Meet Terry Richardson, The World's Most F—ked Up Fashion Photographer

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Terry Richardson's sexual tastes run to making tampon tea, being called "Uncle Terry," and hand jobs — at least according to one model who says the fashion photographer got naked on set and suggested that she touch his dick.

Jamie Peck, who was 19 at the time, shot with Richardson at his studio twice. Although she was prepared and willing to pose for him nude, she writes, "This man has built his business/pleasure empire
on breaking the cardinal rule of asking a young girl you don't know to come over to your house and hang out naked: *don't be a fucking creep.*

The first shoot wasn't so bad. Richardson and Peck chatted before they started working, and he even made her tea, although she does note that "he spoke in the effeminate tones of someone trying very hard not to come off as sexually threatening despite the fact that he was basically walking around in a hipster pedophile costume." He also asked her to call him "Uncle Terry." Peck obliged.

"The second time," she says, "was the weird one."

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I told him I had my period so I wanted to keep my underwear on, and he asked me to take my tampon out for him to play with. "I love tampons!" he said, in that psychotically upbeat way that temporarily convinces so many girls that what's fun for Uncle Terry is fun for them. (I can just imagine him chirping, "Why don't you wear these fairy wings while I fuck you in the ass? Wouldn't that be like, so fun?" to some attenuated girl fresh off the boat from Eastern Europe. Either the man's totally delusional, or he gets off on the fact that many of these things are not, in fact, very much fun for the girls.) I politely declined his offer to make tea out of my bloody cunt plug. It was then that he decided to just get naked.

Before I could say "whoa, whoa, whoa!" dude was wearing only his tattoos and waggling the biggest dick I'd ever seen dangerously close to my unclothed person (granted, I hadn't seen very many yet). "Why don't you take some pictures of me?" he asked. Um, sure.

It gets worse. "I'm not sure how he maneuvered me over to the couch, but at some point he strongly suggested I touch his terrifying penis," writes Peck.
This is where I zoom out on the situation. I can remember doing this stuff, but even at the time, it was sort of like watching someone else do it, someone who couldn't possibly be me because I would never touch a creepy photographer's penis. The only explanation I can come up with is that he was so darn friendly and happy about it all, and his assistants were so stoked on it as well, that I didn't want to be the killjoy in the room. My new fake friends would've been bummed if I'd said no.

I must have said something about finals, because he told me, "if you make me come, you get an A." So I did! Pretty fast, I might add. All over my left hand. His assistant handed me a towel.

The pictures were published in Purple, the magazine run by Richardson's friend, the influential editor Olivier Zahm. Peck was supposed to receive payment in the form of a signed print, but she was too disgusted with what had happened at Richardson's studio to return to pick it up. (For the record, Peck hardly seems bitter about it: "If you're reading this, Terry, and want to prove you really are a nice guy after all, I'm over it now and wouldn't mind collecting that print.

Richardson wouldn't comment to The Gloss on Peck's allegations. He also wouldn't comment to the New York Post, and nor would he comment last week, when supermodel Rie Rasmussen publicly accused him of sexually harassing young girls. (Though he did reportedly call Rasmussen's agency to complain about her.) To date, his only response, if you can call it that, has been to post a picture on his blog of his mother proudly holding a copy of his book. But what Richardson, who seems to see himself as an heir to both Helmut Newton and Andy Warhol, has said in the past about the industry and his work is troubling. "A lot of it starts with me saying to a girl, 'Do you want to do nudes?' And they're like, 'I don't want
to be naked,'" Richardson told *The Observer* in 2004. "So I say, 'I'll be naked and you take the pictures. You can have the camera. You can have the phallus.'" That's exactly what Peck says happened to her — but having a camera in her hands didn't make her feel more comfortable about Richardson having suddenly whipped off his clothes.

In the same *Observer* story, Richardson is described as having an intern, a NYU communications major identified only by her first name, Alex, whose duties included doing his dishes and posing for photos fellating Richardson from the kitchen trash can while wearing a tiara that reads "Slut." Perhaps the most discomfiting passage of the article discusses "Boonk," a model Richardson says was a meth addict and a prostitute. He photographed her black eyes after she tried to escape from a john and didn't make it. "Whatever happened to Boonk?" he wonders in front of the reporter. This is a man who once said of breaking into modeling, "It's not who you know, it's who you blow. I don't have a hole in my jeans for nothing."

Frankly, "creep" seems inadequate to the task of describing Richardson's behavior. While it's important to note that Peck does not imply that she didn't consent to what went on with Richardson, it is troubling that she describes "zooming out" during their encounter. The environment she writes about at the studio, where she is surrounded by Richardson and his assistants, all armed with cameras (and, apparently, towels), all cheering her along, and all acting like it's the most natural thing in the world for a photographer to interrupt a shoot and demand a hand job from his model, is even more troubling. "Inappropriate" and "unprofessional" don't even begin to cover it. Given the power differential that exists between Richardson, who is old, wealthy, regarded as an artist, and vastly influential, and most of his model subjects, can the consent of these women even be said to be freely given? Richardson is a guy who publishes books with Taschen,
hangs out with celebrities, and photographs the President. Peck was a "nerdy as hell" college freshman when she met him. Most professional models are even younger.

To those who would argue that any nude shoot carries an implied risk of lewd behavior on the part of the photographer, or that models should be aware of Richardson's *oeuvre* and avoid him if they don't like working in a sexualized environment, I say: Bullshit. Nudity is common in fashion, and when the clothes come off, it doesn't denote a holiday from the responsibilities of maintaining a safe working environment. When I modeled, I shot both topless and implied nude with a variety of photographers — in fact, my first editorial shoot, for Italian *Glamour*, was topless — and never was I sexually harassed on a set. Nor did I expect, or feel that I deserved, to be simply because of the kind of work I was there to do. Instead, I expected those around me to *not violate my dignity at work*. Peck agrees that Richardson's behavior is exceptional, and crosses some clear lines. "Of all the fine folks I've frolicked *au naturel* for, he's the only one who's left me feeling like I needed to take two showers."

It's not terribly surprising that Peck, who describes herself as "not a model, just a vain girl with nice tits who likes to pose for the occasional cheesecake photo," is more comfortable speaking out about her experiences with Richardson than many professional models. Rie Rasmussen is one notable, and courageous, exception, but the fact of Richardson's immense power within the industry, his long-standing relationships with both influential magazines like *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Vogue Paris*, and commercial clients like Miu Miu, Gucci, and Sisley, makes it difficult for most working models to openly criticize him. Pointing out the wrongfulness of his behavior risks hurting you more than it will him. And so agencies continue sending their young charges to castings with him, in the hopes of him giving one a big break. And so magazine editors who
would never for a moment consider leaving their teenage daughters alone with someone like Terry Richardson continue booking him for shoots with other people's teenage daughters.

The stories about Richardson and his disgusting behavior are legion. Do you have one? If you do, I'm listening — and I can protect your identity if you, unlike Peck and Rasmussen, don't want your name to be known. Tell me if Richardson sexually harassed you while you were working with him, if he acted in ways that made you uncomfortable, if he asked you to perform sex acts on him. Tell me how old you were, and how he made you feel. And tell me what happened if you tried to complain or resist. If enough people start speaking out about Terry Richardson, then, at the very least, the people, brands, and publications who work with him won't have the fig leaf of plausible deniability anymore. And who knows? Perhaps some of them might even think on it, and reconsider those relationships.

*Picture of Terry Richardson and Kate Moss via*

Terry Richardson Is Really Creepy: One Model's Story [The Gloss]
Supermodel Rie Rasmussen Blasts Terry Richardson As A Predator [NY Post]
Terry Richardson Again Accused Of Exploiting Models [NY Post]
Terry Richardson's Dark Room [NY Observer]
Me and My Mom [Terry's Diary]