

Ms. Doubtfire

Kennedy talks ska, sex, and blonde ambition with No Doubt's Gwen Stefani.

SPIN: Are you sick of your song "Just a Girl" yet?

Gwen Stefani: No, not at all. Understand that for years we were this underground cult band that sat in the garage and made fun of every other band on MTV. Now that we have a hit single, it's like a whole new fresh thing. It's a really amazing feeling for a band that's been together nine years.

Do people get the satire in that song?

Enough people get it. I hate it when I'm asked what that song is about. The lyrics are so obvious. If you don't think it's sarcastic, you've got to be like an idiot.

What were you like growing up?

I didn't have a lot of direction. I remember when I was in school, they would ask, 'What are you going to be when you grow up?' and then you'd have to draw a picture of it. I drew a picture of myself as a bride.

Obviously, you took a wrong turn somewhere.

The first time I ever performed was at a talent show when I was 17. It was me and my brother and some other people doing a cover of the Selecter song "On My Radio." No Doubt kind of grew out of that. Originally it just a bunch of people that didn't know how to play their instruments trying to imitate the music they loved, which was ska. I never wanted to be a rock girl. Basically I have no idea what I'm doing or how I got here.

What were your first shows like?

Very intense. We had two singers then, John Spence and I, although John didn't really sing. He yelled and screamed and did back flips, and I was like his little sidekick.

Spence killed himself nine years ago. Do you know why?

I couldn't answer that question. Obviously he was in a lot of pain. It's really hard to understand why anyone would commit suicide. Mostly I have happy memories about him. He was a very important part of the band. He was the one who said, "Look, I want to be a singer." He was the one who used to say, "No doubt." And that's where we got the name. It still haunts us in a way.

Which is better, the pogo or moshing?

Pogo, definitely. Why would you want to hurt yourself while you're trying to have fun? Moshing, I don't get it. I bruise really easily and I don't like having that all over my legs.

Come on, you seem like a woman who can take care of herself. I bet if you were stuck in the mountains, you could pee standing up. I'm a pro at that. I don't even sit on toilet seats

No Doubt's bassist. Tell me how you two hooked up.

Basically, I forced Tony to make out with me. This was 1987, we had been in the band only for a few months together. He didn't even like me and I made him kiss me. Then I forced him to go out with me for seven years. He broke up with me about a year and a half ago, but now he's like psycho-man, and he likes me again, so I don't

know what I'm going to do.

Did you two lose your virginity to each other?

Oh, boy. That's private, Kennedy. Please don't ask those kind of questions.

Sorry, but people look up to you—they want to know your opinions on sex.

All I'd say is avoid having sex with anyone until you get married. It just brings too many complications.

All right, then. Who's sexier: Suggs from Madness or Gavin from Bush?

Oh, God. Suggs. I have been in love with him for so long. When I saw the video for "One Better Day," with Suggs's wife in it, I cried for like an hour.

Do you ever worry that you might be a one-hit wonder?

I think that if everything was taken away tomorrow, if they dropped the tour and everyone hated us, I'd still be fulfilled. Because I can honestly say I never expected us to get this far. It's kind of sad in a way, we've done so much that we probably won't do again. I mean, we did MTV. We did *Conan O'Brien*. You just don't go back and do those things again.

Are you uncomfortable with the comparisons people make between you and Madonna?

It gets old, but it's understandable. She's the one female artist that really made history, and automatically you're going to be compared to her. Then there's the blonde-hair thing. I'm really obsessed with the '40s and that whole starlet period, but for a long time I wouldn't wear my hair blonde for fear of getting bagged on. Now I'm fine with it.

Speaking of blondes—do you ever act dumb?
I am right now. ☺



Ska scrapers: from left, Gwen Stefani, Adrian Young, Tony Kanal, and Tom Dumont.

anymore. Do you know how many restrooms I have to go to? Public ones? Every night.

There's a line in the song "Hey You" that goes "You're just like my Ken and Barbie doll / Your name will never change." Are you Barbie?

Well, kind of. The song is about me wanting to marry my boyfriend and knowing that it would never happen; that I'm never going to have anyone, that I'm always going to be alone and sad. **I assume you're talking about Tony Kanal,**