

Exhibit B

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Keeping Up With Being Kept

By RUTH PADAWER APRIL 10, 2009

AT FIRST GLANCE, the Web site SeekingArrangement.com seems like any other dating site. Most of the men are looking for fit, sexy women, and most of the women want nice guys who can make them smile and laugh. But if eHarmony or Match.com is a chatty social mixer, Seeking Arrangement is a down-and-dirty marketplace where older moneyed men and cute young women engage in brutally frank transactions. They're not searching for longtime soul mates; they want no-strings-attached "arrangements" that trade in society's most valued currencies: wealth, youth and beauty. In the cheesy lexicon of the site, they are "sugar daddies" and "sugar babies."

There's the 18-year-old from France asking for \$5,000 to \$10,000 a month from "a mentor who can provide me with the finer things in life and keep me happy!" And the 49-year-old investor from upstate New York willing to pay \$5,000 a month for a "daytime playmate" for "intense connection without commitment." Critics say the site is at best a convenience store for adulterers and at worst a virtual brothel, but Brandon Wade, Seeking Arrangement's 38-year-old founder and chief executive, is unperturbed by the criticism. "We stress relationships that are mutually beneficial," he says. "We ask people to really think about what they want in a relationship and what they have to offer. That kind of upfront honesty is a good basis for any relationship."

The site now claims more than 300,000 registered members, far fewer than mainstream dating sites like Match.com, which has 1.5 million paying subscribers, but still a remarkable number. Sugar babies outnumber daddies 10 to 1. Wade says, providing what one sugar daddy called "the best fishing hole I

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This abundance of possibility is part of what the site is selling, along with fantasy. Some of these men — especially those shopping for women half their age — are digging deep into their pockets to pay for an illusion: that despite their receding hairlines and wattled skin, they're still enchanting enough to charm pretty young women. One image on the site features a dazed, graying man doted on by two barely clad attendants — a caricature of an already caricatured relationship. But this marketing spin doesn't capture the nuances of the relationships that often develop between the "daddies" and the "babies" who meet on the site — relationships that can turn out to be more complicated than even the members themselves expect. Men may use money as a way to buy themselves out of the normal obligations of romance, like accommodating a woman's emotional needs as much as their own. But despite the power and security that the money buys, it can also undercut the very ego it's intended to boost.

Consider B. K., a fit finance executive in his early 40s, who, last October, began "dating" a 20-year-old engineering major at a college 90 minutes from his house. Like nearly half the sugar daddies on Seeking Arrangement, B. K. is married. (Neither B. K. nor any other user of the site would allow full names to be published — certain the revelation would infuriate wives or boyfriends, shock colleagues and repel friends or family — and agreed to use only their first names, nicknames or initials.) B. K. and his wife opted against separation, for the sake of the kids, and for now, they have a policy — at least in his mind — of don't ask, don't tell. Between pangs of guilt about cheating, B. K. views his secret dallying as a safety valve, letting him feel desired so he can return home and appreciate the many things he loves about his wife, even if they don't include giving him the attention he wants.

And so, nearly each week, B. K. gets together with Lola, the young woman he met on the site, for a meal or a gym workout and a few hours at a hotel outside the Western city where he lives. Their visits are generally no longer than four or five hours because Lola, a senior, has a full course load and also works 40 hours a week at two low-wage jobs. With no money from her parents, she was frank in her Seeking Arrangement profile, saying she needed "immediate financial assistance." In B. K., she gets that in the form of \$100 or \$150 stuffed in her bag each time they meet. He feels good about helping her with her tuition, encouraging her studies and romancing her, albeit in hotel rooms. Most of all, he's grateful that she doesn't want a commitment. At least he was at first.

"It's very clear with this site that she's getting something out of this, hopefully emotional support and mentoring advice and fun in bed, but also something financial, so don't come back to me and say that you were used or that I left you high and dry," he said. "I like that aspect of it, but on the other hand, it would be nice not to have the money involved, because you always wonder: would she still want to be with me even without the money? Does the money make me more attractive than I really am?"

ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF ARRANGEMENTS on the site involve the daddy paying an "allowance," usually a thousand or two a month, though the site claims some reach \$10,000. The rest provide the baby with incidental cash, shopping sprees, gifts, travel or the fleeting illusion that theirs is a high-end, easy life. "I get flown to whatever city I want," wrote a North Carolina college student, who goes by the name gurlnextdoor on the site's blog, a mix between an online support group and a kaffeeklatsch. "He pays for it, takes me shopping, we talk, laugh, go out to eat and do whatever we want to do for our days together. . . . I don't bring up mundane problems about my home life, and he does the same. . . . If I wanted someone to talk to about my life problems, I'd get a boyfriend or a therapist."

Like B. K.'s companion, Lola, many women on the site are in their 20s, though plenty of others are in their 30s, 40s and 50s. Some are looking for attention, some have financial problems and some are seeking refuge from romantic pain. On the blog and in conversations with me, still others said benefactors provide a way to get the extras they want — the Fendi bags, the to-die-for shoe collection or the breast enhancement. A surprising number of babies say on the blog that they don't need the money at all, either because they have decent-paying jobs or bottomless credit cards from their parents. What appeals to them about the arrangements are the expensive gifts — "I just LOVE being spoiled," gushed one 19-year-old woman on the blog — because those gifts make them feel valued, as if the money spent measures just how desirable they are.

Other women on the site would happily forfeit conspicuous prizes and go for the cash instead, especially for tuition. One woman's profile says, "That you can help me get through school and achieve financial stability through support and mentoring is more important than wowing me with diamonds and Prada." In fact, Seeking Arrangement pays to have its ads pop up on search engines whenever

someone types in "student loan," "tuition help," "college support" or "help with rent." Lola was one of many to stumble on the site that way, when — behind on her rent and tuition and down to one meal a day — she Googled "student loan." What popped up was hardly what she expected, but she was willing to try almost anything to stay in school.

Her first sugar daddy, a man in his early 50s, turned out to be a terrible kisser and too dominating in bed. "I had to grit my teeth every time we met," she told me. In four visits, she earned \$550, enough to cover the rent, and then dropped him. A month later, she connected with another sugar daddy, a man in his late 50s who lived in Louisiana. The only thing he wanted, he told her, was that she do well in school. He insisted she send her transcript, and once satisfied, he sent her nearly \$500 a month. Though they never met, never even talked on the phone, he wrote her long letters by hand encouraging her studies and advising her on finances and sent her novels, newspaper clippings and a J. K. Rowling commencement address for inspiration. He never once mentioned sex.

Six months later, the man in Louisiana had to cut back on expenses, so Lola began looking for a new source of income to supplement the \$8 an hour she earned working in a lab and the cash she picked up cleaning houses and selling her plasma. Last October, Lola and B. K. had their first date.

Though petite, Lola seems older than she is, maybe because she is so matter-of-fact in her manner. On the day I met her, on her way to meet B. K., she was wearing jeans, a striped T-shirt and no makeup. Her hair was pulled back, no-nonsense style, making her look more as if she were about to go camping than rendezvous with her sugar daddy. She brought along a textbook and her GRE vocabulary flashcards, in case B. K. was late.

"At first, it was a job, then it became a pleasant job and then it was getting together with a friend," she said, describing her relationship with B. K. "With him, I don't feel like a prostitute, though maybe I am. It's not just the sex with us. We care about each other, we talk, there's a connection, not just business."

Whether sugar relationships amount to prostitution is hotly debated among the site's members. "Let's get real here," wrote GoldenGate on the blog. "I'm with a guy who's old enough to be my dad, short and balding. Not to mention his other

shortcomings, ahem. But he gives me a great big fat allowance every month. If that wasn't there, we wouldn't be together."

Others on the blog were shocked, saying they could never be with a man, even a rich one, if they weren't somehow attracted to him. Indeed, most go to considerable effort to distinguish between "sugar" and prostitution. (Legally, at least, they are right; since the 1970s, courts have ruled that as long as the woman is paid for some service besides sex — housecleaning, companionship — the arrangement is not the equivalent of prostitution.) They say being a sugar baby is no more an occupation than dating is, especially when the goal of dating is to find a rich boyfriend or a wealthy husband. They routinely turn down creeps interested in nothing but sex.

Some sugar babies also insist that wives who stay in miserable marriages for an American Express black card, mansion or country-club membership are more like prostitutes than they are. And yet the blatant financial transactions leave many uneasy. Even Seeking Arrangement's chief executive uses a fake name — his legal one is Brandon Wey — partly because he's afraid his association with the site might dampen his chances of raising capital for a more mainstream enterprise in the future and partly because he thought the name Brandon Wade sounded more Hugh Hefneresque.

In interviews and on the blog, the site's members parse the nuances of the sex and money transactions. "I read on a post about asking 10k if you're model material . . . so because I ask for so little, am I 'on sale'?" wrote one woman. "I don't think I can accept more than 1k a month plus gifts, because then I will start feeling compelled to do ANYTHING for him."

E. C., a 23-year-old sales-and-marketing coordinator in Toronto, says she already earns \$40,000 a year as well as commission and the use of a company car. But having grown up in a wealthy family, her current salary doesn't allow her to live in the manner to which she's accustomed. So E. C. dined with a banker from the site who was charming and attractive. His breath, however, was so bad she decided he wasn't sugar-daddy material.

Then she met a charming 43-year-old businessman from the site with nice breath. She tried to steer their conversations to the question of an allowance, unsuccessfully. On their third date, they slept together. Afterward, she was glad

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no money had changed hands. "If he'd given me money after that, I would have felt he was paying me for the sex," she said. "And if he'd paid me beforehand, I would have felt I owed him something, and the whole thing would have gone from charming to being bought." Instead of paying her, he takes her to swank restaurants and penthouse suites in Niagara Falls. "He shows me off to the whole place, and it makes me feel good."

Her parents, she added, would be appalled if they knew she was on such a site — except if they thought it increased her chance of meeting an eligible and rich young doctor.

MOST PEOPLE WOULD LIKELY BE appalled to learn that a daughter — or father — was using SeekingArrangement.com. Beth Bailey, a Temple University historian of courtship, said that her first reaction to the site was "revulsion." But when she reconsidered it within the historical context of dating, she had a somewhat different response.

Heterosexual relationships, including marriage, have long involved economic transactions, but Bailey points out that when men provided financial security, they traditionally did so in exchange for a woman's sexual *virtue* (and potential to bear and rear children), not for sexual thrills. For that, they often turned to prostitutes and mistresses, involving a more frank money-for-sex exchange. It's only in the last century that money has been traded — albeit indirectly — for sexual attention from "respectable" unmarried women. In the early 1900s, courtship shifted from girls' porches or parlors to a commercial venture: a date. Etiquette manuals of the time were explicit — boys were to pay for meals, entertainment and transportation, and in return, girls were to provide well-groomed company, rapt attention and at least a certain amount of physical affection. His money bought not only companionship but also her indebtedness.

"It made a lot of people uneasy, because if men's money was central to the dating relationship, what distinguished it from prostitution?" Bailey says. Seen in this context, Bailey argues, Seeking Arrangement "is a piece of contemporary society. It's simply more explicit and transparent about the bargains struck in the traditional model of dating."

Though one-quarter of the site's sugar daddies (including married ones) are looking for male "babies" and 1 percent of the site's members are "sugar

mommies," they still tend to fall into traditional roles, where the one who is paid supplies sex, admiration, comfort and the kind of status conferred by any other expensive consumer good. The "baby" is the one who regulates her appearance, schedule, behavior and emotions to make the payer feel special.

Still, a 22-year-old named Mercedes told me, "I don't see how people can view this as exploitation." Mercedes is a junior who pays her own tuition at a Georgia university. She has had six sugar daddies in the past year to supplement her wages busing tables and washing dishes at a bar. "I could go out and work three jobs and still go to school and probably make decent grades, but is that really what I want to do? I make more money this way, and I have a lot more fun because I get to go out to concerts, go shopping, see movies and make money off of it. If instead of this I was just dating a rich guy, it'd be almost the same thing, and society wouldn't look down on that. You know with a sugar daddy that they're spending a lot of money on you and they clearly want something in return, but is that really any different than how it is with a boyfriend?"

BRANDON WEY GOT THE IDEA for the site from his own dissatisfying love life as an M.I.T. student and then as a well-off but awkward tech executive. Traditional dating Web sites were no help. "It was difficult to advertise the assets I had compared to hundreds of thousands of guys who had better looks or better pickup lines," says Wey, now married to a woman 13 years younger than he is, whom he met before the site went live. "I needed to find a way to put myself at the front of the line."

Wey unveiled SeekingArrangement.com in 2006 and aimed to keep the site well stocked for his wealthy customers. Babies can join free, while daddies pay \$44.95 a month — and an optional \$5 to ensure the site's name doesn't show up on credit-card statements. For another \$1,200 a year, a sugar daddy can become a Diamond Club member, with his income and net worth verified and his profile featured at the top of the home page.

B. K. joined the site about a year ago, swapping flirtatious e-mail messages with potential sugar babies, taking a few out to dinner and romancing one for a few months before he found Lola. He was drawn, he said, to her independence and intellect, her humility, her academic determination and, of course, her looks. He loved their time together — dancing, snuggling, the whole bit — and, at times, feared he was falling in love.

From the start, Lola was clear that her heart lay elsewhere. Her boyfriend of four years lives 1,000 miles away, and though they see each other only a few times a year, Lola maintains that she is deeply in love with him. When B. K. asked Lola what gift she wanted for Christmas, she demurred, but when pressed, she asked if he would pay for plane fare to visit her boyfriend. B. K. said yes — and felt great about it. “Isn’t that what love is?” he told me later. “It’s not about trying to own someone.”

While Lola was gone, B. K. sent her e-mail and text messages virtually every day but heard nothing back. Pining, he began trolling the site, window shopping, and noticed Lola had logged on. He feared that she was looking to replace him. “I was like, What the hell is this?” He e-mailed her, asking why she was on the site, but got no answer. “Maybe I’m the needy one,” he mused. He wondered if Lola was trying to end their relationship or if her boyfriend had found out. “The no-strings-attached assumption is hard on my heart sometimes, but I don’t think she will just disappear.”

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RICH men and kept women have been around for a very long time, of course, but the Internet makes hunting for such arrangements easier. Quickly and privately, a well-off man can find a young woman wherever in the world he wants. And he can find someone who fits his needs, however unconventional they may be.

One sugar daddy whose screen name is Sam has tried long-term girlfriends, mistresses, prostitutes and a brief marriage. Now single, the 39-year-old entrepreneur has found the arrangement that suits him best: a monogamous business-associate-with-benefits deal in which he pursues an entrepreneurial project with a young, beautiful, intelligent woman. He provides financial backing, mentoring and networking; she provides sex, fun and, inevitably, a bit of worshiping, all of which make him feel virile and influential. In between vacations using his private jet, both work hard on the project. They don’t tend to see each other much, as he travels frequently for his work.

Sam’s profile on Seeking Arrangement is audacious. He advertises for a woman who is “drop-dead beautiful, sexy, fun and elegantly mannered in a fancy setting. She must turn heads . . . and make me the envy of the crowd.” He wants no tattoos, no cosmetic implants, no vegetarians and no Gen Yers who begin their e-mail-message sentences with lowercase letters.

When I asked to chat in person, Sam suggested meeting at CORE, a private Manhattan club where membership is by invitation only and costs \$65,000 the first year and where Sam's assent was required before I could be admitted. Sitting alone at a long conference table in a room set aside for him, he looked utterly unremarkable, a man of average height with a buzz cut and an aloof air. But once Sam got talking, he became affable and witty, especially as he described his unorthodox history with women. He started college when most kids his age were still in middle school. "When you go to college at that age, you're pretty undatable," he said. "I was somewhere between a curiosity, a mascot and a friend. I tutored freshman physics and calculus so I could at least be near women. Of course, all they'd do is talk about their boyfriends."

He has an almost mathematical approach to assessing relationships, and once even computed the costs for a girlfriend, mistress, prostitute and wife — mistresses turn out to be most expensive by the hour; wives, by the year; girlfriends are cheapest all around. But he's not as calculating as he seems. In fact, he concluded there's little correlation between cost and quality. Still, he is relentlessly searching for an algorithm that will predict relationships' success.

Sam is also more determined than most to try separating a sugar baby's affection and the money she's paid to provide it. In his arrangements, he says, he establishes a trust in the woman's name that pays a monthly stipend of at least \$5,000 for the length of their contract. If the woman decides to quit sleeping with him at any point, he may quit serving as adviser and pamperer, but the stipend continues regardless. "If I didn't do that, then it's like a leash I'm putting on somebody, and that seems really unfair," he said. "Besides, then I'd never know what the relationship was really about."

Sam runs these relationships with an explicit business plan, a set budget, measurable goals and quarterly reviews. From the outset, the contract has an end date. It's a brilliant, if contrived, way to protect his pride. The contract specifies that the romance and sex are to end by the preset date, so there's no break up, no rejection, no bruised ego. She's not dumping him; the gig's just over.

He was involved in three relationships this way, helping the women establish a school overseas, start a tech company and help run a nonprofit, he told me. He declined to put me in touch with the women but said each had been successful. He is like Pygmalion, smitten with his own creations.

He found those three women through word of mouth, long before he discovered Seeking Arrangement and its rush of possibilities. Between November and shortly after I met him in mid-January, he had winnowed down 140 candidates to four finalists. "It feels so good to have so many people paying attention to me," he said. He met all four, interviewed them extensively, coached them on their business plans and took two of them on multiday outings. In each case, he told them he preferred to put off sex until he'd settled on a candidate, though he did end up sleeping with one of them — but only, he says, because she so aggressively pursued him.

NOR ARE MEN THE ONLY ONES seeking relationships within particular parameters. A. B. was 18 when she first went on the site, in 2006, looking for extra money. She had started college at 15 but quit when her money ran out. She was soon contacted by a well-to-do, married filmmaker whom she liked immediately. He encouraged her ambition to become a professor of art or philosophy. For a few months, they saw each other frequently, visiting museums, discussing Camus and Nietzsche, taking in films, sharing their poetry and artwork and sometimes romping in bed. He gave her \$500 each time they met, whether or not they had sex. In between visits, he sent her money for art supplies. He said if she got a part-time job, he'd pay the tuition and living expenses she couldn't cover.

Ecstatic, A. B. re-enrolled at her Southern college. Her sugar daddy flew her up to Pennsylvania to meet him a few times. But he became increasingly peeved that she also had a boyfriend at school. And though her boyfriend understood why she was in a relationship with a sugar daddy, A. B. felt compromised, as if she were leading two lives. She ended that Seeking Arrangement relationship.

About two years later, A. B. met another sugar daddy from the site, a single father who seemed pleasant enough but unlikely to entangle her emotions. Still, after a few visits, he wanted nothing but sex, so she stopped seeing him.

"When these sugar-daddy relationships go the way I think they should go, the lines are pretty blurry between that and a typical boyfriend-girlfriend relationship," she said. "And when they go the way I don't think they should go, the lines are blurry between that and sex work."

In February, A. B. met a third benefactor. This one was a pleasant and clever psychologist in his 40s. He flew her to San Francisco. They went to jazz clubs and a tony restaurant, talked about philosophy and shared a bed but stayed on their own sides all night. But the next night, after they'd both been drinking, he pressured her into forgoing a condom during sex. "I yielded because I thought that if he came away from the weekend having enjoyed himself, he would be more likely to want to see me again and want to support me," she said. The experience soured her on flagrantly transactional relationships, because she realized the power dynamic would always be lopsided. She is done being a sugar baby, A. B. said, even if it means delaying her education even longer.

AT TIMES, B. K. DEBATED WHETHER to turn off his Seeking Arrangement profile to honor his relationship with Lola. But whenever communication from her would go dark for a few days, he was glad that his profile was still active. The e-mail messages he got from women were an ego balm. After all, it's not often a man in his 40s is wooed by a former surfer in her 20s or a 26-year-old model looking for the "finer things in life."

During the two weeks over Christmas that Lola was incommunicado and B. K. worried that he'd just been dumped, he received a suggestive note from a woman close to his age from another state. She sent him long enticing messages, which boosted his morale. Unlike Lola, she was mercurial and dramatic, and he was drawn by her damsel-in-distress air. He loved feeling like her savior. Neither Lola nor his wife seemed to need saving, just help with tuition (in Lola's case) or with kids and chores (in his wife's case).

Everything about the woman seemed enticingly dangerous, and B. K. became obsessed with her and told me their interactions were like the "thrill" of running through a burning building and making it out alive. And then it imploded: a combination of hotheadedness, different politics and her resentment that he wouldn't pony up a regular allowance.

By then, Lola was back at school. She said she'd been out of touch during her visit with her boyfriend because her cellphone battery died. She told B. K. she hadn't bought a charger because she was out of money, even using Target gift cards she received at Christmas to pay for groceries. She reassured him that she wanted to keep seeing him but also reminded him that she had several looming deadlines at school and at the lab where she worked. Delighted that she was still

in his life, B. K. turned off his Seeking Arrangement profile. But with Lola's packed schedule, their visits dwindled to every other week. It took days for her to respond to his e-mail messages. Even a text message he sent asking "Are you O.K.?" went unanswered for days.

Eventually, she e-mailed him in her typically even-tempered way: "I am all right. When I don't respond it means I don't have time at the moment and then I forget because I'm running from one place to the next."

Restless, B. K. switched his profile on. He got a Seeking Arrangement message from a graduate student in her mid-20s who lived just 10 miles from his office. They met for a quick coffee, long enough for the woman to grab B. K.'s hand and put it on her ripped abs, just to show him what she was made of. He was thrilled by her aggressiveness. Afterward, when he suggested by e-mail that he could pay her \$1,500 a month, she objected that she was worth much more. He decided to play it cool and wait for her to come begging.

And then in the midst of all that, he got a message from Lola that she could meet him the following Sunday afternoon, after a study session. Upon getting her note, his message to me was effusive: "YAY!!! I'm almost giddy like a schoolboy!!"

When they finally met in late February, B. K. asked Lola more about her boyfriend than he ever had before. Lola told him she loved her boyfriend and that she hoped he would propose after she graduates later this year. Once engaged, she added, she would stop being a sugar baby. B. K. felt devastated.

Lola seemed particularly tender in that meeting, he told me. Moved by his deep affection for her, B. K. offered her an extra \$200 to see her boyfriend over spring break. Afterward, he was scared he would soon lose her and also scared at how much his feelings for her had intensified. If she asked him to leave his wife, he told me, he would seriously consider it.

In the days after their meeting, B. K.'s moods shifted rapidly; he was dreamy one minute, testy or melancholy the next. Then, after weeks of silence, the graduate student with the taut abs e-mailed him, and they agreed to meet at a local bar. "I may be a fool for love, but I'm also practical," he said before going to meet her, adding that, then again, "maybe I am just a big wallet, and I'm getting played on all sides."

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On a weekday evening, B. K. sat in a back booth, waiting for his new potential sugar baby. She showed up in a tight, low-cut blouse and scooted up next to him, he told me, purring that it had all been a misunderstanding and that \$1,500 a month would be just fine. To his delight, she said none of the other men on Seeking Arrangement had impressed her the way he had. B. K. explained that his current sugar baby might soon get engaged and disappear from the scene. At that point, he assured her, he would want to pursue things. She snuggled in closer and told him that she would wait. And then she started kissing and nibbling on his ear.

Ruth Padawer is an adjunct professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. This is her first feature article for the magazine.

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