

# A Changed Woman

Kathy Griffin shares the pain—and the gain—of her recent plastic surgeries

Comic Kathy Griffin has never been one to keep her plastic surgery under wraps. After potentially fatal complications from a 1999 liposuction, she wrote about it in a women's magazine (the story's headline? "Lipo Sucks!"). Nevertheless this year Griffin opted for more remodeling: a nose job in January followed by hair straightening, and an overhaul of her teeth, brows, waist, arms (yes, more lipo) and facial skin in May and June. Griffin, 42, who will host NBC's dating reality show *Average Joe* in the fall, invited PEOPLE along and talked to Los Angeles deputy bureau chief Elizabeth Leonard about how it all felt—and why her first scare didn't put her off nips and tucks for good.

In 1999 I had lipo from my waist down—my stomach, thighs and the inside of my knees. The idea was to look like Jennifer Aniston. It didn't work out at all. When I woke up I was not able to pee. I got toxicity and had to go to the emergency room and wear a catheter for a week. It was life-



After



Before

## HOW MUCH FOR A TOUCHED-UP YOU?

Griffin got a celeb discount, but here's the going rate in L.A. for:

- LIPOSUCTION upper arms and flanks: \$3,500
- BROW LIFT: \$5,500
- VENEERS on 20 teeth: \$30,000
- JAPANESE HAIR STRAIGHTENING: \$400
- FACIAL PEEL: \$1,500

## EYEBROW-RAISING EXPERIENCE



Facial plastic surgeon Dr. Paul Nassif made three incisions at her hairline and cut the muscles that produce frown lines, then elevated her eyebrows.

Nassif (with Griffin in his Beverly Hills office) lifted her brows, he says, "a centimeter. Not a big deal."



Before



After



"She wasn't that out of proportion," says Dr. David Amron (prepping her arms for lipo).

threatening, and the results were non-existent. In fact, I started running after that and got much better results.

Back then I swore I would never get lipo again. I'm still not saying, "Ladies, go have lipo and get your brows put on a different part of your head! It's a blast!" But I work in an industry where if you don't get a little nip and tuck, a lady of my age is going to end up playing Katie Holmes's great-grandmother in the *Dawson's Creek* reunion. I'm never going to be Halle Berry, but I want to look as good as I can.

I had my nose done because it was a little big. Unfortunately I think it looks exactly the same. Then I had the Japanese hair straightening done. I love it! It's a long torturous process, though—like six or seven hours. They play movies for you.

I'm Irish, and I have the bad Irish teeth. So I went to a dentist and asked for soap-opera teeth. While they're making your new teeth, they have to whittle your own down to pegs. I looked like a turn-of-the-century prostitute. He gave me some temporary teeth, but one fell out when I was on the *Jimmy Kimmel* show. I gave it to Jimmy. That was brutal.

A few days later I had lipo on my upper arms and flanks, which is kind of your kidney area. I don't know why I did it, because it's not like I'm running around in those Britney Spears pants—my flanks are pretty much covered all day. But my arms were total car-pool-mom arms, and I wanted Angelina Jolie arms. I thought about going to awards shows in a beautiful, strappy dress.

I went to a doctor who for safety reasons refuses to do lipo with general anesthesia. So you're awake and shaking while they poke a big knitting needle in you. It's horrible. But everything is covered so you can't look over and say, "Get that vacuum out of me!"

Later that day I got the brow lift so I wouldn't have skin hanging over my eyelids, and the facial peel, where they use acid to smooth your lines. Those were under anesthesia. When you wake up it feels like you're the most

MY, WHAT PERFECT TEETH SHE HAS!



Mismatched caps and stained teeth ("from my Diet Coke addiction," says Griffin) made her self-conscious. Dr. Kourosh Maddahi built 20 porcelain veneers to brighten her smile; a gum and neck massage from therapist Ramyn Savar helped her relax.



Before



After

"Give me the nitrous and do anything you want," joked Griffin in Maddahi's chair (in Beverly Hills).



Fondue "brings the senses back to normal," says Maddahi (with Griffin and Savar).

tired you've ever been. My husband, Matt Moline [a computer programmer], helped me out to the car. It's easy to tell when he's trying not to act freaked out. He would never look at me and say, "Oh my God, you're totally swollen." But I was.

The first night was tough. Even though Vicodin takes the pain away, I got really nauseated. I just had peanut butter and chocolate smoothies. I found that soothing.

By the third day I was so swollen my eyebrows were basically at my hairline. Then the peel kicked in. It was like the worst sunburn I ever had. I cried constantly. The burns were so itchy it felt like bugs crawling on my face. There was nothing about me that wasn't disgusting. Every day I'd look a little worse, and Matt would say, "You look a little better today." He got tired of giving me sponge baths. I don't know how he got through it. You have to buy into the fact that you're going to look really scary and it's going to be painful. You've got a week of hell coming no matter how you slice it.

Two weeks later we went on an incredible vacation in Mexico. I still had bruising from the lipo, and a moustache of peeling skin, but I went out in the sun. I wore a lot of sunblock. When I got back, I had my teeth veneers put in. Afterward they do this tea ceremony at the dentist's office with fondue. I was so excited about the chocolate. And the teeth are soap-opera perfect.

Matt says I look good. I feel good. The peel really took away a lot of lines under my eyes. I love the teeth. And I love the brow—my eyes are a little bit more open.

The lipo's painful. I couldn't lift my arm all the way up for three weeks. As for my flanks, if there's a difference, I can notice it only when I'm naked. I wouldn't do it again.

My parents are like, "Promise us this is the last one." I said, "Unless I grow a new head, I've run out of things to do." I'm sure I'll do stuff for the rest of my life, but I'm done for a while. ●