

'Lost Photos' of Marilyn Monroe Mostly the Same Old Photos of Marilyn Monroe

By Maureen O'Connor May 9, 2012 2:50 PM

This month, *Vanity Fair's* neverending [quest](#) to reanimate the corpse of Marilyn Monroe takes the form of "never-before-published pictures" of Monroe. Billed as "The Lost Nudes" on the magazine's cover, the images are outtakes of photos that appeared twice in *Playboy*—and now *Playboy* is irate at the suggestion that the photos were "lost."

Vanity Fair describes the photos on its website:

[T]he very next morning, Marilyn was reported dead at 36. One of her final acts had been to return the nude photo to Schiller, which he found waiting for him at his house. She had written, "Send this to Playboy, they might like it."



Playboy retorts on its website:

And, indeed, we did like it. So much that we ran them 48 years ago, in our January 1964 issue, or again in January 2005. Sorry, *Vanity Fair*. Sometimes when something is too good to be true, it really is too good to be true.

Schiller's essay actually acknowledges that most of the nude photos appeared in *Playboy*—but not until the last paragraph of the sprawling article:

The agreement for the purchase of the poolside photos of Marilyn with *Playboy* was concluded in September 1962, but Hefner, not wanting to exploit the circumstances of Marilyn's death, decided not to publish them immediately. He waited until January 1964 issue, which appeared in late November 1963, the week of President Kennedy's assassination.

A *Playboy* source grumbled by email, "Yeah I'm sure the fact checker buried that in the back of the piece... but they're touting them as lost and exclusive."

By email, a *Vanity Fair* spokesperson said 12 of their images (mostly black-and-white proofs) had never been published before. Most are similar to *Playboy's* photos, because that's sort of the way outtakes work. *Vanity Fair* splashed the "never-published image" at left across two pages of the magazine. Below, the previously published *Playboy* version, [accessed via the iPlayboy archives](#).

So, technically, neither party is lying. But everyone is splitting hairs, and the moral of the story is that someone needs to smack Graydon Carter upside the head while screaming, MARILYN MONROE IS DEAD, GET TO THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR GRIEF CYCLE ALREADY. America has been reduced to watching movies about a guy who spent a few days with Marilyn and obsessing over the same few pictures of Marilyn's under boob that we've been obsessing over for half a century. Let the lady rest.

