noted that Ratajkowski has an expansive hinterland. Our conversation today has ranged from the author Lori Moore (“I just read *Bark*, her newest – there’s a lot of magical realism”) to conceptual art (“I think post-Duchamp art is just jerking itself off”) via sexuality (“I really believe that we’re all conditioned: maybe we have certain impulses that make us more inclined towards one gender, but we’re pretty flexible. We’re animals. A body is a body”). She’s equally at home discussing politics. She used to be an Obama fan, but no longer, and would prefer Elizabeth Warren to Hillary Clinton. She’s also pro-Edward Snowden, and has radical views on drugs. “My grandfather, who just died at 102, believed that literally every single drug should be legalised and they should just deal with it. And honestly, I don’t disagree.” She’s equally forthright about foreign affairs. “There’s a reason Isis exists, which is because we’ve invaded countries and they hate the Western world. I’m not forgiving them, I’m just saying there’s a reason.”

To Max Joseph, the director of *We Are Your Friends*, who cast her above 100-plus other applicants, it’s this depth that’s part of her allure. “She’s an enigma in a lot of ways,” he says. “I mean, she is very intelligent and she’s very well-read, and she’s also the girl who was in the ‘Blurred Lines’ video. And I

think that we don’t naturally put those two things together. The fact that she can pull both off with maximum integrity is very bizarre. It’s bizarre, but incredible at the same time.”

We turn into a residential area and discover that her old road is the next right. She hasn’t been here since she was five. “I figured I would come back with some baby daddy...” she muses. We turn the corner. To her horror, one side of the road has been demolished for construction work – but on the other is a row of tall, 19th-century houses-cum-flats, and she slowly recognises the front door that was her family’s. “I accidentally drank whisky here. I was four and I loved apple juice which looks exactly the same, and my dad had whisky out and I just grabbed it.” She spends a little time taking the place in, then we head to the pub on the corner, where we sit outside and talk about a scandal.

In September 2014, a hacker released a cache of nude photos stolen from Ratajkowski’s Apple iCloud account. It was one of a series of celebrity phone hacks that became known as “The Fappening”, and its victims also included Jennifer Lawrence, Rihanna and Kim Kardashian. What did Ratajkowski do when she found out? “Nothing; you just surrender. I’ve gotten over the fact I’ve got no privacy. This is not the right way to think, politically – that you ‘have nothing to hide’ – but I always hated when I was growing up how people would really freak out about paparazzi following them. It’s like, ‘Well, that’s the job and the profession that you’re in’. That sucks but that’s not the thing I’d really love to battle.”

In the wake of the crime, Jennifer Lawrence told *Vanity Fair* that anyone who searched for the hacked photos was perpetuating a sexual offence and should “cower with shame”. Ratajkowski, however, doesn’t agree. “A lot of people who were victims of that said anyone who looks at these pictures should feel guilty, but I just don’t think that’s fair. I think once it’s out there, it’s out there, and I’m not sure that anyone who googles it is necessarily a criminal. I think the people who stole the photos are.”

She has no truck, however, with the argument that taking such photos invites problems. “Just because [Lawrence] is sending sexy pictures to her boyfriend, does that make her guilty of something? Absolutely not. It’s part of being sexually healthy.” Does Ratajkowski feel she still has that liberty, given the threat? “I’m not going to worry about it. Life is too short. I could die tomorrow.”

The criminals have since tried to target Ratajkowski again. Two days before we meet, she received an email saying someone had accessed her iCloud. She no longer uses the service – the most they would have got is credit-card information – but it worries her. “What else do they have access to? I have no idea.”

She is grateful for her support network, which includes her new boyfriend Jeff Magid, a philosophy graduate turned professional poker ⊕



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43




➤ player who has recently signed with Interscope to record an album. The relationship works, she says, because he has a flexible schedule and can afford to travel. "I understand why people date other actors now, because it's a really hard lifestyle." Not that she is keen on the idea of dating actors herself. "It's not a rule, it's just that a lot of actors suck." So what kind of guys does she go for? "It's so weird how little of a type I have, I think I'm just attracted to confident men who have their own lives and aren't scared of women."

From her time as a single girl in 2014, she does have some advice for men. Firstly, don't approach a girl in a bar and straight out ask for her number ("I don't think I've ever given my phone number out that way"). Secondly, on Tinder, do not use a car selfie as your profile picture ("not attractive"). And yes, she has tried Tinder. "I got drunk in New York with my friends at my apartment, and it was two in the morning, so I made a Tinder account for 20 minutes." Some people recognised her. Did she go on any dates? "No," she says witheringly.

It's not hard to see what Max Joseph found compelling about Ratajkowski's self-assurance. Her opinions. Her moxie. It won over David Fincher, too. She shows me an email that Fincher recently sent her, reading: "I just want you to know who's in your corner." Underneath was his reply to another direc-

tor's question about whether Ratajkowski would be good for a role: "Em Ra is great. If she WANTS to she could KILL that. If she's not great on tape it's only because she dislikes you. Be good. She doesn't like a lot of dudes."

The question is, of course, what *does* Ratajkowski want? Certainly not many of the scripts going, and she's aware she can't be a model forever. She admires the theatre, she says, but for now will attempt to make film work for her as best she can. Wait for the good parts. Trust her gut. Above all, it seems, try not to get pigeonholed.

This fear of getting herself stuck with a label she didn't want appears to have settled deep. There's a recurring dream she has had five times now. In it, she's in bed and pulls off the sheets to discover that on each upper thigh she has a tattoo of a massive, black, badass revolver. She freaks out: she didn't mean to get them. She tries to scrub them off to no avail. In real life, she's terrified that one day it will come true. "Thank God," she always says to herself when she wakes up from the dream, "I don't have them yet." 

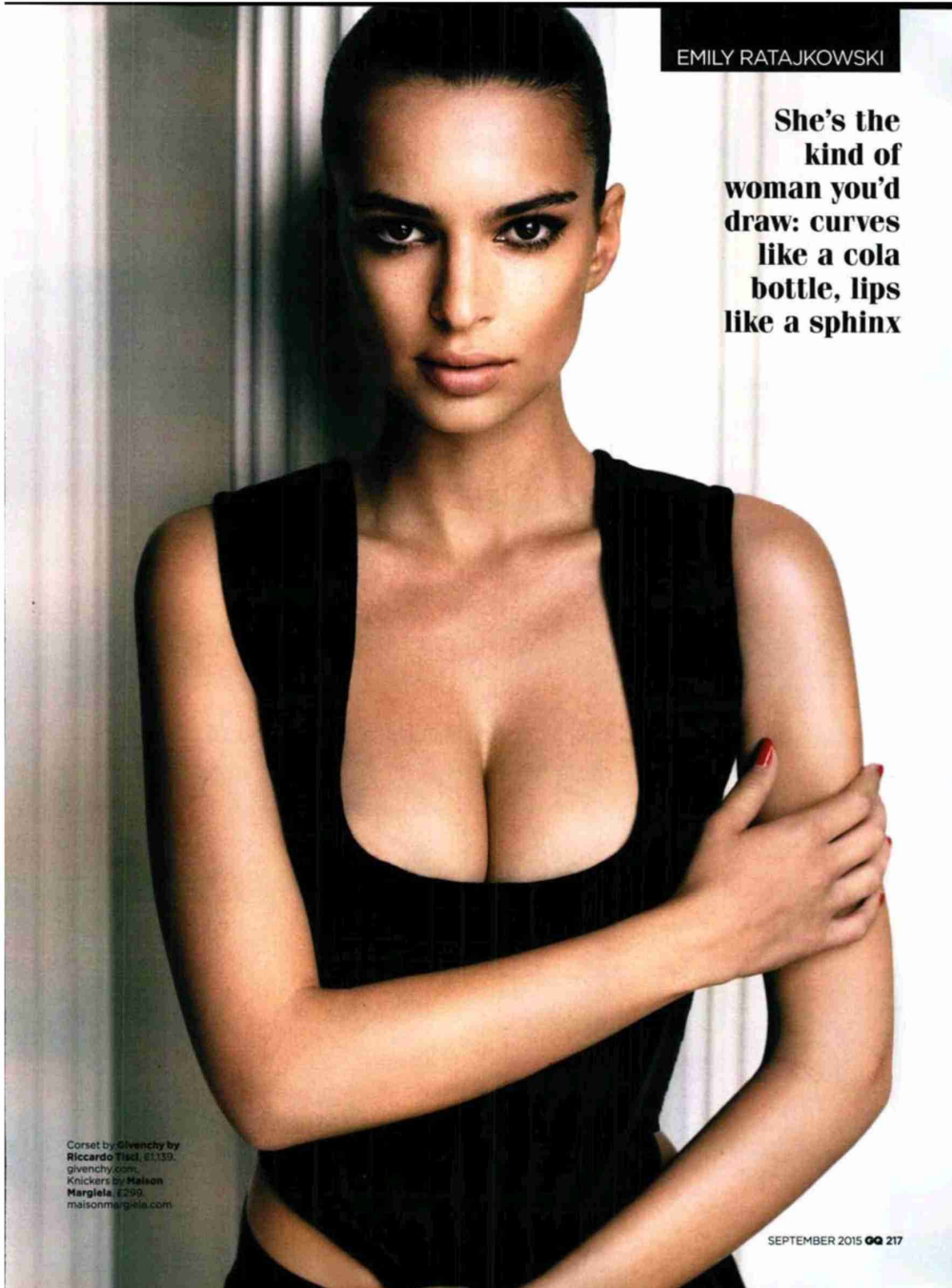
We Are Your Friends is out on 28 August.



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



EMILY RATAJKOWSKI

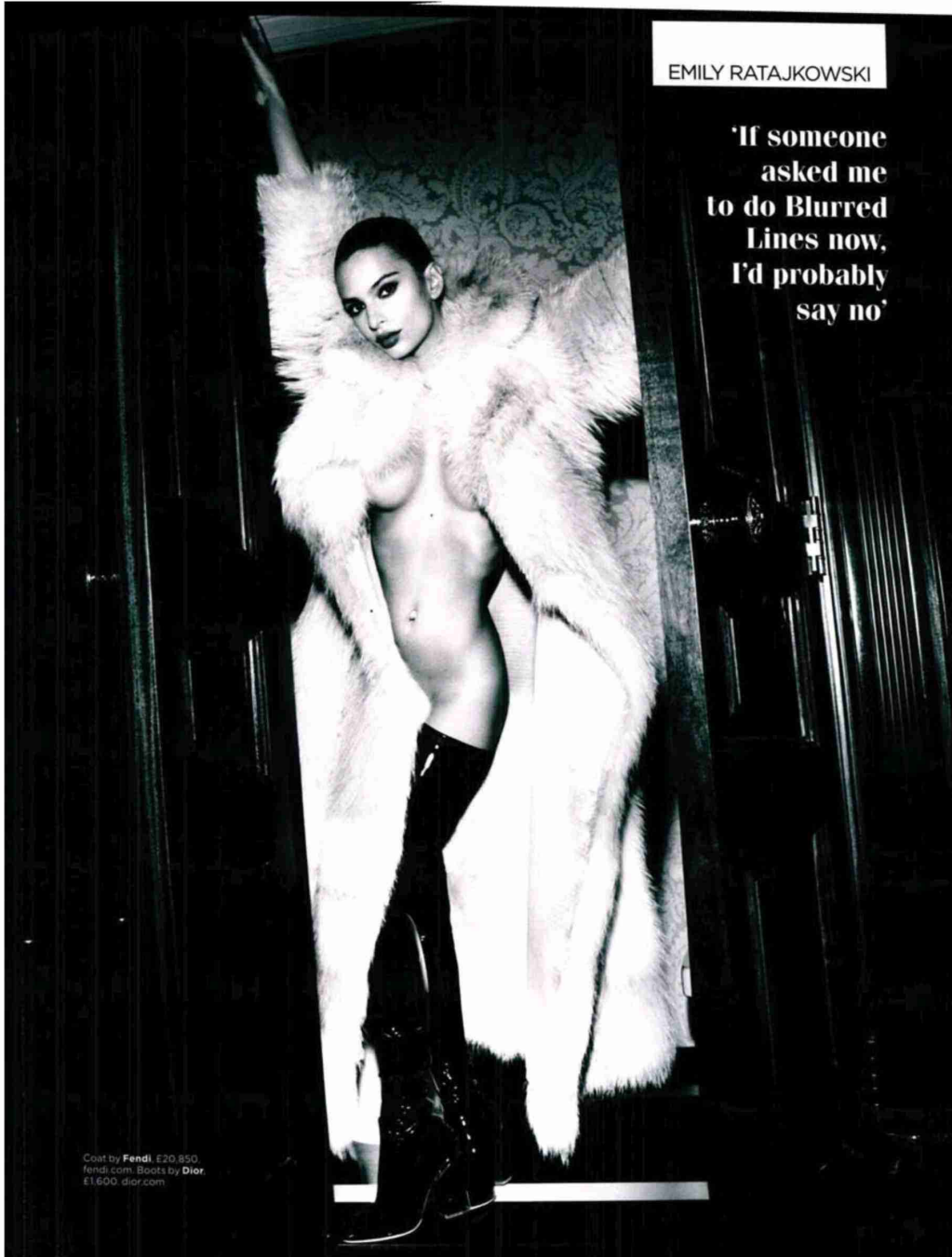
**She's the
kind of
woman you'd
draw: curves
like a cola
bottle, lips
like a sphinx**

Consent by Givenchy by
Riccardo Tisci, £7,139,
givenchy.com.
Knickers by Maison
Margiela, £250,
maisonmargiela.com

SEPTEMBER 2015 **GQ** 217



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



EMILY RATAJKOWSKI

**'If someone
asked me
to do Blurred
Lines now,
I'd probably
say no'**

Coat by **Fendi**, £20,950.
fendi.com Boots by **Dior**,
£1,600. dior.com



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43



Client: Great Northern Hotel Yellow News
Source: GQ (Main)
Date: 01 September 2015
Page: 214
Reach: 125090
Size: 6867cm2
Value: 194267.43

