

FOR A YEAR MY HUSBAND, JOHN, HAS REFUSED TO let me buy an English bulldog because he doesn't want to be seen trundling down the street with an animal that looks alarmingly like him; he has also complained about the roll of fat around his neck that does, admittedly, add years to an aging, albeit adorable, face. Five years ago, when I was pondering the vanity—and morality—of having liposuction on my hips and thighs, John was infinitely soothing, reassuring me that although surgery is serious business, the impulse to vacuum away fat

mister,

was no more morally questionable than the impulse to run a comb through one's hair. But when it comes to his own perceived shortcomings, his most persistent refrain is, "Real guys don't suck."

Well, in fact, they do. They also nip, tuck, tighten, and, occasionally, enlarge. In 1993, according to the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons, 26 percent of all cosmetic surgery patients were men, up from 18 percent in 1988. "Cosmetic surgery is very, very common among men in the highest levels of business—c.e.o.s, managing directors, investment bankers," says Dr. Alan Matarasso, a leading New York plastic surgeon. Among the tycoons rumored to have improved their executive visages by going under the knife are Bear, Stearns managing director emeritus Paul Hallingby and Reliance Group Holdings chairman and c.e.o. Saul Steinberg.

Why are more men having surgery? The motivation is in many ways similar to women's, suggests Upper East Side psychotherapist Jane Greer, Ph.D. But the emphasis is not so much on youth and sexual allure as on the perceived relationship between youth and performance. "If you look at the investment world, for example, it's really a young man's game, and these guys know it," says Dr. Greer. "For many of them, it's not a matter of looking young per se; it's looking vigorous and vibrant. It's like drinking from the fountain of youth: renovating their appearance makes these men feel they have more *clout*."

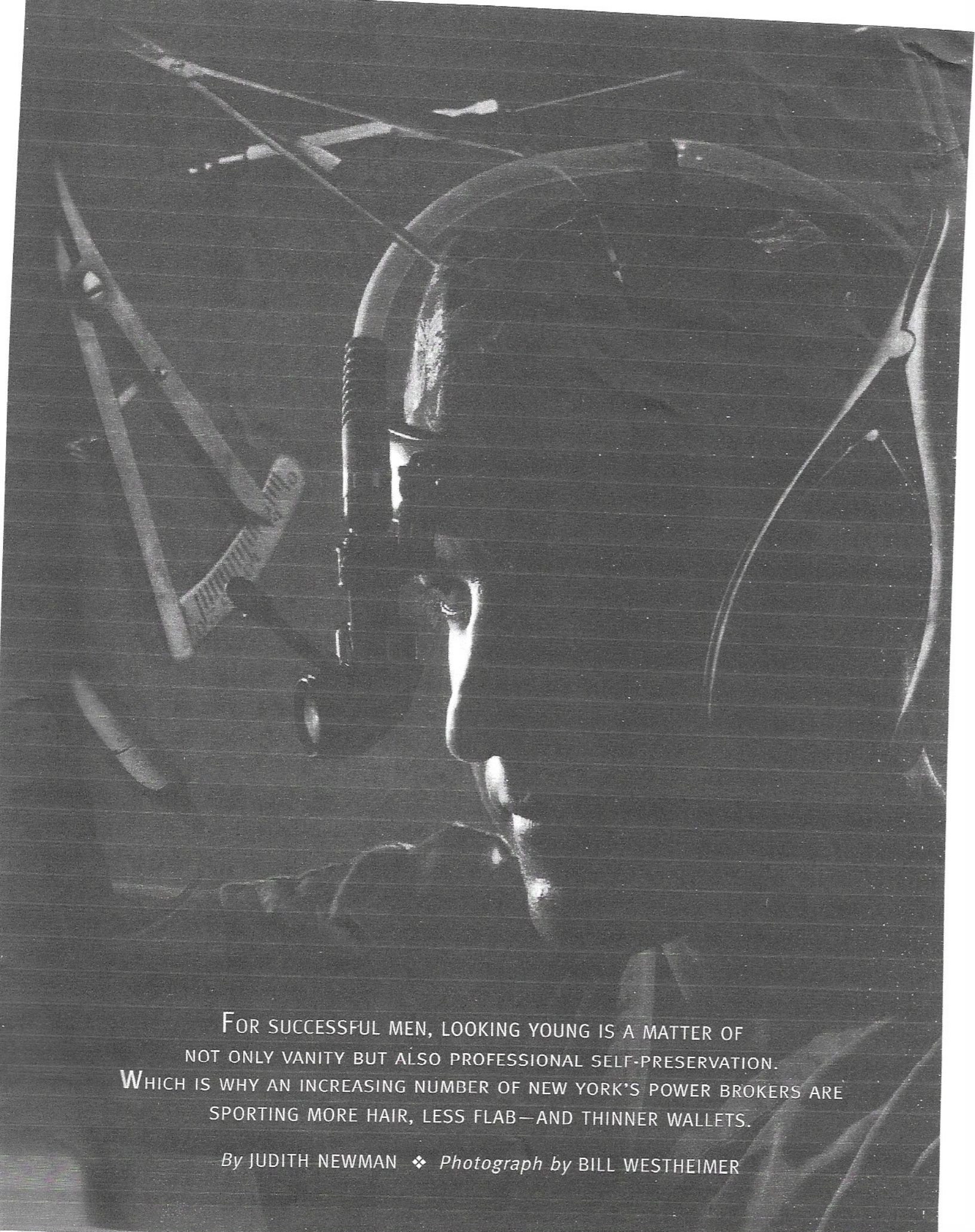
But just because more men are opting for surgery doesn't mean they're discussing it among themselves. "I have a back door in my office," says Dr. Matarasso, "and it's particularly the men who ask to use it."

Dr. Helen Colen, whose cosmetic-surgery practice is about 25 percent male, says that many men will claim to have been strong-armed into her office by a zealous wife or lover who's pleased with her own surgical results. And once the surgery is over, Dr. Colen laughs, the average guy "just vanishes. You never hear from him again."



it!

Like many Upper East Side plastic surgeons, DR. ANDREW N. KORNSTEIN is seeing more men who want to compete with the young and the wrinkleless.



FOR SUCCESSFUL MEN, LOOKING YOUNG IS A MATTER OF NOT ONLY VANITY BUT ALSO PROFESSIONAL SELF-PRESERVATION. WHICH IS WHY AN INCREASING NUMBER OF NEW YORK'S POWER BROKERS ARE SPORTING MORE HAIR, LESS FLAB—AND THINNER WALLETS.

By JUDITH NEWMAN ❖ *Photograph by* BILL WESTHEIMER