

The outlaw of radio speaks up and out

Shock jock Howard Stern Cirgues with everyone -'from the FCC to his mOrT

By **BILL GLOVIN**

Special to the Daily Record

Howard Stern's mother is on the telephone and reviewing her son's latest book - "Miss America" - to his 20 to 25 million listeners.

"This book isn't my son," she begins coldly. "I started to read it, but I didn't get very far. How are you going to keep this from your daughters when they yet older?" he asks him.

For the next five minutes, Momma Stern chastises her bad little boy for the book's pre-occupation with sex.

Now 41 years old, Stern need not go to his room anymore when his mother scolds him. From his radio booth at WXRK in New York City, he answers back.

"Unlike my mother," he announces to his sidekick, Robin Quivers, "my daughters are going to besexuill beings.

"My mother's idea of a great book is 'The Bridges of Madison County.' But she just saw the movie and said she read the book. I didn't want to give my mother ('Miss America') because I knew it wasn't for her.' But she was insulted; she had to see for herself."

Inching toward the boundary of good taste he often crosses, Stern continues his teasing:

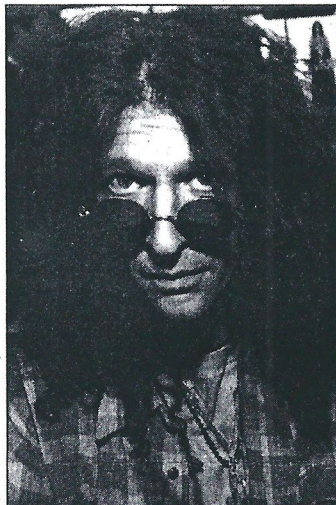
"This book isn't for you; it's for my fails. And yes, all I think about is sex. And all men think about women constantly; the wayl do:

He concludes his message of the moment with this cutting comment: "My mother wishes Jerry Seinfeld was her son and that my book was about airplane food. Do me a favor, Mommy, burn the book."

The exchange is both brutally honest and typical Stern.

Whether you love or hate him - and few people are neutral on the subject - Stern certainly has come a long way since 1982, when he entered the New York/New Jersey market as hpst of the drive-time afternoon program at WNBC-AM.

Several years into his stint, WNBC fired him, then watched



Howard Stern

him resurface anc! dominate morning drive-time at K-Rock, an FMstation.

"Yes, it was a good feeling to take down an entire radio station, but I knew it wasn't just Imus who was bothering me," he writes in "Miss America." "The truth was that there were a thousand Imuses out there, all ripping off my material and building careers off of my style and approach to radio."

Besides radio, Stern always seems to have plenty of other irons on the fire.

Film coming

His radio program currently is broadcast in two half-hour formats six days a week on cable TVs E! Entertainment Network. And a script for a film based on his fir.)lj book, "Private Parts," has be-n completed. The film is scheduled to be released next year.

Stern's popularity has even skyrocketed to the point where he has become a player in state and national political campaigns.

Most political observers believe his endorsement helped decide the 1994 gubernatorial race in New York, vaulting Republican George Pataki over the dean of Democratic governors, Mario Cuomo.

"Miss America" also details his own short-lived candidacy for gov-

'I spent an entire miserable summer cooped up in basement writing the book.'

Howard Stern, on his book 'Miss Ame

ernor of New York, which he abandoned when the courts rejected his appeal for exemption from financial disclosure laws.

To the disgust of his many critics, political candidates sometimes trample over one another to gain his endorsement.

Hooking ~ wagon to S-ern, ~?W- ever, sometimes results in political fallout.

Gov. Chris-t-e Whitman, whom Stern endorsed in 1993, found herself adnft m a turbulent sea of controversy when she made good on her political promise to name a South Jersey rest stop, after Stern.

Despite his ratings and monetary success over the past 10 years, Stern isn't nearly satisfied.

In "Miss America" he calls his drive to succeed "the beast within."

"I spent an entire miserable summer, cooped up in my basement writing the book," Stern says.

One of the more interesting chapters in the book, "The King of All Mental Illness" centers around his fear of failing. The chapter's title is a spinoff on his \$-W-proclaimed nickname, "King of All Media."

In the month or so since the book's release, the P.T. Barnum of publishing has appeared on "20-20," "Dateline NBC," "The Today Show," "Entertainment Tonight," the "Tonight Show" and "The Late Show with David Letterman," been the coverboy on various magazines, and has been featured in dozens of newspaper articles. His book slugging Manhattan, drew thousands of people, turned into a media carnival and typifies the response he receives for an appearance.

But Stern as media phenomenon and broadcast personality works much better than his book.

Fans will not learn much new from "Miss America"; almost

everything in the book has talked about on his program.

Like "Private Parts," much is a rehash - his conquest of WFAN rival Don Imus Philadelphia DJ John DeBell political views, his account of FCC's fining of K-Rock's parent company, Infinity Broadcasting his take on such celebrities Woody Allen, the late J. Keimedy Onassis, and CNN's Larry King.

The book works best when it provides insight on topics people seldom hear about. In a meeting with Michael Jackson to conquer obsessive compulsive disorder and his opportunistic late-vision.

Miss America also includes a reader's interest: rude and tore? photographs, cartoons, and letters from listeners who mimic Mad magazine or a radio.

Much of the book reads as if dictated into a tape recorder. Many chapters are more interesting to browse through than read.

That's why it's difficult to believe Stern when he says:

"I want to say that this book probably the one thing I'm proud of."

A few minutes later, when about his income - one of his favorite topics - we gain more insight.

"Enough is never enough," says.

It's easier to believe that these days of megabuck: celebrity bestsellers' Stern is doing it himself.

BILL GLOVIN is senior editor of *Mega* magazine.